

Archaeology

with the Tse'k'wa Heritage Society,
Dr Jon Driver and Alyssa Currie

Talking points

Knowledge

1. What does Tse'k'wa mean in the language of the Dane-zaa people?
2. When did excavations begin at Tse'k'wa?
3. Who started the Tse'k'wa Heritage Society (THS)?

Comprehension

4. What does the excavated stone bead found at Tse'k'wa tell us about Dane-zaa culture?
5. What evidence from Tse'k'wa suggests that the Dane-zaa traded with other people?

Application

6. What questions would you ask Jon to learn more about the original excavations at Tse'k'wa?
7. What questions would you ask Alyssa to learn more about her connection to Tse'k'wa and her motivations behind working for THS?

Analysis

8. How can traditional knowledge provide context to archaeological discoveries?
9. Why is it important that the artefacts from the excavations are kept at Tse'k'wa?

Synthesis

10. THS is hoping to create a world-class museum to teach more people about Tse'k'wa. How would you design this museum and what would you include?

Evaluation

11. "Archaeologists do not have to be Indigenous in order to be allies of Indigenous communities; they just have to come with compassion and a willingness to advocate for what is right," says Alyssa. Why is it important for archaeologists to be allies of Indigenous communities?
12. "I believe that the best protection for a site and its collections will come from people whose history is embodied in the site," says Jon. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

Creativity

13. Imagine that, 10,000 years from now, an archaeologist is excavating your house. Which three items would tell them the most about your life and your community? What could they learn from these objects?



Activities

1. "Your nearest archaeological site might be much closer than you think, and it might reveal a new story of a place you thought you knew," says Alyssa. "I was born and raised less than an hour away from Tse'k'wa, yet I didn't know about the site until I was in university."

Research a historical site in your own country, either one that you've heard of before or one that you've never come across. Create a presentation describing what happened there and learn as much as you can about the place. Try to include details such as:

- Who lived there or spent time there?
- When were they there?
- What was their life like?
- What did they eat and wear?
- Were they isolated or did they interact with other communities?
- Is there evidence of art and decoration in their community?

If it is nearby, try visiting the site, or if this is not possible, ask someone at your local library or museum if they have any information about the place. Asking questions in person can be



*Illustration of traditional Dane-zaa fishing practices at Lhuuge saahgē? (Fish Creek), near Tse'k'wa.
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a great way to get first-hand information or to be put in touch with someone who might know more about the area.

2. Choose one of the quotes from Alyssa below and do some research on the topic:

a. "In order to understand how the Dane-zaa have taken ownership of the land, the site and the physical collection at Tse'k'wa, you first need to appreciate that 'Western' concepts of 'ownership' are very different from Indigenous Peoples."

b. "Archaeologists have an opportunity and an obligation to work with Indigenous communities at their cultural sites. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)

recognises that Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain, protect and develop their cultural sites; this includes archaeological sites."

If you choose the first quote, research what different concepts of 'ownership' are. How does 'ownership' compare to 'stewardship'? How do you think these different ways of thinking about land impact how the land is managed?

If you choose the second quote, research the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. When did it come into place? What is the history behind the declaration? Why is it important?

More resources

- Listen to this podcast episode with Alyssa about updates from Tse'k'wa: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CHDyFDtII
- Watch this video about Tse'k'wa: www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmQ5TLWiqZE
- A compilation of archaeological work at Tse'k'wa is available at the SFU Research Repository: summit.sfu.ca/item/15869
- The Tse'k'wa Digital Archive includes photographs of excavations and more: summit.sfu.ca/collection/30109
- The BBC have a list of books about archaeology that you can download here: downloads.bbc.co.uk/history/handsonhistory/dig_reading.pdf
- Learn the Dane-zaa language: www.firstvoices.com/tsaa-dane-beaver