Life Along the Ice

How people adapt to Alaska's Arctic coast

6.C.4.1 "Explain how humans adapt to the environment (e.g., types and location of housing, clothing and food choices, methods of transportation, and options for economic activities) using historic and contemporary examples."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline environmental challenges, circle the choices people made in response, and give each matching challenge and choice the same number.

Choices on the Arctic Coast

1. Along Alaska's Arctic coast, Iñupiat communities have long faced cold winters, strong winds, and a short growing season. In the past, some families built winter homes with driftwood frames covered in sod, which helped keep heat inside when trees were scarce. Entrances could be built low to reduce heat loss. Warm parkas made from animal skins helped people travel and work outdoors. These choices were not just traditions. They used materials people could find nearby to meet the challenges of a cold coastal environment.

2. The sea also shaped daily life. For many families, hunting seals and fishing provided food where farming was difficult because of the cold and short growing season. Hunters used skin-covered boats called umiaks to travel on open water and carry supplies. They also traveled over frozen ground and sea ice when it was safe. Hunting and fishing were economic activities as well as ways to feed a household, since people shared food and used animal materials for clothing and tools. Each method depended on the season and the conditions.

3. Today, many Iñupiat families live in insulated houses heated by electricity or fuel. In places where the ground stays frozen year after year, builders may raise houses on supports to help keep building heat from thawing it. People may travel by motorboat in open water or snowmachine when snow and ice conditions allow. Some families still fish or hunt, while others earn wages at schools, clinics, or stores. As sea ice changes, people must pay close attention to travel safety and may adjust when and where they hunt.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did winter homes and parkas each help Iñupiat families deal with the cold in the past?

2. Why were hunting and fishing important ways to get food and make a living along the Arctic coast?

3. Why might people use an umiaq on one trip and a snowmachine on another?

4. How do raised houses and changes in hunting plans each respond to an environmental challenge today?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a family living in a hot, dry desert long ago and today. Write four sentences describing one past choice and two present choices about shelter, food, travel, or work, and explain how each choice responds to heat or scarce water.

ANSWER KEY

Life Along the Ice

GRADE 6 · 6.C.4.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline environmental challenges, circle the choices people made in response, and give each matching challenge and choice the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did winter homes and parkas each help Iñupiat families deal with the cold in the past?	**Sod-covered homes helped keep heat inside, while animal-skin parkas kept people warm when they traveled or worked outdoors.**
2	Why were hunting and fishing important ways to get food and make a living along the Arctic coast?	**Cold weather and a short growing season made farming difficult. Hunting and fishing provided food and animal materials for clothing and tools.**
3	Why might people use an umiaq on one trip and a snowmachine on another?	**An umiaq could carry people and supplies across open water in the past. A snowmachine can be used when snow and ice conditions allow.**
4	How do raised houses and changes in hunting plans each respond to an environmental challenge today?	**Raised houses help keep building heat from thawing frozen ground. Changing sea ice can affect travel safety, so hunters may change when and where they hunt.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Long ago, a family built a home with thick earthen walls to slow the flow of heat into the rooms. Today, the family might put shades over its windows to keep rooms cooler. It might also grow food with drip irrigation to use less water. Each choice helps the family live with strong heat or limited water.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that connect a choice to an environmental condition. For Your Turn, accept plausible past and present choices when the response explains how each addresses desert heat or scarce water.