



BLACKFOOT WINTER COUNTS



"Long forgotten is the proper Blackfoot term. Today it is better known as a winter count, or calendar. This winter count comes from the North Peigan tribe of the Blackfoot nation, and is the longest surviving record of the Blackfoot, dating from 1764-1924." (Paul M. Raczka 1979)

Events were recorded using symbols and pictographs, not words, as Blackfoot language is an oral language.

Winter counts were not just a calendar or a count; Winter Counts are a creative tool to help First Nations remember their complex oral histories.

First snowfall to the next year's snowfall, this was referred to as, "winter" so every year would have different lengths.

"The Winter Count was what was passed from one person to the next to assist our People in knowing and understanding where we had been and what had occurred in the preceding years. It was our recorded history, our method of tracking time. It was maintained as long as there were people around who could remember the significance of events represented by different types of symbols. It was part of the oral history of our People, for the men who took it upon themselves to record history, retained in their memories all the facts relating to each particular symbol; they were then able to relate the story with remarkable accuracy. It was not the chronological order that was important, but the story contained within each symbol that mattered. Each year was marked by a symbol that illustrated the most significant event that had occurred in that particular year, but unlike a European linear record of history, time was recorded in a circle. The figures were painted on a tanned hide starting in the centre and spiraling outward in a counterclockwise direction to establish a chronological order of events." (Kerry M Scott 2002)

LEARNING RESOURCES

Galt Museum Traveling Exhibit - Piikanikoan: Living under a Blackfoot Sky: A Modern Winter Count

<https://www.galtmuseum.com/exhibit/piikanikoan-living-under-a-blackfoot-sky>

A Contemporary Winter Count 2002 Kerry M Scott

https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/thesescanada/vol2/002/MR80215.PDF?oclc_number=890511433

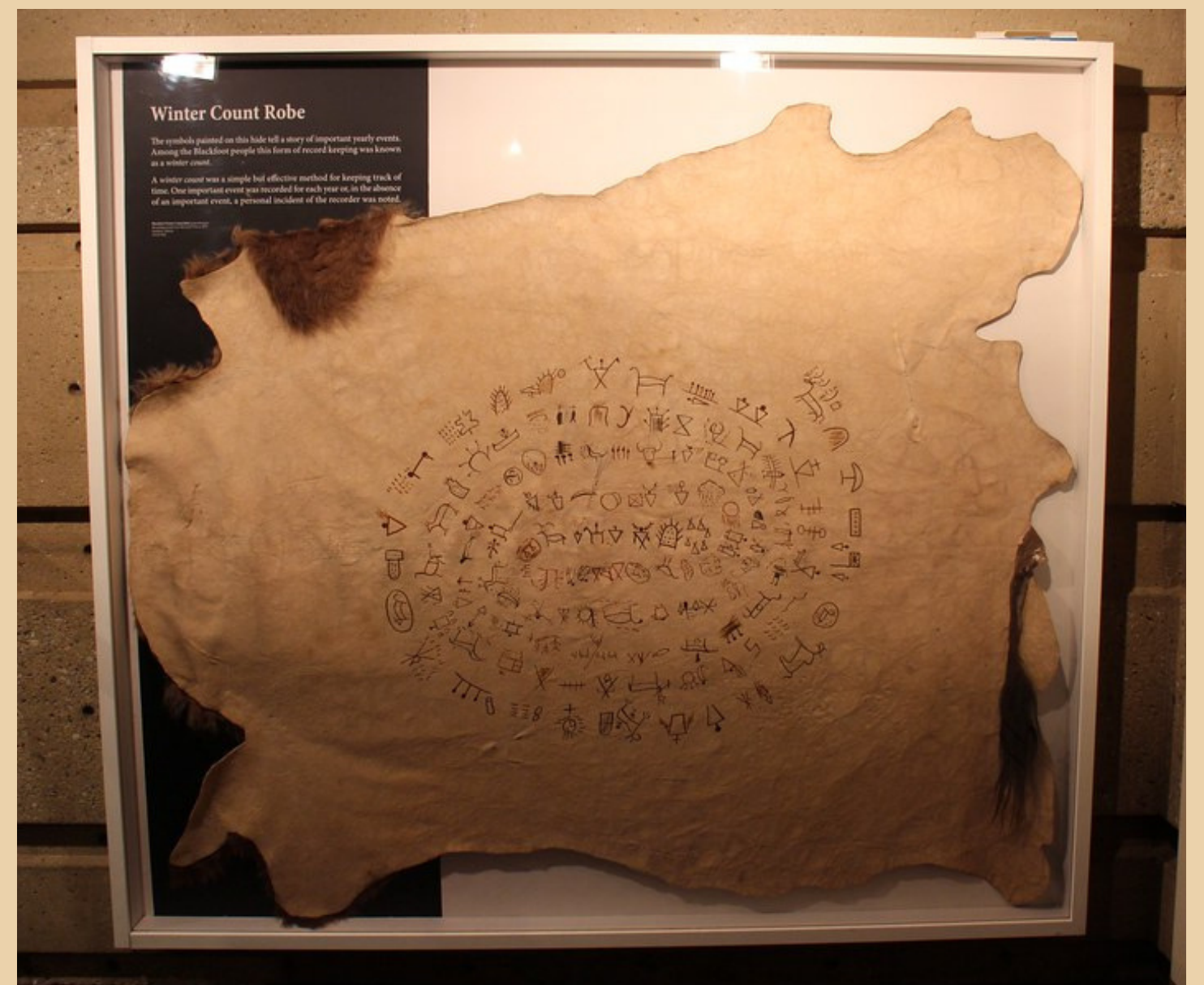
Winter Count A History of the Blackfoot People 1979 Paul M. Raczka

WINTER COUNT VIDEOS



*although three of these videos were created in the united states they still contain information and knowledge about winter counts.

WINTER COUNT EXAMPLES





CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



- Create Your Own Winter Count - National Parks Service <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/create-your-own-winter-count.html>
- As a class create a winter count to represent the school year. At the end of each month spend some time in circle discussing the events of the past month. As a class chooses an event to represent that month and create a pictograph to reflect the month.
- As a class examine an example of a winter count. Discuss together.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grade 2

Organizing Idea - Time: Duration is described and quantified by time.

Guiding Question - How can duration support interpretation of time?

Learning Outcome - Students relate duration to time.

Knowledge - Events can be related to calendar dates.

- Duration can be described using comparative language such as longer or shorter.
- Duration can be measured in nonstandard units, including events, natural cycles, or personal referents.
- Winter counts are First Nations symbolic calendars that record oral traditions and significant events.

Understanding - Time can be communicated in various ways.

- Duration is the measure of an amount of time from beginning to end.

Skills and Procedures - Express significant events using calendar dates.

- Describe the duration between or until significant events using comparative language.
- Describe the duration of events using nonstandard units.
- Relate First Nations' winter counts to duration.

REFERENCES:

<https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca/curriculum/en/c/mat2>