



NFB FILM

STUDY GUIDE

THE LIVING STONE

*Color or Black & White — 33 minutes
Produced by the National Film Board of Canada, 1958.*

Suggested Uses: Social Studies, English and Art classes in junior and senior high schools. General auditorium showings.

SYNOPSIS

Present-day Eskimos continue an age-old tradition of creative craftsmanship, carving ivory and bone — and more recently, stone — into vigorous portrayals of Arctic life. *THE LIVING STONE*, an evocative picture of a spring and summer among a few Eskimos in Canada's eastern Arctic, shows the inspiration, often related to belief in the supernatural, behind such sculpture. Although today his carvings are produced increasingly for sale, the Eskimo's approach to the work is still, as always, to release the image he sees imprisoned in the rough stone. The film centers around an old Eskimo legend about the carving of the image of a sea spirit to bring food to a hungry camp.

CONCEPTS

The following are the main learning concepts presented in the film. These points should be checked before showing the film because by knowing them a more accurate judgment may be made of the extent to which the film will be of use in the class. Some of these concepts are more difficult than others and their degree of application will be governed by the grade level at which the film is used:

1. The seal is essential to the life of the Eskimo.
2. Eskimos believe in the sea spirit.
3. Many Eskimos like to carve in stone.
4. Eskimo carvers believe that there is a spirit in the stone which their carving will release.
5. By carving a likeness of the sea spirit the Eskimo believes he will receive her favour.
6. The importance of the sun to the Eskimo cannot be realized by anyone who has not spent a winter in the High Arctic.
7. Eskimos are wonderful story tellers.
8. Eskimos believe that all who hunt the creatures of the sea spirit must know her rules and abide by them if they are to succeed.
9. A boy's first seal is a very important event.
10. There are many spirits which, Eskimos believe, govern their lives — but of all these the sea spirit is the most powerful.



CLASS PREPARATION

a) Introduction:

The introduction will depend on the particular use to which this film is being put. In Social Studies, it exposes another facet of Eskimo life. In English, it reveals something of the story teller's art. In Art, it shows what can be done by inspiration and patience.

If Eskimo stone carvings can be obtained, they would serve as an excellent focus for class attention before showing the film. If actual carvings are not available, pictures could be used to the same effect.

b) Words Which May Cause Difficulty:

Eskimo names —

Nu-le-ak-juk — The Sea Spirit	Aglu — The breathing hole of the seal
Niviaksi — A Great Hunter	Sur-ke-nak — The Sun

c) Directive Questions Answered in the Film:

1. Why was Nu-le-ak-juk so important to the Eskimo?
2. What is the importance of the seal to the Eskimo?
3. What does he hope to achieve by carving the likeness of Nu-le-ak-juk?
4. Where is the Eskimo's carving stone obtained?
5. Why is Sur-ke-nak so important to the Eskimo?
6. What does the Eskimo believe about the piece of stone which he intends to carve?
7. Did Niviaksi's carving result in favours from Nu-le-ak-juk?
8. Why is a boy's first seal so important? What happens when his seal is brought into camp?

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Take up and discuss the directive questions. Relate them as much as possible to the various concepts presented in the film.
2. The Art class may wish to try their hand at carving. It will find this film a source of inspiration for many pictures.
3. Some students may wish to discuss the Eskimo's beliefs in spirits.
4. Some of the younger children may wish to retell the story of Niviaksi.

RELATED VISUAL AIDS

Films:

ANGOTEE (NFB — 32 mins.)
ESKIMO SUMMER (NFB — 16 mins.)
ESKIMO ARTS AND CRAFTS (NFB — 22 mins.)
HOW TO BUILD AN IGLOO (NFB — 11 mins.)

Filmstrips:

ESKIMO CHILDREN ON BAFFIN ISLAND — PARTS I & II (NFB — Color)

