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Signals

Several times we see Miyax studying the wolves. She is trying to read them for clues as to how the wolves communicate with each other. She thinks that if she can imitate these signals, she will be able to talk with them as her father once had done. Her father disappeared before telling her how this was accomplished.

A. What did Amaroq command her to do when he first communicated with her?

B. What signals did he give her to tell her that she had better do this?

Miyax finally concluded that when Amaroq clamps or bites the top of the other wolves' noses, he is asserting himself as leader. To show respect or obedience, the wolves in his pack bit Amaroq's lower jaw or simply rolled on their backs in a signal of submission.

By studying the puppies and adults, Miyax confirms her new language—wolf talk. Then, after she practices with Kapu and Sister, she finally is able to make friends with Amaroq.

To start your class thinking about nonverbal communication, ask a student to “tell” you, without using any words and from a distance, to move to a specific place in the room. After several students have tried, introduce the following activity.

Divide the class into groups of 8 to 20, the size of a wolf pack. Have them decide who will be the leader. Within the group, they are to create a system of communication that does not use any words. Everyone in the group must understand the system and be able to use it. The system should be able to accomplish one or more of the following tasks:

1. direct someone to move to a specific place in the classroom
2. direct someone to place a series of objects in a specific order
3. direct someone to draw several geometric shapes in a specific arrangement

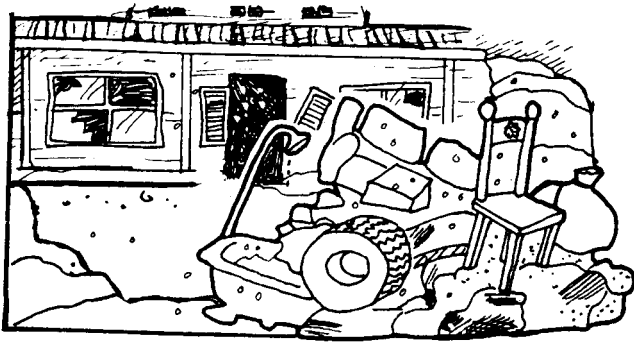
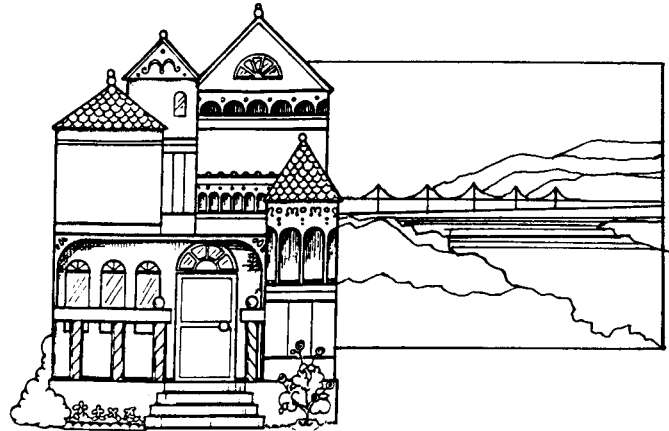
If task 2 or 3 are chosen, show students ahead of time the objects and geometric shapes about which they will be communicating.

Prepare several cards for each task. For Task 1, simply list specific room locations; e.g., closet door, big window, Suki's desk, northwest corner. For Task 2 make drawings (or a list) of the five or more selected objects in a different order on each card. For Task 3 draw the selected geometric shapes in a different arrangement on each card.

When the groups are ready with their signal system, have a group member choose a card at random and direct a groupmate. After everyone has had a turn, compare the signal systems developed by each group. Were there any similarities?

Civilization

Miyax’s confusion must have seemed even greater after she took her trip to Barrow, Alaska. She was going to an outpost which was inhabited by many Americans. These were Amy’s people, people who were civilized and knew only the good life. She often thought of Amy, the big neat house with the arched doorway, Persian rugs on the floor and sunny rooms with windows that looked out onto the bay.



Imagine her dismay, then, when she arrived in Barrow only to see the cluttered streets. Rags and trash were everywhere. The little houses were huddled up against the broken ice fields like a “cluster of lonely birds.” And these were surrounded by old “boats, oil drums, tires, buckets and broken cars.”

Since many tourists come, there is a thriving community of Eskimos who have jobs and make money. But this money does not always bring happiness. Her new father-in-law, for one, periodically is gone for nights at a time on drunken binges. Sometimes he ends up in jail, and other times he returns home full of “evil” to beat his wife. Even here in remote Alaska, civilization brings with it a high price—misery.

Brainstorm the negative impact civilization and its “improvements” have unwittingly brought to today’s society. While there are benefits there are also negative side effects that can take place. Write your ideas here. Share your thoughts with the class.

Use the information gathered through the brainstorming activity to create a poster that will show some industrialized improvement from which we benefit and the negative side effects it brings.