

## Northwest Coast

WORD FOR THE DAY: FAÇADE: the front of a building.

1. Explain that this story is about an American Indian tribe and the way they probably lived about 200 years before they had any contact with Europeans. This is based on the reports of ethnographers George Hunt and Franz Boas and what the tribal people told them from their oral histories. This Indian tribe is the Kwakwaka'wakw (also called Kwakiutl) of the Northwest Coast of North America. The people in the story were settled on the southern tip of Vancouver Island in Canada. The students will learn that this group was different than many Indians they may have learned about.

2. You might put three words on the blackboard with definitions, if a board is available: Kwakwaka'wakw, numaym, and the boy's name Sa'laLEla. You might want to help them repeat or pronounce the words.

3. You might tell them that while the potlatch ceremony is still held among the Northwest Coast Indians, it rarely involves give-a-ways of wealth. About 200 years after this story took place, whites began to come to their region. First arrived the Russians, followed by the French and English. The whites brought diseases with them that the Indians caught and this decimated their tribes. Because of the diseases and later Canadian governmental rules that forbade many of their practices, the Northwest Coast Indians lost most of their people and their wealth. But they still make the beautiful art that they did in the sixteenth century. It can be seen in museums all over the Northwest Coast.

4. The Kwakwaka'wakw had a bilateral form of social organization where genealogy and inheritance could come from both sides of the family. You might alert the students that there will be another story coming up in a few weeks about the Creek Indians to the south. There they will encounter a matrilineal society and learn more about the privileges of women among these people.

5. People visiting Seattle Washington can attend a potlatch. They can sail to an island off Seattle's coast called Blake Island. There they will experience the full potlatch and eat the incredible salmon roasted on cedar planks. They will also hear stories and watch dancers.

6. You might ask the students how they would feel about living a life where they created art every day or how they felt about having so much freedom.

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