

# Wapos Bay THE ELEMENTS episode 6

## Episode Description

Talon notices that T-Bear is distracted from his training in traditional skills by video games and television. Talon takes his concern to mushom, and Raven suggests a “Survival” experience for T-Bear to learn to value traditions. Mushom likes the idea and the family begins a fund-raising campaign to support an elder-youth camp. The Band’s social and economic fund also contributes to the project. At the camp, T-Bear’s distractions and shortcuts lead to several mishaps and the youth end up on their own, having to prove their resourcefulness and survival skills. Shortcuts to a destination or goal can be a temptation at any age, but T-Bear’s knowledge of electronics and his own video game prove that something good can come from where you least expect it.

## Key themes

- Relationships and responsibilities suffer when young people spend too much time with electronic video games and other mediated experiences. Carrying out responsibilities with care and integrity is an important value and a test of maturity.
- Aboriginal people live in the modern world and families have to contend with entertainment devices that take the youth’s time and attention. Cultural camps offer a retreat from the excess of contemporary life and can counter the alienating effects of a mediated environment that touches even the most remote communities. Aboriginal organizations such as Bands can assist in finding resources to run and operate a cultural camp. Fundraising activities such bottle drives and bingos continue to have a prominent position in Aboriginal life.
- Living in the modern world means negotiating a mediated environment.
- Retreating from the modern world can provide a time for creative thinking, problem solving and writing.



## PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES (Refer to Background Information guide for series’ preview activities)

- 1 ► Introduce the Cree words used in *The Elements*.

### CREE GLOSSARY

- kohkum** – grandmother  
**mushom** – grandfather  
**wapos** – rabbit  
**muskwa** – bear

- 2 ► What responsibilities do you have to your family? In your home? What gets in the way of your responsibilities? What happens when you neglect your responsibilities?
- 3 ► **A)** What is technology? What are examples of traditional Aboriginal technology? Does technology always make our lives easier and better? What types of technology are primarily for entertainment?  
**B)** How can technology begin to gain control of your life?  
**C)** What Aboriginal cultural practices can counter the pervasiveness of electronic video technology that can be addictive?
- 4 ► **A)** What survival skills do you have? When did you have a chance to use them? Have you ever had to live without power and electricity? What did you do? How did you stay warm? How did you eat?  
**B)** Have you ever read stories of survival? Does your family have stories of survival?
- 5 ► When someone uses the phrase “braving the elements,” what do they mean? What are “the elements”?

### VIEW EPISODE

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Introduce and View *Wapos Bay: The Elements*.

### POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

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- 1 ► What is a shortcut? Which characters were taking shortcuts? What was the outcome? Have you ever taken a shortcut when doing a task? What happened?
- 2 ► **A)** Who are the most important people in T-Bear’s life? What was interfering with T-Bear’s relationships and responsibilities? How did T-Bear make up for it?  
**B)** Have you ever been in a similar situation? What happened? Did it prompt you to change? What would you do differently?
- 3 ► What was mushom’s plan to help T-Bear? What steps did they take to put the plan into action? How did Raven help? How did the members of the Wapos Bay community contribute to the project? How did the Cree language help the youth when they needed it?
- 4 ► At the cultural camp, what energy source were they relying on? How did T-Bear deplete the energy source?
- 5 ► Do you think video games are addictive? Do you think T-Bear is addicted to them?

### PROJECT IDEAS

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- The Morris code was introduced to viewers in Episode 4. Refer to *Something to Remember* for the story behind “Morris code.” Develop your own code based on Cree or another language. Explain the code to the class. Write a letter to the class using the code you’ve developed.
- Write about the Wapos Bay youths’ survival story.
- Part of the Canadian writing tradition explores the theme of survival in the harsh Canadian environment. Read excerpts of the literature by Susannah Moody, Margaret Atwood, Sinclair Ross. Read the children’s book *Two Little Girls Lost in the Woods* by Glecia Bear or the original novel, *Christmas at Wapos Bay*, by Dennis Jackson and Jordan Wheeler.
- Create and develop new *Wapos Bay* episodes. Make a storyboard to illustrate them. See the guide from episode 5, *A Time to Learn*, for more information on storyboards.
- Research and graphically represent the amount of time classmates spend with various technologies. Share the results with parent and community members. Have a discussion about the research findings.