



NUNAVUT RABIES AWARENESS & PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Veterinarians Without Borders (VWB) North America

Veterinarians Without Borders (VWB) North America works for, and with, communities in need to foster the health of animals, people and the environments that sustain us. VWB supports, among others, remote Northern Canadian communities, including Indigenous communities to improve animal health through temporary veterinary clinics, vaccinating to reducing the spread of rabies, and working to create the conditions for long-term, community-led sustainable animal health services.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

This program was made possible due to a grant from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The CFIA protects Canadians and their pets by reducing the risk of introducing dog rabies into Canada through special dog import requirements. This program contributes to the CFIA's mandate for safe food and healthy plants and animals by reducing the risk of rabies endangering human and animal health in Nunavut through rabies education.

Program Background

There has been an increase in awareness of rabies cases among the Arctic fox and dog populations in Nunavut. Rabies poses a threat to children, with animal bites being among the most common injuries experienced by children in Indigenous communities. Many children in Nunavut communities do not have a clear understanding of the signs of rabies in foxes and dogs, preventative measures for rabies infections in dogs and humans, proper behaviour and safety around dogs, or the steps to take if possible infections occur in humans.

Rabies has been enzootic among the Arctic fox population for decades. Local outbreaks typically happen on a 10- to 15-year cycle, in correlation with fox population boom years. In recent years, there has been an increased likelihood of foxes wandering near people and dogs due to diminished sea ice levels. In 2021, there was a documented case of a fox-human attack



in Igloolik. There have also been several documented cases of rabies infections among dogs in communities around the territory, including dog deaths.

Dogs are an important part of Nunavut community life. Many families own dogs or come into contact with dogs on a regular basis. The disease is completely preventable in dogs who receive the rabies vaccine, which is standard in Southern Canadian communities. In Nunavut, there is a lack of preventative veterinarian services and most dogs are not vaccinated against rabies. This leaves Nunavut communities vulnerable to rabies outbreaks.

Rabies is a serious disease that kills virtually 100% of infected people if left untreated. If an animal bite occurs, it is imperative for a patient to get a rabies vaccine within 24 hours. One third of rabies deaths around the world are children. Children in Indigenous communities are more at risk for dog bites, partially due to the presence of free-roaming dogs, the amount of time children typically spend outside around their communities, and a lack of understanding of safe behaviour around dogs. In a 2014 study, animal bites are listed as one of the top injuries experienced by Indigenous youth.

It is essential that children in Nunavut are aware of proper behaviour around dogs, the signs and symptoms of rabies, what to do if bitten or contact with suspected rabid animals occurs, as well as rabies preventative measures. Research on rabies education and awareness campaigns for school children around the world have shown that regular rabies educational content increases knowledge of rabies in school children. Culturally- appropriate and relevant rabies education for children could help decrease dog bites among the young population in Nunavut, and empower children to self-advocate for their care in case of possible infection.

Program Design

The program was designed to be culturally- appropriate, relevant and reflect the lived experiences of people and children living in Nunavut. The design includes many Nunavut and subject relevant visuals, hands-on, movement and discussion based activities, and uses simple and accessible language for English Language Learners/ Inuktitut Language Learners. Each lesson includes a slideshow with built-in discussion questions and movement activities, student practice worksheets, and an exit ticket.



Curriculum Connections

The program fits within the Uqausiliriniq and Aulajaaqtut strands of the Nunavut Approved Curriculum. More specifically, it meets learning objectives in Grades 5 and 6 Health (Outdoor Safety and First Aid), Grades 5 and 6 English Language Arts (Listening/Speaking, Reading/Viewing, Writing/Representing) or the Grades 5 and 6 Inuktitut Language Arts Curriculums.

Extension activities fit within the Iqqaqqaukkaringniq and Nunavusiutit strands, meeting objectives in the Nunavut Approved Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Arts Curriculums for Grades 5 and 6.

Lessons

The lessons are meant to be accessible to new as well as seasoned teachers and are designed to run smoothly without the need for lengthy teacher study or preparation beforehand. To help with this, the slides include all relevant information as well as discussion questions to engage students. The program acknowledges that teachers are the experts of their students and will modify and adjust the lessons as necessary to meet the needs of their students.

The lessons were designed to take about 40 minutes to complete but may take longer or shorter depending on teachers and their students. Some teachers may choose to teach each lesson over several different days if that works best for their class.

Lesson 1- Rabies and Foxes

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe what rabies is.
2. Describe the signs of rabies in foxes.
3. Identify how to be safe around wildlife.

Slides	Suggestions
3	<i>What Do You Know About Rabies?</i>



	<p>Option A- Run this discussion as a whole class brainstorm and record student answers on the board or on a chart paper. If possible, keep the notes that you have made for future reference in Lessons 3 and 4.</p> <p>Option B- Give students time to complete their individual KWL charts in advance (a lined copy and an unlined copy has been provided in the Lesson 1 Worksheets- choose whichever one suits your students best). Then, spend a few minutes with students sharing what they came up with. Keep students' copies of the KWL charts for future reference in Lessons 3 and 4.</p>
15	<p><i>Movement Break</i></p> <p>Option A- Play Charades with the signs of rabies in foxes identified on Slides 13-14.</p> <p>Option B- Play Simon Says with the signs of rabies in foxes identified on Slides 13-14.</p>

Extension Activities Ideas

- Write a recount of a time that you saw a fox.
- Keep a tally of proven fox sightings in the community over the coming weeks or months and graph the results in a bar or line graph (display it in the classroom).
- Grade 6 Research project: Using various reliable sources, research the differences and similarities between red fox and Arctic fox characteristics.
- As a Grade 6 class or in groups, work on a project to write a "Who Would Survive?" book on red and Arctic foxes (based off of the *Who Would Win?* book series).
- Grade 5 Research project: Research climate change and how that is affecting Arctic ice patterns, foxes' territories, and animal interactions with humans.

Lesson 2- Rabies and Dogs

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe the signs of rabies in dogs.
2. Describe how to prevent dogs from being infected with rabies.

Slides	Suggestions
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3	<p><i>How Do You Feel About Dogs?</i></p> <p>Option A- Run this as a Think-Pair-Share activity. First, give students 30 seconds to quietly think of an answer (“Think”). Next, give students 2 minutes to share their answers with a neighbour (“Pair”). Lastly, have students share theirs or their neighbours’ (your choice) answers with the class.</p> <p>Option B- Run this as a movement break. Ask students who have a negative relationship with dogs to move to the left side of the room, those with a positive relationship to move to the right side of the room, and those with a mixed relationship to stand in the middle of the room. You can have some students share why they chose to stand where they did.</p>
7	<p><i>How Do You Know If a Dog Has Rabies?</i></p> <p>The brainstorm activity on this slide was designed to activate students’ prior knowledge from Lesson 1. As you can see on the next slide, the signs of rabies in dogs are similar to the signs of rabies in foxes. You may choose to compile a list of students’ answers on the board or on a chart paper or ask small groups to make lists before sharing with the whole class.</p>

Extension Activities Ideas

- Research project: Nunavut dog sledding. Option to compare and contrast with other Arctic dog sledding styles, such as Alaskan or research a specific race such as the Nunavut Quest or The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.
- Learn about the qamutik and build a model.
- Bring-in a local dog sledding expert as a classroom guest speaker.
- Art activity: draw a dog, incorporate elements of art (line, shape, space, colour, form, texture) or positive space concept.

Lesson 3- Rabies and Humans

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe how a person may become infected with the rabies virus.
2. Describe the steps to follow if someone has been bitten or scratched by an animal or has come into contact with an animal that is suspected of having rabies.



Slides	Suggestions
3	<p><i>KWL Chart Review</i></p> <p>This slide intends to give students an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned so far in the program and what new questions they may have. If you have kept the KWL group brainstorm or student worksheets from Lesson 1, please add to them. If you don't have the copies anymore, you can run this slide as a group discussion.</p>
13	<p><i>Role Play</i></p> <p>Students act out the steps to take if you are bitten or scratched by a dog or have come into contact with a suspected rabid animal (see Slide 10 for reference). You can assign students to the roles of child, adult, nurse, and dog.</p> <p>You may choose to divide the class into groups for this activity, with the option for them to present their short skits to the whole class or you may choose to have several volunteers come up to the front of the classroom to act out the scenario, with the rest of the class participating as audience members.</p>
14	<p><i>Tatqiaq Learns About Rabies</i></p> <p>You may choose to read this book as a read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, paired reading or independent reading. Some teachers may choose to complete this section of the lesson on a different day or as part of a literacy block. Lesson 3 Worksheets include comprehension questions to go along with the text.</p> <p>Books are available for download at the following links:</p> <p>Inuktitut version (dialect to be confirmed): https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/rabies_story_book_inu.pdf</p> <p>English version: https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/rabies_story_book_en.pdf</p> <p>Printed copies may be requested directly from VWB, available while supplies last.</p>



Extension Activities Ideas

- Ask a community nurse to visit your class to talk about rabies and the rabies vaccine.
- Have students create oral presentations or skits about how to protect themselves, their family members, and their pets from rabies. Include information about what children should do if they have contact with wildlife or if they are bitten by an animal. Present it to the neighbouring classes or at an assembly.
- Create a school display board on the topic of “Rabies Prevention.” The display board(s) could be posted outside the classroom, in the library, or at the school’s entrance.
- Do a “buddy read” with a younger grade, such as Kindergarten or Grade 1: The Grades 5 or 6 students read the *Ulaayu Learns about Rabies* book to their assigned younger reading buddies.

Lesson 4- Humans and Dogs

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe safe behaviour around dogs.
2. Use dog body language to identify how dogs are feeling.

Slides	Suggestions
32	<p><i>Role Play</i></p> <p>Students act out how to be safe around loose dogs in the community (see Slides 28- 31 for reference).</p> <p>Option A- Run this as a whole class activity and narrate for students as they act out the scenarios, ie. “You are walking down the road and two loose dogs are coming from the right. Look left, don’t make eye contact and keep walking slowly on. The dogs are very curious and instead of ignoring you, have come right up. Stand very still with your arms at your sides, and look down. After sniffing you for a few seconds, the dogs get bored and walk off. Continue walking down the road slowly. Etc.”</p>



	Option B- Divide the class into groups of 2- 4 to act out the scenarios on Slides 28-31. Assign students to the roles of children and dogs.
45	<p><i>What Have You Learned?</i></p> <p>If you have kept copies of the KWL group brainstorm or student worksheets from Lesson 1, give students time to complete the last section- "What I Learned". You may choose to run this activity as oral sharing instead, if that works better for your class.</p>

Extension Activities Ideas

- Research project: the history of dogs in Nunavut, including pre-contact and post-contact (role of RCMP, etc.).
- Write a poem about a dog (either yours, someone else's or a fictional dog).
- Read: *Ulaayu Has A Question*, the story of an inquisitive young Inuit girl who learns the lessons of safety around dogs, as well as hearing a story of where the dog comes from.
- Create posters to educate your school or community about safe behaviour around dogs.

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