



*Ancestors*  
AND  
*Elders*

A STUDY GUIDE

**SHUMKA**  
UKRAINIAN SHUMKA DANCERS

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# Ancestors AND Elders

## ABOUT THE SHOW

*Two cultures.  
Different legacies.  
New connections.*

**Ancestors & Elders...** explores the power of tradition and truth. In a production featuring a cast of Shumka Dancers and multidisciplinary Indigenous artists, we share a story of the first Ukrainian newcomers to Canada, exploring the shared values and respected differences between these hopeful settlers and the First Nations people they encounter in a new land.

Survival, for both Indigenous and Ukrainian immigrant people in Alberta, often meant silence: lost stories and connections between our communities help us all survive tremendous loss and struggle. We use dance to begin to break that silence; to remember those who came before us, the traditions they instilled, and the truths they endured.

**Ancestors & Elders** is directed by Indigenous theatre artist Barry Bilinsky and Shumka's Joseph Hoffman, with a creative team of over 100 Alberta-based designers, artists, story-tellers, musicians and dancers.

# THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Practise being an attentive member of the audience and enjoy the performance in a respectful manner.

Following are guidelines for appropriate behaviour at the theater:

1. Dress for the occasion. Think of going to the theater as a special occasion, because it is a special occasion. Casual attire is perfectly acceptable now, but casual attire does not mean sloppy attire. Be comfortable, but polished.
2. Arrive on time. It shows respect for the performers on the stage and your fellow theater-goers.
3. Go to the restroom before you sit down, or during intermission, but not during the performance. It will be disruptive not only to persons seated in your row and the people around you, but also to the performers on the stage.
4. Unwrap any cough drops or candy before the show begins. The only sounds one should hear at a performance should be coming from the stage.
5. Try not fidget. It can be very distracting to persons sitting around you.
6. Keep your shoes on. Wherever you are in public, unless you are in the park perhaps, your shoes should be kept on.
7. Stay as quiet as possible during a live performance once it has begun. Do not talk or even whisper.
8. Take your hat off if you are wearing one that might block another person's view.
9. Respect the space of the persons on either side of you. Try to stay within the boundaries of your own chair; do not take both arm rests; and do not take multiple shopping bags with you to the theater, unless you leave them at the coat check before you enter the theatre.
10. Turn off your cell phone. As soon as you sit down, turn off your cell phone and put it away.
11. Be appreciative. Do show your appreciation by clapping at the appropriate times and standing when all others around you are standing. A standing ovation is the audience standing up to applaud and show enthusiastic approval or appreciation for the performance.

Adapted from a blog by: Patricia Napier-Fitzpatrick, March 2015



## ABOUT THE GUIDE

Shumka exists to present, promote, preserve, develop and share Canadian-Ukrainian inspired dance as a community leader. In fulfilling our mission, we:

- respect the origins of traditional Ukrainian culture, while integrating the Canadian experience and contemporary community expectations in order to make programs relevant to today's audiences;
- engage diverse communities through performance, education and opportunities for inclusive participation.



The purpose of this **Study Guide** is to connect the production of **Ancestors and Elders** to activities and website links across several curriculum subject areas for teachers of Ukrainian bilingual and elementary school to high school classes in Alberta and beyond.

The Ukrainian Shumka Dancers and multidisciplinary Indigenous artists present a story of the first Ukrainian newcomers to Canada, and several of the educational links provided, further delve into the immigration of Ukrainians to Canada and the challenges they faced. The Indigenous links explore their cultural aspects and the changes they faced with the immigration of Europeans. The shared values and respected differences between these hopeful settlers and the First Nations people they encounter in a new land are some of the activities that teachers can explore with the links that are provided.

## INDIGENOUS RESOURCES

### Education is Our Buffalo

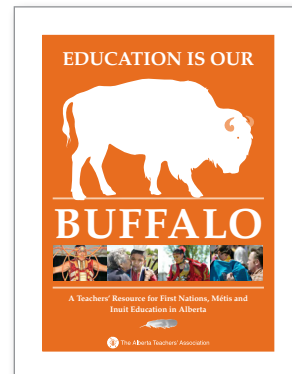
[https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Education%20is%20Our%20Buffalo%20\(PD-80-7\).pdf](https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Education%20is%20Our%20Buffalo%20(PD-80-7).pdf)

An ATA produced resource for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Education in Alberta, includes: Culture, Cultural Protocol, Spirituality and Teachings, Term Definitions, Treaties, Maps, History, Timeline of Historical Events and more.

### First Nations, Inuit and Metis

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/ProgramsandServices/ATALibrary/Pages/Social-Studies.aspx#first%20nations>

Information on Canada's First People, the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, guides to treaties six, seven, eight and ten, Louis Riel Day and more.



### Treaty Resources

[www.fnmieao.com/resources](http://www.fnmieao.com/resources)

Contains information on various treaties, Environment-Indigenous Knowledge and Science, Residential Schools, Social Justice Initiatives, Colonialism, Allyship, Inuit, Metis, First Nations, Four Directions Teaching and Primary Resources.

### EMPOWERING THE SPIRIT Educational Resources to Support Reconciliation

[www.empoweringthespirit.ca/k-12-infusing-indigenous-texts-in-classrooms/](http://www.empoweringthespirit.ca/k-12-infusing-indigenous-texts-in-classrooms/)

Question/answer videos, learning guides, three-levelled slide decks, book talks, and graded annotative book lists

### Reconciliation Education

[www.learnalberta.ca/Home.aspx](http://www.learnalberta.ca/Home.aspx)

Indigenous learning resources for each grade level which are linked to Alberta's Program of Studies.

### First Nations, Metis and Inuit Teacher Resources

[guides.library.ualberta.ca/first-nations-metis-inuit-contexts-in-education/teacher-resources](http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/first-nations-metis-inuit-contexts-in-education/teacher-resources)

Includes multi links to recommended student books, relevant readings, treaties, residential schools, teacher resource, lesson plans.

## *Picture Books, Junior, Intermediate and Young Adult Fiction*

### The Canadian Children's Book Centre Theme Guide: Indigenous Reading

[www.bookcentre.ca/theme-guide-indigenous-reading](http://www.bookcentre.ca/theme-guide-indigenous-reading)

An annotative bibliography of children's First Nations, Metis and Inuit books to assist in teaching themes (i.e. Reconciliation)

### From Sea to Sea: Celebrating Indigenous Picture Books

[www.ibby-canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FromSeaToSeaToSea\\_Ibby\\_Catalogue\\_Final\\_Digital.pdf](http://www.ibby-canada.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FromSeaToSeaToSea_Ibby_Catalogue_Final_Digital.pdf)

An annotative collection of Indigenous picture books written by Indigenous authors and frequently illustrated by Indigenous artists. The books reflect historical and current themes.

### Indigenous Storybooks

[www.indigenoustorybooks.ca/about/resources/general/](http://www.indigenoustorybooks.ca/about/resources/general/)

In-depth look at Indigenous stories, their framework, curriculum resources K-9, books, articles and blogs, authenticity and resource evaluation (criteria and guidelines)

## Activities/Projects and More

[www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1302868012055/1534942371387](http://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1302868012055/1534942371387)

Compiled by the government of Canada - exercises, projects, activities for students aged 4 to 16. Includes: The Learning Circle, People and History, Fact Sheets, Game Lesson Plans, Publications, National Indigenous People Days and more.

[www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2016/09/10/lesson-plans-and-resources-for-orange-shirt-day/](http://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2016/09/10/lesson-plans-and-resources-for-orange-shirt-day/)

Lesson plans and resources to help plan Orange Shirt Day at school.

[www.kairosblanketexercise.org/kairos-blanket-exercise-sad-journey-indigenous-history/](http://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/kairos-blanket-exercise-sad-journey-indigenous-history/)

An explanation of what takes place during a blanket exercise.

[www.pathoftheelders.com/teachers](http://www.pathoftheelders.com/teachers)

Teacher lesson plans, resources for student game activities for grades 4 (education-canoeing) through grade 10 (self-government negotiating game).

Each game activity ends with a reflection follow up.

[www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PUB-LFP-K-3-In-our-Own-Words-for-Web.pdf](http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PUB-LFP-K-3-In-our-Own-Words-for-Web.pdf)

Informs how to bring authentic First Peoples to the K-3 classroom.

Page 9 has information on how to determine if a resource is authentic.



### Edmonton Catholic Schools

- [www.ecsd.net/AboutUs/The-District/Documents/sbfile/180925/JourneyofTruthandReconciliation-18.pdf](http://www.ecsd.net/AboutUs/The-District/Documents/sbfile/180925/JourneyofTruthandReconciliation-18.pdf)  
Each school within the District shares activities and information about Indigenous Learning that takes place in each school.
- [www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/Indigenous-Learning/Pages/Council-of-Elders.aspx](http://www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/Indigenous-Learning/Pages/Council-of-Elders.aspx)  
Elder request information
- [www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/Indigenous-Learning/Pages/Cultural-Instructors.aspx](http://www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/Indigenous-Learning/Pages/Cultural-Instructors.aspx)  
Workshop and Class Presentation Information

### Greater St. Albert's Catholic Schools

- [www.gsacrd.ab.ca/parents/first-nations-metis-and-inuit/school-and-teaching-resources](http://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/parents/first-nations-metis-and-inuit/school-and-teaching-resources)  
Greater St. Albert School District share their three-year student focused plan for Indigenous learning.

### Gord Downie and Secret Path Learning Resources

- [www.secretpath.ca](http://www.secretpath.ca)  
Includes a Secret Path musical video, an animated film adaptation of Chanie Wenjack and Gord Downie visiting Chanie's family.
- [www.downiewenjack.ca/our-work/secret-path-learning-resources](http://www.downiewenjack.ca/our-work/secret-path-learning-resources)  
Contains a truth and reconciliation model, lesson plans for early, middle and senior years, lesson plans and art work, junior high lesson plans

### In Our Own Words: Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content to the K-3 Classroom

- [www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PUB-LFP-K-3-In-our-Own-Words-for-Web.pdf](http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PUB-LFP-K-3-In-our-Own-Words-for-Web.pdf)  
This link provides an array of ideas and suggestions that can be applied in whole or in part to incorporate First Peoples content into a K-3 classroom. By following the suggestions provided here and remaining open to respectful dialogue and consultation with members of the local First Peoples communities, teachers will benefit their students and expand their own comfort with this material.

## Indigenous Edmonton Directory

[www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/IRO-Directory.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/IRO-Directory.pdf)

The Indigenous Community is a reflection of the diversity and multifaceted population which calls Edmonton one of their homes.

The Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton have roots that are deeply sown and well-traveled throughout the whole of the City and extend from the past, through to the present, and will continue well into the future.

This Directory has built upon the work initiated by the Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee to collaboratively reproduce, with communities, this directory.

## Terminology Document

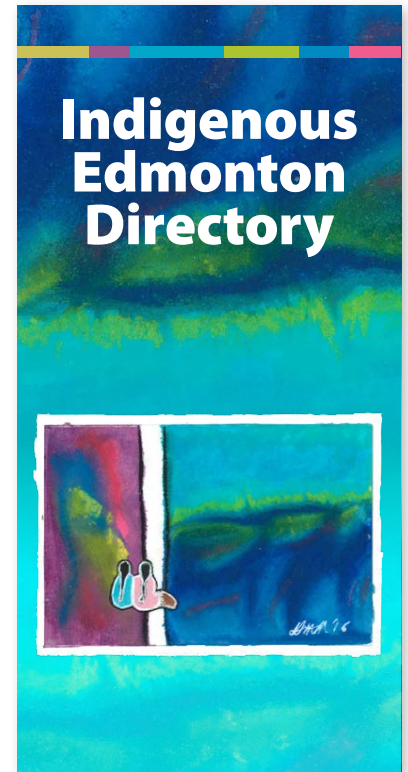
[www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16a%20-%20Terminology.pdf](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16a%20-%20Terminology.pdf)

Educators always want to be respectful in their conversations and working relationships with people of a different culture. This includes using the culturally appropriate terminology when working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit or engaging in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education.

## Treaty and Metis Land Map

[www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-17c-TreatyMap.pdf](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-17c-TreatyMap.pdf)

Acknowledging Land and People is a publication of the Alberta Teachers' Association Walking Together Project intended to support certificated teachers on their learning journey to meet the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Foundational Knowledge competency in the Teaching Quality Standard.





## UKRAINIAN RESOURCES

### *Classroom Resources*

[www.collectionscanada.ca/settlement/kids/021013-2171-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/settlement/kids/021013-2171-e.html)

Gives background information on the History, Daily Life and Culture. The Books and Links Section (scroll down to Ukraine), provides a list of age-appropriate books that are divided into Fiction and Non-Fiction.

[www.learnalberta.ca/content/sscanic/html/ukrainevillageimagescollection.html](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/sscanic/html/ukrainevillageimagescollection.html)

A collection of photos depicting Ukrainian pioneer life. Photos were taken at the Ukrainian village.



[www.ualberta.ca/kule-folklore-centre/research/online-resources](http://www.ualberta.ca/kule-folklore-centre/research/online-resources)

The Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore has a wealth of on-line projects and links directly related to Ukrainian folklore and culture. Great selection of websites, videos, and exhibit information. Excellent resources, personal with expertise, in many aspects of Ukrainian culture.

[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301/ic/can\\_digital\\_collections/pasttopresent/opportunity/ukrainian\\_settlers.html](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301/ic/can_digital_collections/pasttopresent/opportunity/ukrainian_settlers.html)

Discusses the eras in which Ukrainians came to the Prairies of Canada. Provides quick links to Ukrainian Immigration, Peasant Perceptions, The Government and Land Selection, Kinship, Society and Land Selection, The Edna-Star Settlement, Ivan Pylypow and Wasyl Eleniak.

[www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=3089&pid=0](http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=3089&pid=0)

Gives information about the Ukrainian Pioneer home located in Elk Island National Park. Reference is made to: Heritage Value, Historical Value, Architectural Value and Environmental Value.

[www.tc2.ca/sourcedocs/uploads/history\\_docs/Immigration/conditions-for-early-ukrainian-immigrants.pdf](http://www.tc2.ca/sourcedocs/uploads/history_docs/Immigration/conditions-for-early-ukrainian-immigrants.pdf)

This is a letter written on May 15, 1897, by W. F. McCreary, complaining about the arrival of Ukrainian Immigrants.

[www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires\\_de\\_chez\\_nous-community\\_stories/pm\\_v2.php?id=story\\_line\\_index&fl=0&lg=English&ex=464&pos=1](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_stories/pm_v2.php?id=story_line_index&fl=0&lg=English&ex=464&pos=1)

Personal, heart-felt true stories of life experiences told by Ukrainian Immigrants. They were all part of the first wave of immigration to Canada, 1891-1914.

[www.ualberta.ca/canadian-institute-of-ukrainian-studies/publications-and-e-resources](http://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-institute-of-ukrainian-studies/publications-and-e-resources)

Located at the University of Alberta, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies has a wealth of information on historical and current Ukrainian events and issues. Recommended for high school and older students.

[www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ukrainian-internment-in-canada](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ukrainian-internment-in-canada)

Information of the Internment of Ukrainian Immigrants in Canada during World War II.

## YouTube Resources

### Teach Me to Dance

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=y mh03NxLNAk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y mh03NxLNAk)

Lesia teaches her English-Canadian friend, Sarah, a Ukrainian dance that they are to perform at their school's Christmas pageant. However, Sarah's father's intense prejudice against Ukrainian immigrants prevents the girls from performing the dance. In spite of this, the girls maintain their strong friendship and meet in a barn to celebrate Christmas Day together.

Side note: Honorary Lifetime Member John Pichlyk plays the role of Lesia's brother.

### New Home in The West – Ukrainian pioneer/immigrants in Canada

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMnqLR-y6bU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMnqLR-y6bU)

The video shows early Ukrainian immigrant life including how they used handmade tools and explains how they built their first homes.

### Heritage Minute – Ukrainian Internment in Canada During World War II

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAX5NgEe7ro](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAX5NgEe7ro)

The plight of Ukrainian immigrant pioneers during WW II internment camps.

## Student Books

### Kohkum's Babushka: A Magical Metis/Ukrainian Tale, Marion Mutala

[www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol24/no29/kohkumsbabushka.html](http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol24/no29/kohkumsbabushka.html)

As Natalia lays down on the grass on a very warm day, she feels Baba's brightly coloured babushka wrap around her head. She finds herself on the Canadian prairies listening to a story Kohkum is telling her granddaughter Paulette, about why she is wearing a babushka. As Kohkum's story unfolds, Natalia (who is invisible) learns about a friendly relationship between a Ukrainian Immigrant family on their way to their new homestead and Kohkum's ancestors. Both families share their cultural traditions with one another, and they come to realize that although there are differences, there are also many similarities between the two cultures. At the end of the book, there is a section called "Cultural Connections" that provides ideas for classroom activities.



### Baba's Babushka: A Magical Ukrainian Wedding, Marion Mutala

[www.ynwp.ca/books/17-baba-s-babushka-wedding-a-magical-ukrainian-wedding.html](http://www.ynwp.ca/books/17-baba-s-babushka-wedding-a-magical-ukrainian-wedding.html)

Young Natalia puts on one of baba's babushkas and experience a magical journey back in time to learn about Ukrainian cultural wedding traditions.

### Baba's Babushka: A Magical Ukrainian Easter, Marion Mutala

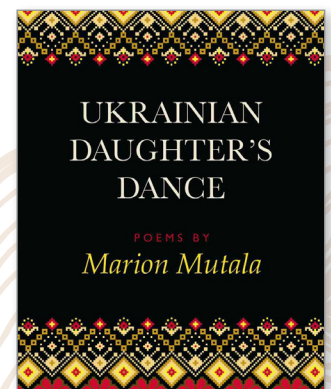
[www.saskmade.ca/products/babas-babushka-a-magical-ukrainian-easter?variant=29509339529](http://www.saskmade.ca/products/babas-babushka-a-magical-ukrainian-easter?variant=29509339529)

Natalia wears another one of baba's babushkas and experiences another journey back in time to learn about Ukrainian cultural Easter traditions.

### Baba's Babushka: A Magical Ukrainian Christmas, Marion Mutala

[www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/babas-babushka-christmas-a-magical/9781894431538-item.html](http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/babas-babushka-christmas-a-magical/9781894431538-item.html)

Natalia wears yet another one of baba's babushkas and again experiences a journey back in time where she learns about cultural Ukrainian traditions.



**Ukrainian Daughter's Dance, Marion Mutala**

[www.inanna.ca/catalog/ukrainian-daughters-dance/](http://www.inanna.ca/catalog/ukrainian-daughters-dance/)

A selection of poems that document a Ukrainian woman's life journey on the Canadian prairies and explore issues of immigrant identity.

**A Prairie Boy's Winter, William Kurelek**

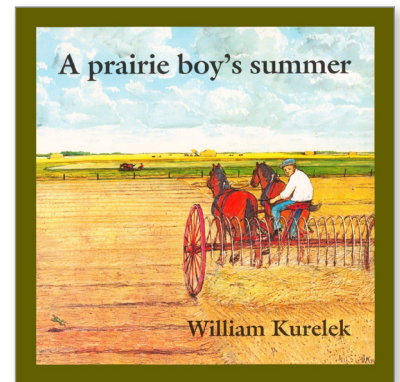
[www.lookingglassreview.com/books/a-prairie-boy's-winter/](http://www.lookingglassreview.com/books/a-prairie-boy's-winter/)

A child's life on a cold prairie farm, during the long cold months of winter.

**A Prairie Boy's Summer, William Kurelek**

[www.lookingglassreview.com/books/a-prairie-boys-summer/](http://www.lookingglassreview.com/books/a-prairie-boys-summer/)

Describes a boy's difficult life experiences during the summer months during the time of the Depression.



**Lesia's Dream, Laura Langston**

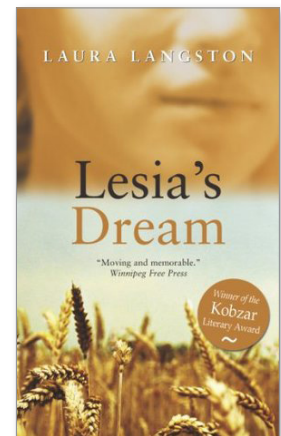
[www.lauralangston.com/books/lesias-dream/](http://www.lauralangston.com/books/lesias-dream/)

Although sad to leave baba behind, Lesia looks forward to a life of freedom and prosperity on the Canadian prairies. However, the harsh realities of building and maintaining a homestead are a far cry from the life Lesia dreams of living.

**Silver Threads, Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch**

[www.calla.com/wordpress/silver-threads-teachers-guide/](http://www.calla.com/wordpress/silver-threads-teachers-guide/)

Anna and Ivan leave the hardships in Ukraine for a better life on the Canadian Prairies. Together they endure many difficulties building their homestead. Suddenly, Ivan ends up at an Internment Camp during WWI. Life becomes even more difficult for Anna. This site provides a teacher's guide to accompany the reading of the book and a variety of other worthy activities.



## Pyrohy Lunch

**Taste of Ukraine**

[www.tasteofukraine.com](http://www.tasteofukraine.com)

Taste of Ukraine will provide your class/school with a delicious Ukrainian hot lunch. Although open to all schools and grades, it is a perfect fit for the Alberta Social Studies Great Three Curriculum in which Ukraine is one of the countries studied in great detail. This includes food and culture, of course.

## Cultural Arts and Crafts

**ACUA - Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts**

[directory.acuarts.ca](http://directory.acuarts.ca)

Contact the Alberta Council for Ukrainian Arts to have an artist teach or present a variety of Ukrainian Cultural Arts.

[www.acuarts.ca/pdf/ACUA\\_Kids\\_Legends\\_of\\_the\\_Pysanka.pdf](http://www.acuarts.ca/pdf/ACUA_Kids_Legends_of_the_Pysanka.pdf)

The Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts also has a children's page that tells of Pysanka legends, symbols and design.

## Field trips

### Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village

[www.ukrainianvillage.ca/programs-experiences](http://www.ukrainianvillage.ca/programs-experiences)

Students have a chance to see pioneer life through the eyes of child. They interact with role players to do various tasks. Programs are tailored to specific grade levels. Christmas, Easter, and Harvest are samples of themes available. Guided and self-guided tours can also be booked.

### UCWLC Museum, St. Josaphat Cathedral

[www.stjosaphat.ab.ca/ucwlc-museum](http://www.stjosaphat.ab.ca/ucwlc-museum)

Requests and appointments can be made to view and learn about historical and cultural artifacts.

### Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch

[www.umcalberta.org](http://www.umcalberta.org)

Museum's collection includes: Fine Art, Ukrainian regional and diasporic textiles, pysanky, wood carvings, ceramics, toys and Religious Artifacts. See Visitor Information page for availability and details.

### St. George Ukrainian Catholic Parish

[www.ukrainianstgeorge.com](http://www.ukrainianstgeorge.com)

Contact Father Danylo Kuc to explain and inform about the beautiful icons in the church.

## Student Matinees

[www.shumka.com/performances-programs/student-matinees/](http://www.shumka.com/performances-programs/student-matinees/)

The Ukrainian Shumka Dancers continue to tell stories through dance. One needs to check our website to find out when a matinee is being offered. Study guides for performances are available for most performances.

## Shumka Promotional Videos

### Video - initial exploration of the piece in dance/movement/music

<http://www.vimeo.com/239858124>

### 5 Minute promo video

[www.vimeo.com/305131604](http://www.vimeo.com/305131604)

### 2018 Interview with spoken word artist Anna Marie Sewell about the collaborative process

[www.vimeo.com/261337713](http://www.vimeo.com/261337713)

### 2018 Interview with Indigenous contemporary dancer, Ayla Modeste

[www.vimeo.com/266208282](http://www.vimeo.com/266208282)

### 2018 Interview with Running Thunder Artistic Director and dancer, Adrian Lachance

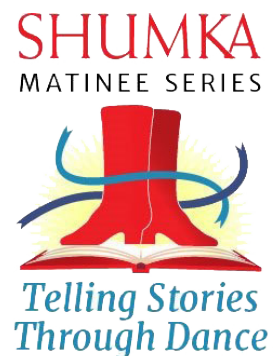
[www.vimeo.com/265792136](http://www.vimeo.com/265792136)

### 2018 Interview with Visual Artist Lana Whiskeyjack

[www.vimeo.com/263189594](http://www.vimeo.com/263189594)

### 2018 Interview with Visual Artist Svitlana Kravchuk

[www.vimeo.com/263947653](http://www.vimeo.com/263947653)



## ABOUT THE UKRAINIAN SHUMKA DANCERS

Established in Edmonton in 1959, the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers is Canada's only professional Ukrainian dance company. Shumka presents full-length, dance-theatre touring productions as well as intimate concert repertoire across the country and around the world. Seen by millions on international television broadcasts, the company has presented command performances for Prime Ministers, Presidents, and Queen Elizabeth II, and has performed alongside the likes of Andrea Bocelli and Julie Andrews. Along with Alberta Ballet and Edmonton Opera, Shumka is honoured to be a resident company of the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium.

Almost 60 years of performance history has shaped Shumka's signature music and dance style. While maintaining deep respect for its heritage, Shumka continually challenges conventional boundaries in order to define the experience of Ukrainian dance in the context of today's society.

Shumka's current focus lies in the area of artistic collaboration and creation. The company is honoured to work with guest artists including dancers from Virsky – Ukraine's State Folk Dance Company – as well as The Kyiv Ballet in *Shumka's Nutcracker* every December.

Shumka recently partnered with the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America on the *Kobzari* project, featuring Shumka's *Kobzar* along with the Chorus, in joint performances by the two renowned ensembles. *Kobzari* was presented in Toronto, Windsor and Edmonton in spring, 2017, celebrating the works and words of Ukraine's national poet, Taras Shevchenko.

In 2018, Shumka premiered *Ancestors & Elders*. In a production featuring a cast of Shumka Dancers together with multidisciplinary Indigenous artists, *Ancestors & Elders* shares a story of the first Ukrainian newcomers to Canada exploring the shared values – as well as respected differences – between Ukrainians and First Nations people of Treaty 6 territory.

Shumka is based out of the Shumka Dance Centre nestled between the Ice District and Brewery District of downtown Edmonton.

[www.shumka.com](http://www.shumka.com)



## HOW TO BECOME A SHUMKA DANCER

The process of becoming a Ukrainian Shumka Dancer involves a combination of talent, effort, dedication and passion. It takes many years of hard work to acquire the skills and technique necessary to dance and perform at this level.

Before auditioning for companies such as Shumka, dancers have often trained in various other disciplines including ballet, tap, lyrical, contemporary and modern dance in addition to years of Ukrainian dance training.



## SHUMKA SCHOOL OF DANCE

Established in 1989, the Shumka School of Dance has trained thousands of young dancers to help them achieve a broad dance-focused skill set, performance excellence, and a strong work ethic. With its family-like atmosphere, the School is a welcoming and safe place for youth to establish and accomplish their artistic dreams. It is also a place where they are given the tools and the experience to become future community leaders and builders.

The Shumka School provides Ukrainian regional, character, RAD ballet and contemporary dance training to students from 3 years of age and up. Offering Canada's only Ukrainian dance curriculum, dancers move through progressive levels of training, choreography and performance opportunities under high-level instruction. In addition, most of Shumka's professional productions incorporate students from the School as support or focus characters.



The School performs at numerous community events including festivals, special events, and in-care facilities throughout the year. In addition to providing valuable on-stage experience for the dancers, it is an opportunity for them to give back to their community.

The Shumka School's popular Junior Instructor Program trains future faculty while giving dedicated youth the ability to lead and inspire. Each summer, an array of Camp offerings provides training and educational opportunities for students from around the globe.

Currently over 200 students take part in the Shumka School and its programs, many aspiring to be future members of the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers and to contribute to the ongoing presentation and development of the art form.

Studia Shumka – a junior performing ensemble focused on continued dancer training – is a new bridging program that helps young dancers transition from the School to the professional company. Studia officially began in September 2018 and is open to graduates of the Shumka Syllabus and other dancers interested in a future in Shumka.

[www.shumka.com/school-of-dance](http://www.shumka.com/school-of-dance)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Shumka's Educational Committee for their assistance with this guide:

- Darlene Atamaniuk
- Anna Fialka – St. Matthew Elementary School
- Terry Mucha

