Sedna – the Inuit Mistress of the Sea

Subjects: English · Religious Studies · Geography | recommended from age 13 (B1) | Video: 8:25 min



Watch the video
youtu.be/oElZKkhyxBQ

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

A · Before watching

1. Almost nothing grows in the Arctic. What do you think people there lived on? Make a guess.

B · While watching

1. Who wrote down Sedna's story in the 1880s, and why does she have so many different names?

2. What does the stranger in the kayak promise her – and what does she really find when they arrive?

3. Where does Sedna live at the end of the story, and what does she rule over?

4. Why does Sedna keep the animals back, and why can't she comb her own hair?

5. How does the angakkuq help the people when the hunts come back empty?

Useful words

suitor	Bewerber, Verehrer	tangled	verfilzt
fulmar	Eissturmvogel	confess	gestehen
wretched	elend	breathing hole	Atemloch
revenge	Rache	depths	Tiefe

C · Put the story in order

Number the events from 1 to 8 in the order they happen in the video.

	After a year her father comes and flees with her across the sea.
	A shaman travels to her in a trance and combs her hair.
	Many hunters ask to marry her, but she turns them all away.
	She rules over the sea animals in Adlivun.
	A stranger in a kayak sings to her about the land of the birds.
	The seals return to the breathing holes in the ice.
	She realizes that her husband is a fulmar.
	The birds whip up a terrible storm.

D · Think and discuss

1. “Sedna is not a kindly mother goddess, and she isn't a sky god handing down punishments.” What is she instead? Use the video to explain.

2. Why were the rules in this myth a matter of life and death for people in the Arctic? Give two reasons.

E · Words from Inuit tradition

Explain the words and their role in the story.

	Meaning	Role in the story
Adlivun		
Angakkuq		
Nuliajuk		
Kinngait		

F · Get creative

1. Imagine you are the angakkuq. In your exercise book, write a short report about your journey to Sedna: What do you see, what does she say, and what do you tell the community afterwards? (8–10 sentences)