

# Arctic Armor

Armed conflicts often took place between neighboring groups of people. The Inupiat and other arctic warriors wore armor, which protected their chests and backs. The armor was made of numerous connected bone or leather plates.



Arctic Alaska. Reconstruction of a Siberian woman wearing laminar armor of hardened leather enforced by wood and bones worn by the Chukchi, Aleut, and Chugach people

They have a special kind of uniform when they fight these wars. These uniforms are made out of shaved *ugruk* [bearded seal] skin. They are made by overlapping the pieces of skin...Only the strong man's arrow goes through.

—Roger Silook, from "Seevookuk, Stories the Old People Told on St. Lawrence Island," 1976

Siberian raiders attacked St. Lawrence Island in spring and summer, trying to take valuables as well as prisoners. Yupik elder Roger Silook wrote that when enemy boats appeared, defenders "would make it rain with arrows" to repel them. This armor skirt, worn to protect the lower body, is made of six telescoping hoops of doubled bearded seal hide, alternating between dark (scraped) and light (aged) skin. The hoops were lifted and secured at the waist to enable the fighter to run or walk freely. On top is a hide chest protector with shoulder straps.



Chukchi, Koryak, Yupik and Iñupiaq warriors used several types of body armor. They had bone- and ivory-plated armor and vests; metal armor imported from southern Siberia or Japan; and hoop armor made of heavy hide.

The Chukchee ideal warrior is so skilled in jumping that he is almost able to fly in the air with the birds. When paddling in a kayak, he keeps pace with a flying gull.

**Wow**

—Waldemar Bogoras, description of the ideal warrior from "The Chukchee," 1904-1909



#### **Armor skirt**

Culture: **Eastern Siberian**

Region: **St. Lawrence Island, Alaska**



#### **Armor shield**

This shield from Kotzebue Sound was designed to cover a man's back, and its wings protected his sides and arms. It is made of tough bearded seal hide, sewn over wooden slats. A protective medallion is embroidered on the back. A fighter could fire his bow, then crouch and turn to block incoming arrows with the shield.

# CREATE A WARRIOR

YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS TO CREATE A Life size WARRIOR WEARING ARCTIC STYLE ARMOR AND TO WRITE A HAIKU.

## Step One

READ all the handouts; *Arctic Armor*, *Anatomy of Arctic Armor*, *a Warrior's story* and *How to Haiku*

Now

## Step Two

READ and answer the questions on the handout; *a Warrior's story*

## Step Three

HAIKU Read and complete the Haiku worksheet. You will need to copy your haiku onto your project.

## Step Four

CREATE Your goal is to create a life-size arctic warrior. Begin by having a family member trace you on the paper. Use the information from the readings and to create a realistic arctic warrior. Your assignment must have all of the following items included.

- At the top of the page place the name for your warrior
- Below his/her name copy your haiku (remember haikus have 3 lines that are; 5 syllables, 7 syllables, and 5 syllables).
- Your warrior should have a bow and arrows
- Your warrior should have armor that resembles what the arctic warriors actually wore.
- In the background of your warrior, draw an arctic landscape.
- On the bottom of the drawing, list the traits of your warrior. Consider what characteristics a real Inupiat warrior would have had in order to be a successful hunter and warrior.



# A Warrior's Story

You are a Warrior, a fierce warrior, and a self-disciplined hunter.

You are meditating with your eyes closed and your arms stretched out in front of you. You can feel the weight of your armor pressing against your shoulders as the fresh smells of the tundra infiltrate your senses. You have just arrived at this site. This is the day that you have trained for your life, why you trained and practiced your hunting and fighting skills since you were barely able to walk. As a successful hunter, you have learned to be patient and a skilled marksman, generous, peaceful, courageous, and kind. You are strong and powerful, yet calm and collected. You are prepared to die for the people and to protect the land of your ancestors.

You have recently heard the news that the raiders have returned for the second time, their boats entering the bay. They are the enemy and they will be defeated, if not by the spirit wind then, by your own swift arrow. In your final peaceful moments, through meditation, you focus on bravery and wisdom during your struggles. Slowly, you stand up and grab your bow and arrows. You bow your head one last time and go to the battlefield to join other warrior troops in victory.

## Questions to Answer:

1. What type of individuals were the arctic warriors?
2. What can you infer *self-disciplined* means?
3. Who is the Warrior prepared to die for?
4. What are eight characteristics of the Warrior in this story?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_