

# Lesson 1: Dentalium Shells & Maqaq Game

\* PRE-LESSON- Ask parents/grandparents if they have any type of object with bead-work to share with the class as students are learning about beads and patterns.

## Objectives:

Students learn about Dentalium Shells and how beads were used for trade.

## Essential Questions:

What is a dentalium shell? How was it used in the past and how do we use them today?



Dentalium Shell Earrings, Etsy

## Alaska Native Values:

Have patience- Some things cannot be rushed.  
Honor traditional arts, skills and ingenuity.  
Except what life brings  
Show respect for others.

## Promoting Culture Self Assessment:

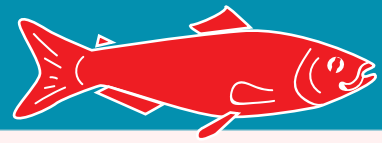
- I encourage and provide opportunities and experiences for children that support Alaska Native culture.
- I ensure that toys and play accessories that depict people are representative of the various cultural and ethnic groups both within my community and the society in general.
- I encourage and invite parents and community members to volunteer and assist with Alaska Native language and cultural activities.

## Standards:

L21: Demonstrate eye hand coordination in different tasks  
M4. Counts orally, counts objects and names numerals.  
L7. Sings, uses finger plays, and recites rhymes or poems.  
L10. Follows directions.  
SSC1. Draws and constructs.

Whole Group	Music: Denalium Song	Art/Writing
<p>Materials: Denalium Shells (in kit) 5 sided Dice Aimhnaq - Alutiiq pronunciation- <a href="https://alutiiqmuseum.org/word-of-the-week-archive/750-dentalium-shell-1">https://alutiiqmuseum.org/word-of-the-week-archive/750-dentalium-shell-1</a></p>	<p>Materials: Computer <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6-RCnmtFVQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6-RCnmtFVQ</a></p>	<p>Materials: Denalium Shells Alphabet cards Flattened piece of clay or or just paper</p>
<p>Activity: See lesson below.</p> <p>* More about the game Maqaq: <a href="https://alutiiqmuseum.org/word-of-the-week-archive/322-dice-plural">https://alutiiqmuseum.org/word-of-the-week-archive/322-dice-plural</a></p>	<p>Activity: Listen to song. Sing with the students and explain again how denalium shells are collected.</p>	<p>Activity: Help students to line Denalium shells to make their favorite letter or shape. Provide letter or shape cards for guidance. As an extension, allow students to be creative and create pictures using the shells.</p>

# Activity



Engage: Whole Group Activity: Dentalium Shells & Maqaq Dice Game

Explain: "This is a dentalium shell. In Alutiiq it is called Aimhnaq. But its got many names because people from all over Alaska used these shells as beads and decorating many important items. Its a shell that's made from a little mollusk that lives in the bottom of lakes. A long time ago these shells were used for trading, like we use money today you could trade dentalium shells for things that you may want or need. We're going to learn a game today using Aimhnaq or Dentalium shells"

Explain: Talking, Niugtuk, Qalarte, Qenax

Gather in a circle. "I am going to share with you how to play an Alutiiq game called Maqaq." "First I am going to set 20 aimhnaq in the center. (Count to 20 as you place the shells in the center) "Do not touch them until it's your turn. We will all take turns. First, one person will roll the dice. That person will count the number on the dice and then they will get to take that amount of aimhnaq out from the center. When all the aimhnaq are gone we can count how many we each got"



Another way to play is when all the shells are gone from the center students start to take from each other's piles until the number 16 is reached then that person is the winner.

Play the game.



Explore:

Allow students to play with the shells that they have won to make a design with them. Add more shells to the pile if they need to add more to their design. Encourage students to share with their classmates what they made.

Share with students photos or examples of how dentalium shells are used today. Ex: Earrings, necklaces, decorating regalia.

## Evaluation

Emerging: Students did not participate.	Developing: Student did not follow rules of the game.	Proficient: Student followed rules of the game and was able to count (with or without help) the amount of aimhnaq they won from the game.	Advanced: Students successfully played game and made a design from the aimhnaq.
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