



# STORIES OF THE AMAUTALIK

# **Stories of the Amautalik**

**FANTASTIC BEINGS FROM INUIT  
MYTHS AND LEGENDS**

**Researched and Written By  
Neil Christopher**

**Teacher Study Guide**

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## GENERAL ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

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Outlined below are some useful learning strategies that may assist those students who struggle with their learning, or demonstrate some difficulty with everyday classroom tasks. Students, teacher and parents must work together to maximize the student's learning potential and to create a positive, productive and successful classroom community.

### **Environmental Accommodations**

- Arrange seating to reduce distractions.
- Provide the student with an area to keep supplies, books, etc., away from students' work area.
- Allow breaks between tasks.

### **Adaptations to Lesson Presentation**

- **Note:** Remember that we learn in different ways and we cannot expect that all students will respond in the same way to a specific teaching strategy. (Some different learning styles include auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile.)
- Give a structured overview before the lesson.
- Provide verbal and written instruction.
- Establish routines that enable the student to check understanding with a peer.
- Provide frequent repetition of important tasks.

### **Adaptations to Assignments, Projects and Tests**

- Shorten assignments and/or divide assignments into parts.
- Provide extended time for completion of assignments.
- Provide additional time for reading assignments.
- Provide assistance with note taking if needed.
- Use peer support and mentoring (select a classroom buddy).
- Enable students to demonstrate understanding of material using a variety of media, including oral presentations, visual arts/illustrations, audio or video taped assignments, bulletin board displays, dramatizations, and demonstrations.
- Provide assistance with organization and planning of class work and / or homework.
- Credit for class participation, effort, and attendance.

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## Icon Descriptions



**READING** Students will read assigned passages using a variety of reading strategies.



**ORAL COMMUNICATION** Students will discuss the readings and express what they have learned through oral language in open class discussions, small group work, and presentations.



**LISTENING** Students will be asked to demonstrate effective listening strategies as they attend to verbal instructions, discussions, and presentations.



**WRITING** Students will develop their written communication skills through a variety of writing activities.



**COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the assigned readings, themes, and topics through various discussion activities, group tasks, assignments, and presentations.



**VISUAL DEPICTIONS** Students will express themselves visually by creating pictures, diagrams, and graphic organizers, demonstrating an understanding of text content and features.



**VIEWING** Students will examine and interpret a variety of forms of work (e.g., films, art, work created by peers, etc.) and respond to these elements in writing, oral presentations, and group discussions.



**HANDOUT** Handouts accompany many activities throughout the guide. These handouts are to be photocopied and handed out to the students, allowing them to practice and expand on the information they are learning.



**EVALUATION** At the conclusion of each unit, evaluation techniques are suggested to allow instructors to informally assess students' understanding and abilities.

### Pre-Reading Discussion and Activities

This section includes pre-reading activities, which will provide the students with background knowledge of Inuit culture and traditional Inuit folktales.



#### **Activity 1**

##### Introduction to Folktales



- Invite the class to discuss what they know about folktales. Some guiding questions include:
  - o What are folktales?
  - o Where do they come from?
  - o How are they passed down from one generation to the next?
  - o Why do we have folktales? What is their purpose?
  - o Were you told any folktales as a kid?
- Explain to the class that folktales are stories that were traditionally handed down orally by storytellers in various cultures. They are usually about ordinary characters in their ordinary lives and tell the story of something extraordinary that happens to them.
- Ask the class to brainstorm any famous or well-known folktales, listing the titles on the board or chart paper. (“The Three Little Pigs,” “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” etc.) If you have any examples, read a few folktales with your class.
- Explain to the class that folktales are a way to learn about the history of different people and places throughout the world.
- Ask the learners to share any traditional Inuit folktales they have been told and discuss the different characters found in each. Record the students’ examples on the board or chart paper.

## PRE-READING DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

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### Activity 2

#### **Introduction to** *Stories of the Amautalik, Fantastic Beings from Inuit Myths and Legends*



- Tell the students that for this unit, they will be reading a traditional Inuit folktale titled *Stories of the Amautalik: Fantastic Beings from Inuit Myths and Legends*, researched and written by Neil Christopher and illustrated by Larry MacDougall.
- Explain to the students that because Inuit have traditionally relied on the environment for survival, it is often a source of fear in Inuit folktales. Ask the students to brainstorm a list of ways in which Inuit have relied on the land and predict what their biggest fears might have been.
- Remind the students that many Inuit folktales involve human relationships with animals, mighty beings, and supernatural creatures.
- Tell the students that in this story, they will be reading about one of these supernatural creatures, called the amautalik.
- Read the monster description provided at the end of the manual to the class.
- Ask the students if they have heard any stories about the amautalik. If they have, ask for volunteers to share what they know about this supernatural creature.

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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### Post-Reading Comprehension Questions



*Stories of the Amautalik: Fantastic Beings from Inuit Myths and Legends*, written by Neil Christopher, is a book consisting of two traditional Inuit folktales about the amautalik. After each reading, use the following suggested comprehension questions to assess the students' understanding of the ideas and concepts presented in each story.

#### **Introduction**

1. What elements can make living in the Arctic difficult?
2. What are many Inuit stories about?
3. What is the amautalik?
4. What does she look like?
5. What is an amauti?
6. What does the amautalik use the amauti for?
7. What is the plural of amautalik?
8. Does the amautalik ever hunt adults?
9. How does the amautalik move across the tundra?
10. If you were caught by an amautalik, how would you try and get away?
11. Where do amautaliit live?
12. What is usually in their hair? Why?
13. Do they all look the same?



## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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### The Hungry Amautalik and the Restless Children

1. Why did traditional Inuit families gather together to have song festivals?
2. Why did the children in this story not want to sleep when the festival was over?
3. What are the two boys' names?
4. What is the girl's name, and whom does she live with?
5. What happened to her parents?
6. What is one of Alliq's favourite activities?
7. What does he do to Kunaju?
8. Why didn't any adults come to stop the boys?
9. How did the amautalik plan her attack?
10. What did Kunaju's parents give her before they left?
11. Whose amulet had it been originally?
12. What did the amautalik smell like?
13. Where did the amautalik take the children?
14. What stopped Kunaju from escaping out of the basket?
15. If you were Kunaju, would you try to help the boys? Why or why not?
16. What were crawling all over the boys?
17. What did the children notice scattered next to the amautalik's layer?
18. What is an ulu?
19. How did the children escape from the amautalik?
20. What did the amulet turn into?

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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21. Was this the first time anyone had escaped from this amautalik?
22. What distracted and eventually prevented the amautalik from chasing the children?
23. Where did Kunaju hide the amulet?
24. What caused chaos to erupt when the children returned to their village?
25. Where were the children sent, and why?
26. Did the boys apologize to Kunaju? What were they apologizing for?
27. At the end of the story, what makes Kunaju smile?

### **The Orphan and the Amautalik**

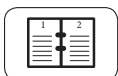
1. What kind of children was this amautalik looking for?
2. Why were these kinds of children easier to snatch?
3. Just as she was about to leave, whom did she find sitting alone on a large rock?
4. Why was Aviuq an orphan? Who raised him?
5. In what ways did other children bully Aviuq?
6. Who was his best friend?
7. Why did she like spending time with him?
8. Where did Aviuq learn his stories?
9. What story was he telling Nilak when the amautalik snuck up behind them?
10. Describe the amautalik.
11. What did Aviuq do to outsmart the amautalik?
12. Why was he able to do this?

### Post-Reading Activities

Listed are a number of activities that can be used to explore the characters, setting, plot, and themes presented in *Stories of the Amautalik*. Please feel free to alter them to meet the specific needs of your classroom. You may choose to read the book as a class or have the students read the two folktales in guided reading groups. **Remember** that the stories may be scary for some students, so you will need to be there to discuss and provide feedback about the context of the material.



#### Activity 1 Elements of a Folktale



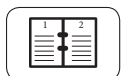
- Invite the students to discuss what they have learned about folktales so far (where they come from, how they are passed down orally through the generations, etc.).
- Explain to the class that all folktales from around the world present a similar set of elements. These include Supernatural Beings, Problems, Solutions, Cultural Elements, and Lessons.
- Distribute **Handout 1: Elements of a Folktale**.
- Once the class has read the first story, “The Hungary Amautalik and the Restless Children,” fill in the first page of the handout as a class. Allow the students to fill it in as you go and ask any necessary questions.
- After the second story, “The Orphan and the Amautalik,” ask the class to work in partners to fill in the corresponding chart.
- When the class has completed the chart, ask the students if they noticed any similarities between the stories. As a class, discuss why these similarities are important and discuss the important themes, including survival, bullying, intelligence, spirituality, and courage, and what they tell us about traditional Inuit communities and culture.

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

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### Activity 2 Character Web



- Distribute **Handout 2: Character Web**.
- Ask the students to choose one of the three main characters from “The Hungary Amautalik and the Restless Children”: Kunaju, Alliq, or Makpalu.
- Students must write the name of their chosen character in the centre circle. They must then select six words that describe their character and write these in each of the outer circles. Students must then find evidence from the text (quotations) to support their chosen words, recording this in the corresponding circles.
- When the handouts are complete, divide the class into pairs. Ask the pairs to share their webs and offer each other advice.
- Discuss the character webs as a class.
- **Accommodation:** Lower - level students can draw pictures of the characters.



### Activity 3 Character Sketch



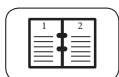
- Distribute blank paper and drawing utensils.
- Students must create a character sketch of the orphan from the story “The Orphan and the Amautalik.” They will first draw a picture of the orphan using the details provided in the story. Around the periphery of the picture, they will record quotes from the passage that they believe describe the orphan.
- Collect the students’ images and combine them in a booklet, or display them throughout the classroom.

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

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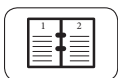
### Activity 4 **The W's of Story Comprehension**



- Divide the class into groups of four.
- Evenly assign groups to each of the stories. (When assigning the stories, keep in mind that the first story is significantly longer.)
- Distribute **Handout 4: The W's**.
- Each box on the handout holds a question pertaining to the W's of the passage (who, what, where, when, and why). Groups must work together to answer these questions in point form.
- When the work is complete, gather all the groups who studied “The Amautalik and the Restless Children” together in one corner of the room and the groups who studied “The Orphan and the Amautalik” together in another corner of the room.
- In their new groups, students must combine their answers and create a master list of W's for their assigned story on a large piece of chart paper.
- Ask a representative to present their master list to the class.
- Open the class up for discussion. Talk about each group's findings and identify similarities and differences between the readings.



### Activity 5 **Event Timeline**



- Explain to the students that every story is made up of a sequence of events. The events that make up a story, particularly as they relate to one another in a pattern or sequence, through cause and effect, or by coincidence, is called the plot. To understand plot, students will identify the events in the story “The Hungary Amautalik and the Restless Children” and create a timeline.
- Ask the students to explain what classifies an event. Write suggestions on the board.
- Ask the students to identify events in the story. Write answers on the board or chart paper.
- Distribute **Handout 4: Event Timeline**.
- Students must re-read the story and identify the different events that occur.

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

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They must record these events in the first box, write a description of the event in the second box, and draw an illustration of the event in the third box.

- When the handouts are finished, discuss the students' work as a class.
- **Accommodation:** Lower level students can orally describe the major events of the story and draw a picture.

### Activity 6

#### Shaminism

**Teacher Note:** This topic can sometimes be problematic. Shamanism is a traditional Inuit belief system. Please use discretion when teaching this lesson, as the subject matter may be sensitive to some families.



- After reading the first story, "The Hungary Amautalik and the Restless Children," divide the class into small groups and ask students to brainstorm various religions practiced throughout the world today. List them on the board.
- Explain that today approximately 80% of Inuit living in Nunavut are Christian. Tell the class that prior to the early 1900s, Inuit had never been exposed to Christianity. They lived a life centred around the earth, the animals, and the spirits of their ancestors. Shamanism is an element of traditional Inuit spirituality. These spiritual leaders helped Inuit communities understand the spiritual world and protected them from danger.
- Explain to the class that shamans were not priests. They were more like tradesmen who specialized in the unseen powers of the world. Tell the students, "The task of the shaman is to be able to make journeys through these boundaries, journeying back and forth between the human and the supernatural, bringing special knowledge, and using it for better or for ill." (Hugh Brody, Film Review of *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, Isuma Inuit Studies Reader, p.12).
- Watch the movie *Shaman Stories*:  
<http://www.isuma.tv/lo/en/isuma-productions/angakkuiit-shaman-stories>.
- Discuss the movie and how the shaman is depicted in the two stories.

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

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### Activity 7 **Survival**



- Tell the students that as you have discussed previously, each of the two stories from the book is a story of survival.
- Explain to the class that survival has been a topic of many stories throughout the history of literature. From a hero surviving an evil villain, a victim surviving an airplane crash, a cancer patient beating the odds, or a homeless child overcoming adversity, stories of survival can up uplift the spirit and inspire others.
- Explain to the students that for all humans, survival is a big part of our everyday lives. Ask the class to take out their journals. Explain that they will have five minutes to answer the question, “What does the word survival mean to you?”
- In pairs, have the students share and discuss their responses. When the pairs are finished, open the discussion up to the whole class, while recording students’ answers on the board or chart paper.
- Tell the students that people all over the world require food and shelter to survive. Ask the class to think about traditional Inuit communities and brainstorm a list of what members of these communities used for shelter and how they acquired food.
- Is it the same in modern society? In partners, ask the students to think about the community they live in. In their journals, ask them to answer the following questions:
  - o Where do Inuit live today?
  - o What do their houses look like?
  - o Where do they get their food?
- Discuss the results as a class and ask the students whether they believe surviving in the Arctic has become easier or more difficult.

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

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### **Activity 8** **Bullying**

- At the beginning of the first story, “The Hungry Amautalik and the Restless Children,” there is an incident between Kunaju and the two boys, Alliq and Makpalu. Ask the students to explain the incident.
- Tell the students that one way to describe this incident is bullying. Ask the class what bullying means.
- Explain that bullying is when one person manipulates another person through threats, violence, or verbal abuse, or uses other intimidation tactics to force the person to do something or to exclude the person from a group.
- Ask the students to list the ways bullying may occur between children at school (e.g., verbal harassment, gossip, exclusion, physical threats, etc.). Record a list on the board.
- Divide the students into four groups and assign each group one of the following forms of bullying: verbal harassment, gossip, exclusion, and physical threats.
- In their groups, ask the students to discuss the following questions about their assigned topic, making point - form notes on chart paper.
  - o What does this behaviour look like?
  - o When does this behaviour occur?
  - o Why does this behaviour occur?
  - o How does it make the victim feel?
  - o How does it make the bully feel?
  - o How do we prevent such behaviour from occurring?
  - o How should such behaviour be dealt with?
- Ask each group to present their topic and notes to the class. Discuss bullying together.
- Before concluding the discussion, talk about the reasons why Alliq and Makpalu would act in such an aggressive way towards Kunaju. Further discuss how bullying is depicted in the second story, “The Orphan and the Amautalik.”



## CULMINATING ACTIVITY

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### Monster Illustrations



- Ask the students to create a visual depiction -- either a drawing, painting, or 3D mask of the amautalik.



- Remind the students that the depictions of the amautalik presented in the book look quite different from each other. Encourage learners to be creative and come up with their own interpretation of this hideous monster.
- When the students are finished, invite them to present their monster illustration to the class.

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Thank you for reading *Stories of Amautalik*. We hope you and your class enjoyed the stories and are inspired to learn more about traditional Inuit culture and communities.

## MONSTER DESCRIPTION

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### AMAUTALIK

#### The Child-Snatching Ogress

The Arctic can be a dangerous place. The relentless winds, the frigid temperatures, and the rough terrain can make living in the North difficult. However, there are other dangers that are well known to the people who have made the Arctic their home.

Inuit have numerous tales of strange beings who prey on children and lone travellers. In many Arctic regions, especially inland, elders have shared stories about a particularly dangerous race of ogress that moves quickly over the tundra, abducting children to be used as playthings or as food. Amautalik (a-mow-ta-lick) is the name given to this type of ogress.

An amautalik is usually described as a huge ugly woman who carries a large basket on her back. This basket is fashioned from foul-smelling driftwood and stuffed with rotting seaweed. Sometimes, instead of carrying a basket, this ogress wears a huge amauti (woman's jacket with a pouch to carry children) made of walrus hide and lined with rancid seaweed.

Amautaliit (plural of amautalik) are primarily child-snatchers, but if they are hungry enough they have been known to subdue adults and carry them off as well. Often their victims do not realize they are being hunted until it is too late. This is probably because of the creature's ability to move silently over the rocky tundra. Despite the amautaliit's great size, strength, and stealth, many of the stories about them suggest that they are not very intelligent and can be tricked or frightened away.

It is also said that amautaliit usually live underground and that once they have captured someone, they carry their captive back to an underground lair. Amautaliit usually have soil and plants matted in their hair and clothing, due to their subterranean life.

Written by Neil Christopher, reprinted from *Arctic Giants*, 2011.



## Elements of a Folktale

Part I: Fill in the following chart as a class.

### **THE HUNGRY AMAUTALIK AND THE RESTLESS CHILDREN**

Supernatural Being	
Problem	
Solution	
Cultural Elements	
Lesson	

## HANDOUT 1

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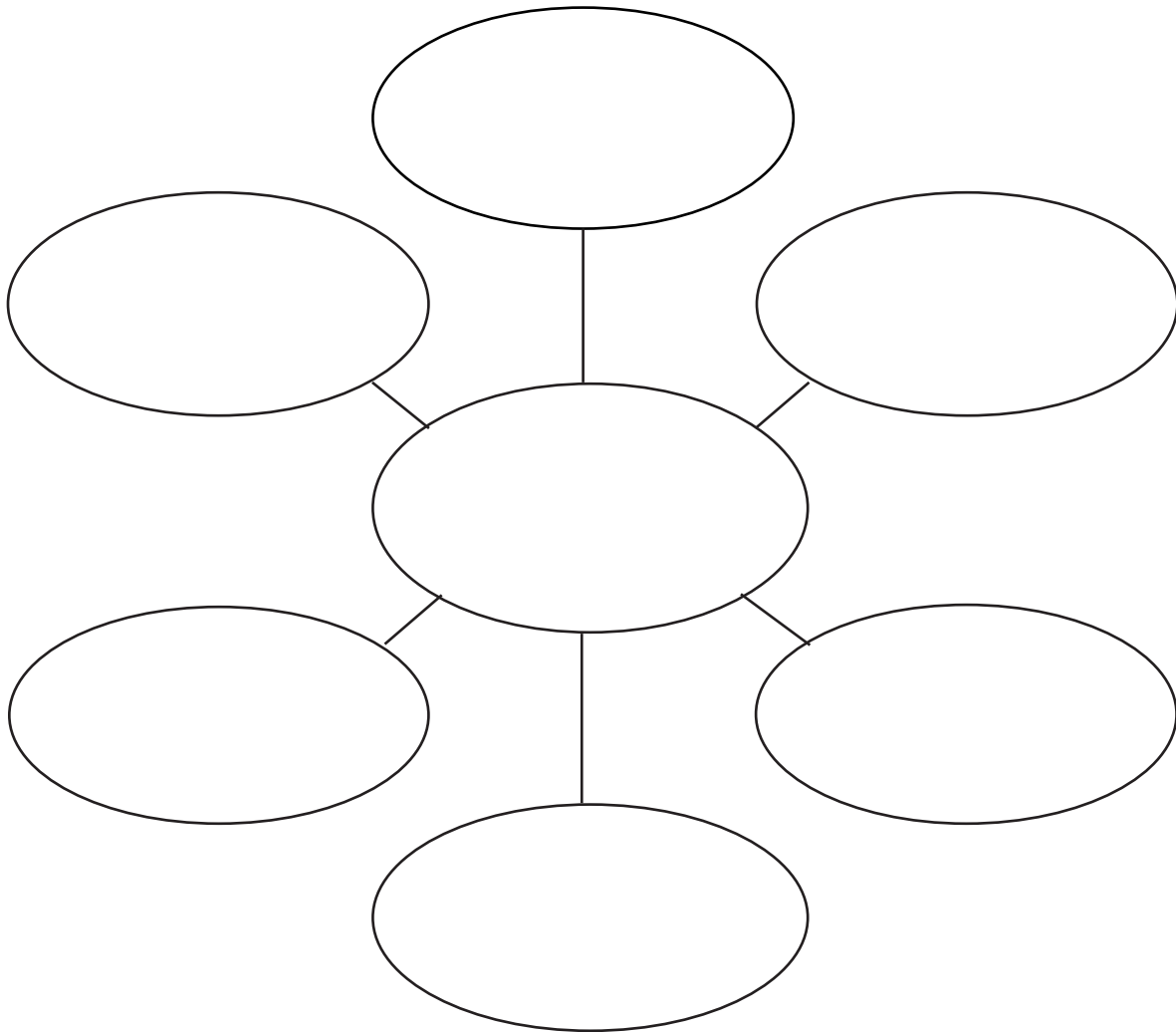
Part II: With a partner, complete the following chart for “The Orphan and the Amautalik.” Be prepared to discuss your handout with the class.

### THE ORPHAN AND THE AMAUTALIK

Supernatural Being	
Problem	
Solution	
Cultural Element	
Lesson	

## Character Web

Write the name of your story character in the centre oval. Write the words that describe your character in each of the connecting ovals.



## The W's

Answer each question in the box in point form.

<b>Who</b> are the characters?	<b>When</b> did the story take place?	<b>Where</b> did the story take place?
<b>What</b> problem occurred?	<b>Why</b> did the problem occur?	<b>What</b> was the resolution/ How was the problem solved?

## Event Timeline

Pick out the events that took place in The Hungary Amautalik and the Restless Children, and then record them in the timeline.

EVENT	WRITTEN DESCRIPTION	PICTURE

## MARK BREAKDOWN

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	Mark Breakdown	Final Mark
<b>Pre-Reading Activities</b>		
Discussion	Participation	/5
<b>Post-Reading Activities</b>		
Comprehension Questions	Completion	/20
Elements of a Folktale	Part I: 2 marks / section Part II: 2 marks / section	/20
Character Web	2 marks / oval	/12
W's of Story Comprehension	4 marks / section	/20
Event Timeline	1 mark / section of chart	/15
Shamanism	Participation	/10
Survival	Completion	/10
Bullying	Chart - 10 marks Presentation - 10 marks	/20
Monster Illustrations	Completion - 5 marks Creativity - 10 marks	/15
<b>Final Mark</b>		/147