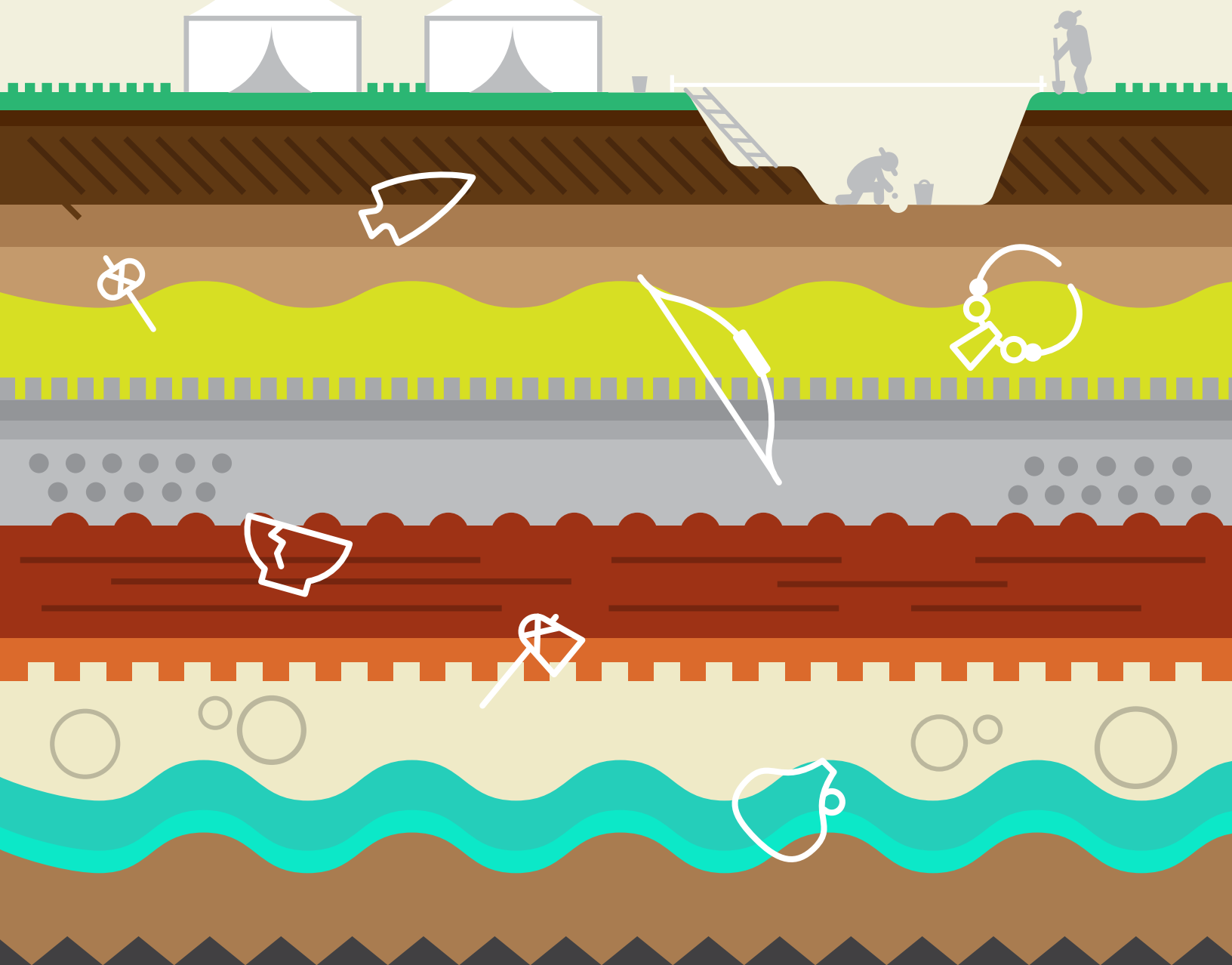
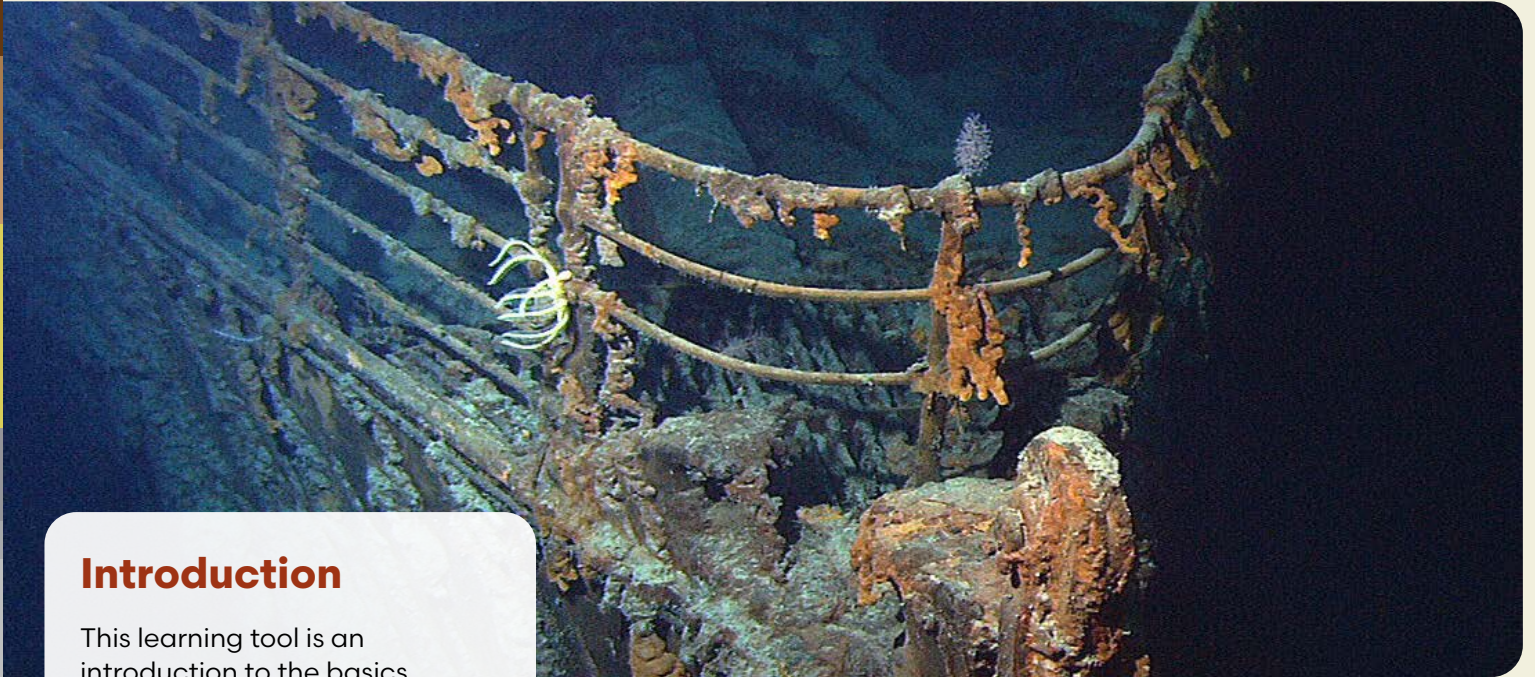




Archaeology in Canada



Section 1: Introduction



Introduction

This learning tool is an introduction to the basics of archaeology. It includes practical information on what archaeology is and how we use it, and activities to help us understand how it enhances our historical knowledge, influences our perceptions of history, and shapes historical narratives.

Learning about archaeology can help students appreciate how important and complex the process of uncovering historical sites can be. Archaeology is more than digging up an artifact; it is interpreting the artifact's use and connecting it to the bigger picture. Archaeology can help support or disprove historical narratives. It can also play a role in supporting histories that have been disregarded, purposefully forgotten, or misconstrued. This is particularly important in Canada, where Indigenous experiences and oral histories have often been ignored. Along with biased colonial narratives, this willful exclusion has long obstructed our education on many aspects of Canadian history.

Bow of the RMS Titanic photographed in 2004 by the ROV Hercules (Courtesy of NOAA, Institute for Exploration, University of Rhode Island/ Wikimedia Commons).

Message to Teachers

This tool is meant to give teachers and students a framework to understand archaeology as a historical tool, and its relationship with Canadian history. Students are encouraged to think critically about their historical understandings and the communities they inhabit.

We encourage teachers to be sensitive to both individual and group dynamics to ensure the classroom remains a safe environment for all learners. The classroom climate should encourage students to relate to one another in positive and respectful ways. With your students, co-create ground rules for considerate and inclusive discussions, and address harmful language and ideas immediately. Please consult your school support systems for additional support, if needed.

The activities included here may be used in sequence or can stand alone. Additional free, bilingual resources on archaeology in Canada are available on [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#). Historica Canada's education guides are part of a collaborative process that engages history educators, academic historians, and community stakeholders in content creation and lesson planning. This guide was developed in collaboration and consultation with Scott Masters and Dr. Kristen Barnett, and produced with the support of the Government of Canada.

Historica Canada offers programs that you can use to explore, learn, and reflect on our history, and what it means to be Canadian. This tool is aligned with current Canadian curricula and has been produced for use in middle and high school classrooms.



Terminology

Some of the activities in this guide require advanced reading skills. Consider pairing language learners with stronger readers. Teachers may want to consider pre-teaching important words or concepts to help students understand the big ideas involved in these activities.

The term **Canada** is used in this guide to indicate the traditional Indigenous lands and former French and British colonies we now refer to as Canada. This guide uses primarily contemporary language to refer to geographical areas; teachers may want to use the terminology of the time for their students.

Chronology in traditional archaeology is divided into “prehistoric” and “historic” periods. The “prehistoric” period refers to anything before the arrival of European settlers, extending back tens of thousands of years ago. However, many Indigenous peoples and archaeologists have come to prefer the terms “pre-colonial” or “pre-contact” to correct the misconception that history did not exist before European presence. The “historic” period refers to the time from the arrival of European settlers to the present. The transition from “prehistoric” to “historic” took time, so the term “protohistoric” is often used to describe this transition period.

Indigenous peoples in Canada were incorrectly referred to as “Indians” by colonial European settlers. While “Indian” is not an appropriate term to describe Indigenous peoples, it is still used in legal definitions. Similarly, terms such as “Paleoindian” and “Paleoeskimo” are used in archaeology to refer to early Indigenous populations in North America, despite growing calls to replace this language. “Aboriginal” is a political and legal umbrella term that is used in the Constitution and includes status and non-status First Nations, as well as Métis and Inuit. “Aboriginal” and “Indigenous” are often used interchangeably, but Indigenous is preferable, and is used in this guide. Cultural or Nation-based specificity is preferred whenever possible.



Bottles excavated at the Niagara Apothecary, at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario (Day of Archaeology/[Wikimedia Commons](#)).



Rock formations in the Milk River Valley at Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park in Alberta (Dreamstime.com/James Gabbert/ID 309170103).



In 2022, a gold coin was found on the coast of Newfoundland. Plucked from the beach, it dates to 1420s England, which meant that it was already 70 years old and out of circulation by the time John Cabot arrived on Canada’s shores. How it got here remains a mystery.

Medieval coin: Quarter noble of Henry VI dating to 1422 - 1427, cropped (Somerset County Council, Ciorstaidh Hayward Trevarthen, 2015-04-30/[Wikimedia Commons](#)).

What is Archaeology?

Archaeology is a social science that uses evidence, including material remains (physical evidence left by humans), to grow our understanding of past human life. Archaeologists also use written documents and collaborate with communities to incorporate knowledge, expertise, and oral histories. Whenever possible, this is used in combination with information that comes from physical remains found at locations where people lived, worked, visited, and were buried long ago. Archaeology can be used to investigate any time period. There are archaeologists that specialize in the recent past, and those who study human evolution and periods dating to millions of years ago.

Archaeological remains may be as large as a town or as small as a bead. Since organic materials (plant and animal matter) don't usually preserve well over time, the artifacts (objects) that archaeologists study are often made of materials like stone or clay, which are more durable. In the right conditions, such as dry caves, underground sites, or permafrost, we are more likely to find plant and animal materials. Through careful study, archaeologists can discover a lot about peoples' economic, social, religious, and political lives. For example, diets can be reconstructed from faunal (animal) and floral (plant) remains, while house structures, rock alignments, [pictographs \(rock paintings\)](#), and [petroglyphs \(rock carvings\)](#) can tell us about homes, use of resources, and social, familial, and religious life.



Pictograph in Lake Superior Provincial Park, Ontario (Dreamstime.com/John Twynman/ID 255571328).



Wanuskewin Heritage Park dig site in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (Jeffery J. Nichols/[Wikimedia Commons](#)).

Archaeological Sites

An archaeological site is any place where the material remains of ancient human activity are found, whether by chance or through a deliberate search. While a lot can be learned from studying surface sites, many archaeological sites are underground. Investigations of buried sites can be conducted using specialized equipment, core samples, and controlled excavation. An archaeological dig often relies on the use of small handheld tools to slowly and carefully remove thin layers of soil. The exact position of everything found, including soil, artifacts, belongings, and other features, is then recorded.

Some of the questions archaeologists aim to answer include whether the site was used once or repeatedly? Was it used by the same or different groups of people? When? What did life look like here?



Archaeological dig at the Ontario Student Classics Conference, 2005 (France3470/[Wikimedia Commons](#)).

Teacher-led Introductory Activity

Create a scavenger hunt in the classroom using 5-10 images depicting artifacts or other clues from an archaeological site of your choosing. As an optional measure, assign select students a “tool” or “skill” (e.g., linguist, entomologist), which must be used in order to access specific clues.

1. Have your class search for clues to determine what kind of site they are looking at. Once they have located the clues, have students describe what they can about the site or society. Ask students: What do you know for sure? What are you making guesses about?
Tip: Hold back some clues – archaeologists don’t always find things at the same time!
2. Reveal the site in question. Ask students: What did you get right? What information was, or still is, missing? Was it easy or hard to make observations and guesses? Were you correct, or close to correct? How do you know? What kind of information or language did you use to come to your decisions?
3. Have students refer to the inferences they made from your clues. Have them consider: When making these guesses, what factors were you considering? Do you think your guesses reveal more about the objects or about the society or civilization as a whole? Did you manage to make guesses that helped reveal something about a particular object, or did your inference apply to a society or civilization as a whole? What does this reveal about the challenges archaeologists face?

Modification: Try bringing the hunt outdoors! Students can look for images set up in advance, or explore what’s already in their environment.

Archaeology in Canada

Canadian archaeology was developed in the early 19th century, when the tools and methods of Western archaeology were still being worked out. At the time, many sites, including sacred burial grounds, were destroyed for the “exotic” objects they might contain (this destructive practice is known as relic-hunting).

After Confederation in 1867, interest in Canada’s pre-colonial past continued to develop. The post-Confederation era was a period of intensive archaeological collection. Photography had become a new means of keeping records. Local nature, science, and history societies grew, and encouraged provincial governments to establish museums and other educational programs promoting archaeology. Canadian archaeologists began doing field work, describing and interpreting results, and setting research standards.

In the 20th century, the study of archaeology became more widely available, and the field grew. New

techniques and dating methods were discovered, regional cultural histories were defined, and a basic (if not necessarily accurate) outline of the pre-colonial history of Canada was established. The late 1900s also saw record industrial growth in Canada, which increased concerns from the public about environmental preservation. As a result, archaeologists and heritage activists across the country successfully urged governments for legislation to protect heritage sites at risk of destruction.

In the 21st century, archaeology continues to evolve. Indigenous peoples, who have long fought for the right to become more involved in the excavation and study of their own heritage, are finally being recognized. In the Northwest Territories, archaeological permits require the permission of the nearest First Nation; in southern Canada, there has been a rise in land-claims and self-government treaties, nearly all of which assert Indigenous sovereignty over cultural matters such as archaeology.

Indigenous Archaeology

Indigenous peoples have long been voicing concerns about non-Indigenous archaeologists and the destruction, collection, and control of their Indigenous pasts. Studying Indigenous pasts without the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the present is a problem that Indigenous archaeology aims to correct. Developed in part to support better practices, Indigenous archaeology was introduced as a set of approaches to archaeology with, by, and for Indigenous peoples. It brings together Indigenous peoples and archaeologists through partnerships and collaboration.

Indigenous archaeology is divided into two categories: Indigenous-centered archaeology, which is done by non-Indigenous scholars and archaeologists in collaboration with Indigenous communities, and Indigenous archaeology, which is led by Indigenous scholars and archaeologists. Both work to understand the past in ways that consider multiple perspectives and integrate Indigenous science, knowledge, experiences, and values into archaeological methods and analysis.

Recent developments include combining Indigenous and Western sciences – recognizing and including methods from the thousands of years of observations, questions, and conclusions that Indigenous peoples conducted long before the development of Western science.

The Scientific Method

Archaeology relies on the Western scientific method, a process in which you:

1. Make an observation
2. Ask a question or form a hypothesis
3. Conduct research and test the hypothesis
4. Analyze the data to come to a conclusion

Sometimes an archaeologist might come up with a hypothesis first, and then search for observable data to prove or disprove it.

Archaeological excavation of an Indigenous site on the north shore of Lake Consecon in Prince Edward County, Ontario, 1956 (Flossey Ibey/HC01994A/Community Archives of Belleville & Hastings County/Wikimedia Commons).

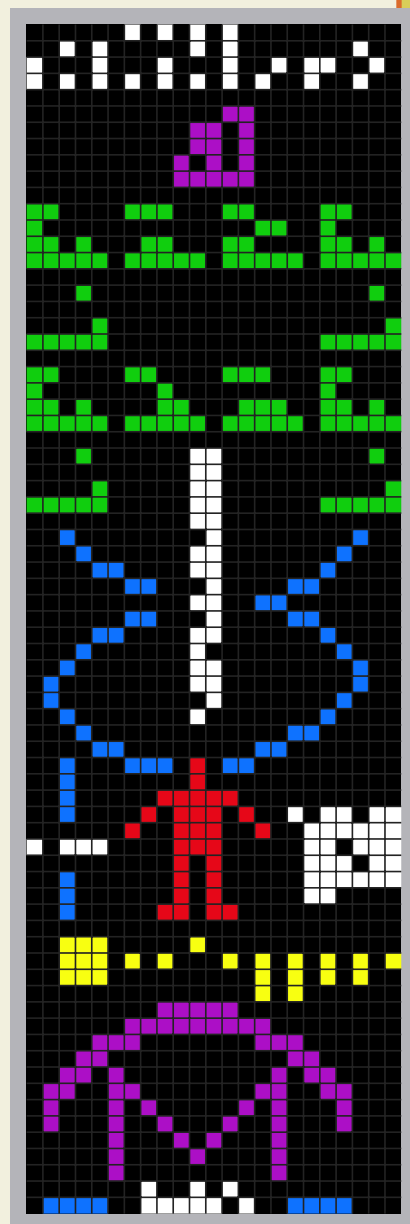


Activity: Subjective History

One of the many difficulties archaeologists and historians face is avoiding bias or jumping to conclusions. Take a moment to reflect on your life, and elements that you feel are familiar, like your family dynamics, social norms at your school, the layout of your local mall, money, perhaps the kinds of local produce you can find in the summer, or some basic laws where you live. Many of these things may seem matter of fact, but are actually subjective to your lived experiences. If you were to move to another part of the world, somewhere you have never been before, how many of these things would be familiar? What resources would you use to learn more? In some ways, studying the past is comparable. It is important to keep an open mind and not assign your own subjective values without evidence.

1. As a class, define and discuss objective vs. subjective language, starting with a list of traits that fall under each category. How might subjective language be a disadvantage in finding or sharing information? How might it be useful? It may be helpful to use props (for example, make objective and subjective observations about a book, and then compare it to another book and note how the lists change).
2. Hundreds of years from now, what would archaeologists be able to learn about you? Pick five personal items that would tell an archaeologist – who is unfamiliar with your society – about you and your life. Remember to consider what you have learned about subjectivity. What would they be able to observe from these items? What do these items not show? (Keep in mind that electronic devices would run out of battery and may not be rechargeable.)
3. In small groups, observe and discuss similarities and differences in each other's items. Assume all these objects have been found together. What would this tell archaeologists about your class? Does the added context change how your own objects may be interpreted? Do they offer an accurate representation of your school? Your neighbourhood? Your province? Your generation? If not, what is missing? What kinds of additional materials would be helpful in completing the picture?
4. Have a class discussion: What do your findings tell you about the limits of primary source evidence? How might our biases affect our interpretation of that evidence? What can archaeologists do to help counter or prevent subjectivity? What might happen if they found the same, or very different, items in a classroom in another part of the country?

Extension Activity: In small groups, look at the Arecibo Message, which was sent to outer space in 1974 in order to convey basic information about earth and humanity. Do you feel it is an accurate or appropriate depiction? Why or why not? What does the message tell us about what people at that time considered to be historically or societally significant? What does it tell us about society at the time? Would the message be different today?



The Arecibo message as sent in 1974 from the Arecibo Observatory (Arne Nordmann (norro)/2005/[Wikimedia Commons](#)).

The first Indigenous peoples to arrive in what is now Canada came here about 40,000 years ago. They traveled in many groups and by various methods, and there is much we still do not know. The land-bridge model posits a connection between present-day Siberia and Alaska that allowed people access to the North American continent. Other models include

coastal migrations and movements from South America into North America. What we do know is that early Indigenous peoples evolved in many ways over thousands of years. As archaeologists work more with Indigenous peoples to listen to and respect their knowledge and oral histories, more information is being shared and our understanding continues to grow.

Dating

Determining the age of archaeological sites can be difficult. Archaeologists use a combination of relative dating (comparing data to form a chronology) and absolute dating (using scientific analysis to find an estimated age) methods. Radiocarbon dating is one important absolute dating method. When a living organism dies, the radiocarbon stored inside of it starts to decay at

a predictable rate. Measuring the rate of decay of radioactive carbon can determine how long it lived and when it died. For example, we can learn when a settlement was occupied by dating the wood in their boats or seeds in the pottery. There are several other dating methods archaeologists also use, which you can read about in [this article](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.



A mammoth skeleton on display at Yukon Beringia Interpretive Center in Whitehorse, Yukon (Chris Hunkeler/Wikimedia Commons).

Excavations at Red Hill Valley, an Indigenous settlement over 11,000 years old near Hamilton, Ontario, have found evidence that the community hunted either mastodons or mammoths.



Paleontology

Our fossil record representing the past 600 million years includes an estimated 250,000 species – and new species are constantly being described. These fossils include a variety of organisms, ranging from microscopic prehistoric fish to dinosaurs. Animals with hard skeletal parts have a higher chance of being preserved and make up the vast majority of fossils.

Often mistaken as a part of archaeology, the study of fossils is actually a separate field called paleontology. It helps us understand the nature of ancient organisms and provides information about ancient biomass (material produced by organic organisms).

While paleontology and archaeology are two different fields, they share some similarities, such as the types of tools and technology they use, field practices, and research methods. They may even work in the same site, and there is some crossover; for example, environmental archaeologists work on fossilized plant and animal life.



Interior of the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretative Center, Alberta, 1996 (LBM1948/[Wikimedia Commons](#)).

Activity: Early Indigenous Peoples

1. Read TCE's articles on [Culture of Early Indigenous Peoples](#) and the [History of Early Indigenous Peoples](#).
2. In pairs or small groups, choose a pre-contact archaeological site to research. Some starting examples include:
 - i. [Bluefish Caves](#)
 - ii. [Jemseg Archaeological Site](#)
 - iii. [Áísinaí'pi](#)
 - iv. [Pointe-du-Buisson Archaeological Sites](#)
 - a. Begin by examining some artifacts from, or photographs of, the site. Together, write down three inferences (informed guesses) and three questions about the site based on what you have seen. Remember to consider both environmental (e.g., soil) and cultural (e.g., pots) evidence.
 - b. Now do more in-depth research on the site. Ensure your information is coming from reputable sources – read the [Research Tips guide](#) before you start. Take note of how many of your inferences were correct, and how many of your questions were answered. Is there anything we still don't know? Why might that be?
 - c. Do you see any parallels or similarities between the evidence discovered at the site, or the peoples who lived at this site, and your community today? What does this reveal about the historical continuity of societies in Canada?
3. Present your conclusions to the class then have a discussion on what you have learned. Were there similarities between the sites? What was different? What was the range of artifacts? What have we as a Western society learned about early Indigenous history from these sites? Why do you think it is important to learn about early Indigenous peoples in North America?

Extension Activity: How might our understanding of these sites be deepened by learning from connected Indigenous communities?

Though traditional archaeology primarily relies on physical remains, it is influenced by other factors like written texts, Indigenous knowledge, oral histories, and legends.

Oral Traditions have been a vital method of passing down stories, knowledge, histories, spiritual lessons and teachings, songs, poems, prayers, and ways of survival for thousands of years. Among Indigenous peoples in Canada, Oral Traditions refer to a means of gathering, preserving, and sharing stories, myths, traditional knowledge, and history. For centuries, biased Western beliefs that the written word is more trustworthy than oral histories have threatened and damaged traditional ways of passing down knowledge. Today, Indigenous communities continue to reclaim oral histories and traditions that have been suppressed or threatened by colonization. Other communities have also embraced Oral Traditions to save and pass down chronicles and genealogies, as well as to communicate ideas in musical form.

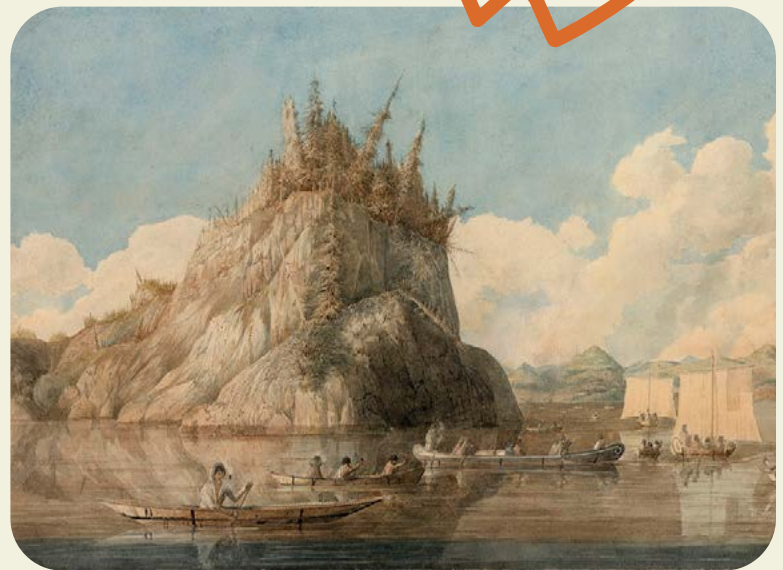
Oral histories can be an important tool for archaeologists. Whether they remain in the Oral Tradition, or are eventually written down, they offer key information about our pasts and can guide physical discoveries.



The Franklin Expedition

Part One: Oral Testimonies

In 1845, the British government commissioned Sir John Franklin to continue the search for the [Northwest Passage](#) in the Arctic. Two ships, HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, set off on the expedition. The ships — and the men on board — disappeared, never to be heard from again. Searches for the Franklin Expedition began in 1848, but the ships were only found in 2014 and 2016, respectively, after scientists finally listened to Inuit oral testimony that had been preserved since the fateful event.



Local Indigenous group attending the Franklin Expedition crossing of Lake Prosperous, Northwest Territories (Robert Hood, 1820/Library and Archives Canada/2836428).

1. As a class, discuss why Western historical traditions have often disregarded oral histories. Who might benefit, and who might not?
2. On your own, investigate the history of the Franklin Expedition. Read and listen to the oral history testimony in the [Exploring the Arctic through Oral History](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Further information on the Expedition can be found by reading the [Franklin Search](#) and [Sir John Franklin](#) articles.
3. Write a reflection on the role that Inuit knowledge and oral history played in finding the two ships. What do the ways in which primary sources were used in the Franklin search tell you about how different sources of evidence are valued by different groups? Do you think this impacts what parts of history are remembered or considered significant?
4. In small groups, discuss what you have learned about the relationship between oral histories and archaeology. How does archaeology relate to Oral Traditions? How does the discovery of material evidence affect the legitimization of Oral Traditions in Western historical practices?



Graves of the Franklin Expedition, Beechy Island, Nunavut, Canada (Dreamstime.com/Karen Foley/ID 255549070).

Part 2: Marine Archaeology

1. Read *TCE's* article on [Maritime Archaeology](#) and explore the [Underwater archaeology at the Franklin wrecks](#) page from Parks Canada.
2. Conduct some research on another shipwreck or marine archaeological site in Canada. Are there any close to where you live? When is the site from? What does the site look like? How was it found? What part of our history does it reflect? What challenges does this site present for archaeologists?
3. Create a diorama of the shipwreck or site, paying attention to the challenges posed by the terrain, what tools and technology would be needed to access the site and explore it, and what archaeologists have found at the site.
4. Write a reflection: What have you learned about marine archaeology as a process?
5. What are some unique challenges not experienced by "land" archaeology? Are there benefits to marine preservation? What tools or technologies were invented or developed to help conduct this work?



Canadian postage stamp, issued 1987, depicting the recovered wheel of the Breadalbane (Dreamstime.com/Alexander Mirt/ID 212011002).

Food for thought: Sometimes archaeologists and historians know where a site or evidence is, but are unable to access it, as was the case for both the *Titanic* and the *Breadalbane*. How important is simply knowing an artifact or site exists?

Activity: The Norse in Canada

In the 11th century, Norse explorers formed a settlement on the northeastern tip of Newfoundland. Tales of these explorations, preserved through Oral Traditions now known as the Vinland sagas, were written down in the 13th century. For centuries the sagas kept this history alive, but it was not until the late 20th century that archaeologists uncovered the site of this settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows. Using both the sagas and physical evidence, we have been able to piece together a history of the Norse in Canada.



Still from Vikings video (Historica Canada).

1. Using the **Norse in Canada Worksheet** located at the end of this guide, fill in the first column on what you think you know about Vikings, Norse explorers, and their history in Canada.
2. Watch the [Vikings](#) video and then read the *TCE* articles on [L'Anse aux Meadows](#) and [Norse Voyages](#).
3. Fill in the rest of the chart based on what you have learned.
4. Have a class discussion about what you have learned.
 - a. What does this site reveal about the people and the historical context of the time? Can you connect the site and its people to society today?
 - b. Think about how this story fits into the popular narrative of the European "discovery" of the Americas. Consider how long the sagas have existed, and how long we've had archaeological evidence.
 - c. Why do you think explorers like Christopher Columbus and Jacques Cartier are still credited with the European discovery of the Americas? Why is the European discovery of the Americas still dated to the 15th and 16th centuries? What does this tell us about continuity and the dominant historical narrative, and about how history is perceived?

Archaeological dig sites are often chosen based on information provided by external sources. However, there are occasions where archaeological activities are prompted by an unexpected discovery. For example, the discovery of a centuries-old cemetery during the construction of an LRT station in Ottawa, or the hundreds of artifacts being uncovered by melting ice and glaciers in the northwest. As time passes, many histories are forgotten, while others are purposefully buried (physically or otherwise). In these cases, the unexpected discovery of material evidence becomes the key to unlocking a whole new chapter in our history. Other times, all we have are possibilities, and the hope that one day an archaeological team will start to dig in the right place.

Cupids Cove Plantation is the archaeological site of the first permanent British settlement in Canada. Located in the traditional territory of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq, it was settled by a few dozen colonists in 1610, and uncovered in 1995 thanks to geographical clues found in contemporary letters and diaries.

Archaeological sites offer an irreplaceable window into the past. In Canada, the Borden System records the location and nature of sites. Because they are so rare and valuable, established sites are often protected from vandalism and unauthorized excavation by a range of laws and regulations. However, many of these rules are established regionally. The federal government has no legal framework to protect archaeological sites on lands under its control, despite signing most UNESCO Conventions on heritage conservation. This puts Canada far behind many other countries in conservation efforts. Archaeological sites continue to be threatened by natural processes like erosion, by illegal collection and looting, and by large-scale economic development.



Reconstructed buildings, palisades, and original stonework of the historic Jesuit mission at Sainte Marie among the Hurons near Midland, Ontario (Dreamstime.com/Jaahnlieb/ID 258551465).



St Joseph's Oratory, Montreal, the site of an unexpected archaeological discovery dating hundreds of years (Dreamstime.com/Chandra Ramsurrun/ID 207152417).

Historical Significance Criteria

Prominence: Was the person/group, place, or event recognized as significant at the time? Why or why not? What did it mean to be "significant"?

Consequences: What effect(s) did the person/group, place, or event have?

Impact: How widespread and long-lasting was the person/group, place, or event's impact?

Revealing: What does the person/group, place, or event reveal about the larger historical context or current issues? How do they inform our understanding of a historical issue or period?



Still from The Blackburns video (Historica Canada).

Activity: The Blackburns

Despite playing a significant role in Toronto's history, Thornton and Lucie Blackburn's story had been lost to time until an archaeological dig in 1985 uncovered their former home. It was the first dig on an Underground Railroad site in Canada.

1. Watch the video on [Thornton and Lucie Blackburn](#). Then, read their [biography](#) and the [Black History in Canada until 1900](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. You may also want to do supplementary research.
2. In small groups, discuss what you have learned from their story – about the conditions that Black people faced in Canada, and Canadian history and society at large. Why do you think the Blackburns' story had been forgotten for so long? Does it matter that we know about the Blackburns? Why? How does the discovery and reminder of these stories affect our understandings of our own history and modern society?
3. The site of the Blackburns' home is now a public school. There are many places in Canada (buildings, streets, even entire cities) that hold multiple histories. Churches built over Indigenous burial sites; the lost rivers of downtown Toronto; national parks; neighbourhoods built over demolished Black Canadian towns, etc.
 - a. Do some investigating and select one of these places that interests you.
 - b. Write a newspaper article sharing what you have learned.
 - i. You may want to include information like why there is or is not archaeological activity there, obstacles (logistical, cultural, or otherwise) to excavation, why it is important that the work is conducted, and what part of our history this site could reveal, as well as any other information you think is relevant.
 - ii. Be sure to discuss the historical significance of the site you chose (see the **Historical Significance Criteria** to the left).



HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Begin with a lead sentence that will immediately grab the attention of the reader. Your introduction should establish the context and answer the 5Ws: who, what, where, when, why (and how). Use direct quotes to help frame your story but use them sparingly for the most impact. Your main body should provide evidence to back up your story and you can either sum up your story succinctly in a traditional conclusion or find a suitable and effective closing quotation. Always be sure to review the historical background of your story to highlight relevant facts that may otherwise go unnoticed.



Archaeologists at work at excavation site near Sussex, New Brunswick (Fundy Archeological Site/Wikimedia Commons).

Summative Activity

1. In pairs, choose an archaeological site in Canada to research and present. Some questions to consider include:

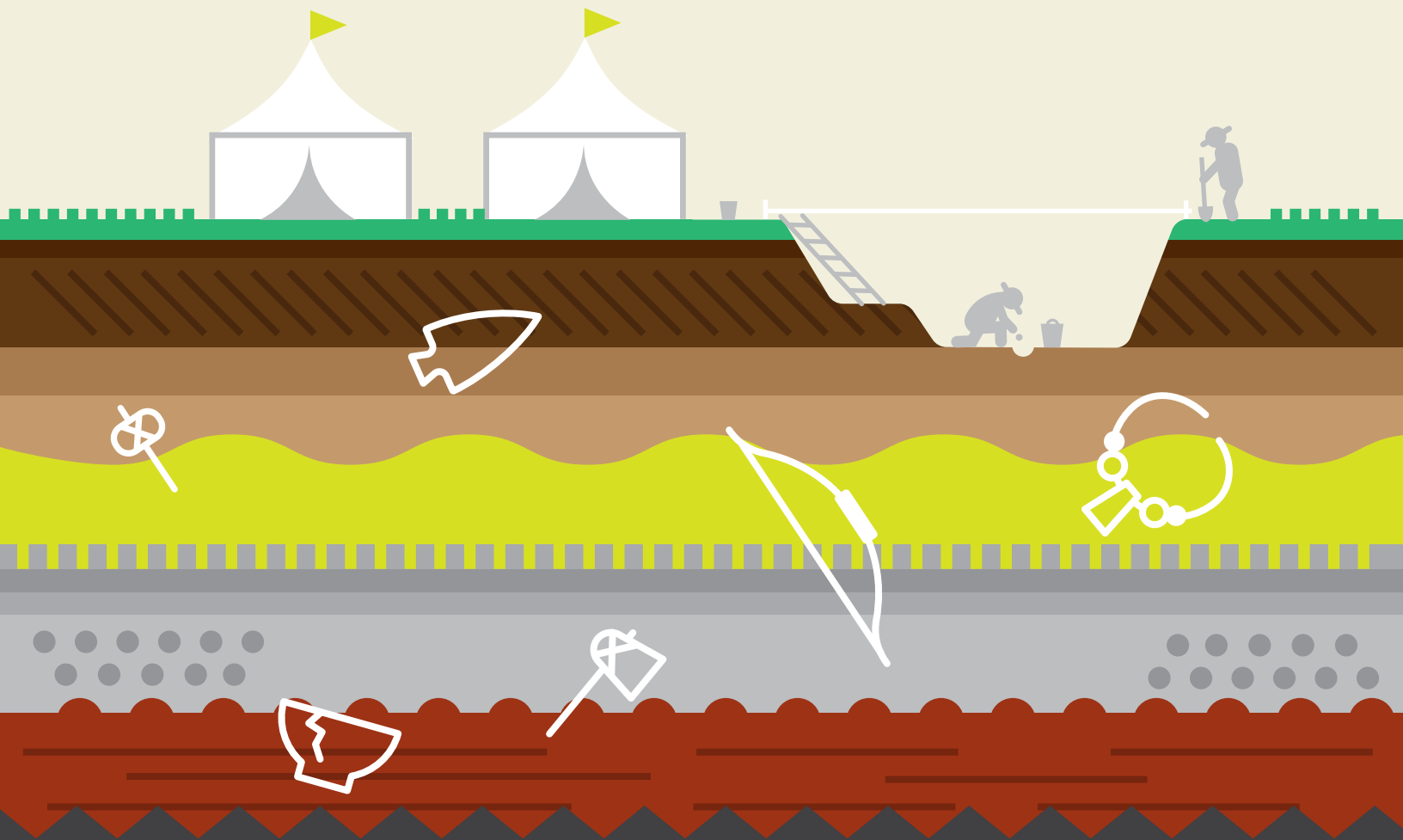
Why is this site significant? What does it reveal about the context in which this area was settled, and the circumstances the inhabitants faced? What stories does this site tell of the people who settled here? What does it reveal about life in Canada at this time? What were some benefits and challenges of living there (consider landforms, climate, vegetation, bodies of water, etc.)? What does it reveal about human or natural history? How does it relate to the history you think you know about this time and place?

2. Pretend you are a tour guide or archaeologist for your chosen site and put together a pamphlet or poster showcasing background information on the location, the work that has been done there, and what it contributes to our understanding of history.
3. Place the promotional materials around the classroom. For the first 15–20 minutes, let one partner from each group explore while the other partner presents and answers questions. Then swap. Each site should have a unique stamp that students can receive as “proof of visitation.” For your tourists to get the most out of visiting your site, consider getting creative with your visuals (create an artifact, make a diagram, bring a tool that might be used on the ground, etc.).

For the presenter: As your classmates come by, welcome your audience and act as a tour guide through the history and significance of the site — and be prepared to answer any questions they might have.

4. As a class, discuss similarities and differences you’ve noted between these sites. When and how were they discovered? How many have oral (or written) histories relating to them? What do they reveal about Canadian or world history? In what ways do they challenge your own preconceived notions of Canadian history? What has archaeology taught us about Canada? In what ways does it fall short? What have you learned about how we understand history through archaeology?

Archaeology in Canada



THE NORSE IN CANADA WORKSHEET

Prior Knowledge (What I think I know)	Confirmed (What was right)	New Information (What have I learned)	My misconceptions (What was I mistaken about)	Wondering (What I'm still curious about)