



A Guide to

# Nunavut Archaeology and Artifacts

for Northern Students



Δ.ε.Δ.ε. Λ'ε'δ'Ν'ι'ρ'ο'σ'ε' ε'π'ε'ρ'ε'σ'ε'ρ'ι'ς  
INUIT ENGILGAAGNITTANIK TIGUMIAKTIKHANIK  
INUIT HERITAGE TRUST INC

# Acknowledgments

Writing by: Brendan Griebel  
Design by: Brendan Griebel  
Project management by:  
Torsten Diesel, Inuit Heritage Trust

The Inuit Heritage Trust would like to extend its thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the Nunavut Archaeology and Artifacts booklet series:

- Curriculum and School Services, Nunavut Department of Education
- Government of Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage
- Tourism and Cultural Industries, Nunavut Department of Economic Development and Transportation.
- Nunavut Tourism
- Parks Canada, Nunavut Field Unit
- Krista Zawadski
- Luke Suluk
- Kevin Kelly
- Nick Amautinuuar
- Joanasie Qappiq
- David Aglukkaq
- William Beveridge
- Ralph Kownak
- Sharon Thomson
- Ken Beardsale
- Sue Ball
- Sylvie LeBlanc
- Max Friesen



# A Guide to Nunavut Archaeology and Artifacts for Northern Students

Explaining this Guidebook	2-5
Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview	6-9
Archaeology: The Basics	10-13
Different Paths to the Past	14-17
The Role of History in Modern Day Nunavut	18-21
A History of Archaeology in Nunavut	22-25
Archaeology in Nunavut Today	26-29
Community-Based Archaeology in Nunavut	30-33
The Past as a Profession	34-37
A Year in the Life of a Research Archaeology Project	38-41
Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Artifacts	42-47
Photographing Archaeological Artifacts and Sites	48-49
Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Sites	50-53
Classroom Archaeology	54-57
Notes and Comments	58-59
References and Resources	60-61



# Explaining this Guidebook

## The past as ever-present

There are many stories that describe the history of Inuit people in the Canadian Arctic. Many of these stories view history as a place that is disconnected from the modern world; something that happened in the past and remains there. The profession of archaeology seeks to uncover history by digging up material remains that are hidden beneath the ground. By examining these remains, or ‘artifacts,’ for traces of their previous lives, archaeologists try to create a picture of how people lived many years ago.

This booklet will look at the history, archaeology and artifacts of Nunavut in a slightly different way. It understands history as being something that originated in the past, but that remains very much alive today. The past continues to seep into modern people’s lives in the form of memories, oral history, traditional skills, names and old objects.

While these fragments of history may have originated deep in the past, they are handed down through generations who continue to breathe new life into them by using them in the context of their own lives.

On a daily basis, the decisions Nunavummiut make are guided by the past: Before traveling on the land and sea ice, the wisdom of elders is recalled to check the weather and the colour of the ice to make decisions about safety. Before making new policies for the territory, politicians will consider how traditional Inuit values and knowledge might make those policies better.

History also overlaps with modern society in more material ways. Rather than simply being objects frozen in time, archaeological artifacts and sites continue to impact and challenge the way Nunavummiut live their lives. Old camp sites fall in the path of modern roads and buildings, requiring decisions as to whether they should be removed or



# Explaining this Guidebook

preserved. The designs of ancient harpoons and tools are learned and adapted into new materials to successfully carry old traditions into a new age.

This booklet was written to help young people consider the ways that history lives on in Nunavut. Young people will come to recognize the role they play in remembering, maintaining and building more knowledge about the past. Today's young people will soon become the generation responsible for making important decisions and laws regarding the lessons Nunavummiut learn from history, the respect Nunavummiut give to history, and the role that history continues to play in the territory. For that very reason, young people should become aware of how history influences their own lives and the lives of those around them.

## Intended booklet audience

This booklet was designed to facilitate the classroom instruction of students in grades 10-12 of the Nunavut high school system. The booklet's content is directed towards more advanced high school levels for the following reasons:

- It provides a brief review of themes explored in the Grade 8 curriculum from the *Arctic Peoples and Archaeology website/CD-ROM*, and the Grade 9 web curriculum from *Taloyoak: Stories of Thunder and Stone*, and extends these themes into more advanced discussions of heritage politics, identity and guidelines in Nunavut.
- It discusses the personal and civic responsibilities of students to respect and preserve the heritage of Nunavut;
- It discusses heritage sector work as a potential career opportunity for students.





# Explaining this Guidebook

## Booklet contents

This booklet will discuss three important areas related to the fields of heritage and history in Nunavut:

### 1. Archaeology in Nunavut

Archaeology is used to research and manage old sites in Nunavut in partnership with Nunavummiut communities. Despite this, many local people do not know what archaeology is, how it works, or what regulations guide its work in the territory. As partners and future archaeologists, Nunavummiut need to know what rights local people have in regard to preserving and managing their own heritage, and how they can make sure that archaeology projects are relevant to local people. This booklet will seek to answer the following questions:

- What is archaeology and how can it help to understand the Inuit past?
- When did archaeology begin in the Arctic and how has it changed since then?
- Who is responsible for managing archaeology in Nunavut?
- What is community archaeology and how does it encourage Nunavummiut participation?
- What rules are Nunavummiut encouraged to follow around old sites and artifacts?

### 2. History in Nunavut

Different understandings of history impact the ways that individuals, communities and cultures form their identities and politics. This booklet will consider how Nunavut has been shaped by history through the following questions:

- Are the decisions and lifestyles of Inuit ancestors still evident in modern Inuit culture?
- Do Nunavummiut build understandings of the past in different ways than scientific archaeologists?



# Explaining this Guidebook

- How has the past informed the politics and identity of Nunavut?

## 3. History as a Profession

The territory of Nunavut has numerous heritage opportunities available for young people to start building careers in archaeology and museum studies. This booklet will focus on archaeology as a potential job, providing answers to such questions as:

- Why choose archaeology as a job?
- What does the work year of an Arctic archaeologist look like?
- What responsibilities does an archaeologist have?

### Using this booklet

This booklet is designed as a resource for classroom instructors to follow up on previous archaeology and oral history curricula written for Nunavut. It encourages students to think more critically about the roles that

history and archaeology play in their lives. This is more effectively done by exploring the booklet's content through in-class discussions and debates. Much of the material can be used to challenge students to think in new and different ways. Discussion and debate topics have been listed alongside each course module, and classroom activities relating to learning material can be found at the back of the book. It is recommended that this booklet be used alongside the two other booklets in the *Nunavut Archaeology and Artifacts* series, to gain more in-depth knowledge of how archaeology and artifacts are regulated and managed in the territory. A section titled 'Notes and Comments' has been included at the back of this booklet for educators to write in additional discussion topics, activities and resources for the benefit of future educators using the booklet.



# Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

## Inuit migrate to the Canadian Arctic

The origins of the Inuit people, as told through their legends, belong to a time long ago when animals, people and the Arctic landscape were one. The first material evidence for Inuit living in the Canadian Arctic has been dated by archaeologists to around 1250 AD. These early ancestors of the Inuit are known as ‘Sivullit,’ or ‘the first ones.’ Archaeologists have named this group the ‘Thule,’ or ‘Neo-Eskimo,’ people. Before the arrival of the Thule, the Canadian Arctic was inhabited by various different cultural groups who came and went from the region starting around 3000 B.C. While archaeologists call these early populations ‘Paleo-Eskimo’ people, they also name and group them according to the different ways in which they lived and the types of tools that they used.

***“In the very first times there was no light on earth. Everything was in darkness, the lands could not be seen, the animals could not be seen. And still, both people and animals lived on earth, but there was no difference between them...They may have had different habits, but all spoke the same tongue, lived in the same kind of house, and spoke and hunted in the same way. That is the way they lived here on earth in the very earliest times, times that no one can understand now.”***

***-From a story told to Knud Rasmussen in 1931 by Naalungiaq, a Netsilingmiut man.***





# Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

When Inuit entered the Canadian Arctic, they likely overlapped with another cultural group known to Inuit as the ‘Tuniit’ and to archaeologists as the ‘Dorset’ people. Inuit stories describe them as a race of very strong, yet shy, people who hunted with massive strength and simple tools, and made their buildings with large boulders. What happened to the Tuniit when the first Inuit arrived is still not fully known. Inuit have many stories about how the two groups interacted, but archaeologists have never found any material evidence of the two groups meeting or living together. It is still not known why the Thule people migrated into the Canadian Arctic from their previous home in northern Alaska. Various theories have been suggested as to why the Thule would leave a familiar place for a new and relatively unknown land. These theories include:

- The Thule were searching for new sources of metal, which was one of the most valuable resources at that time;
- The Thule were escaping from negative social conditions in Alaska, which included overpopulation and warfare;
- The Thule were following bowhead whale migrations that moved increasingly eastward as the climate became warmer.

Regardless of their reasons for moving, Thule people soon found themselves in a land very different from the driftwood and whale-rich coasts of Alaska.

## Adjusting to a new environment

When the first Thule pioneers arrived in the Canadian Arctic, they tried living in a similar way to their Alaskan ancestors. They built large and elaborate winter houses, the earliest of which had kitchens as separate rooms so that food could be cooked over an open fire. As in Alaska, their main food source continued to be bowhead whales, which they hunted in teams from a type of large boat known as the ‘umiak.’ The skill,



# Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

danger and large rewards in hunting these animals gave them great symbolism in Thule society and rituals.

Around 1400 A.D., the climate began to cool again and the sea ice increased, resulting in fewer whales and more dangerous whale hunting conditions. The Thule people began adjusting their lifestyle. The High Arctic was abandoned, with populations moving to less ice-locked locations. During winters, groups began to construct and live in snow houses on the sea ice, which allowed them to focus their diet around seal hunting. In the summers, inland caribou hunting became more popular. Settlement sizes became smaller and less permanent than before so groups could re-locate more often to harvest a wider variety of animals. Life began to change even more dramatically after 1500 A.D., and especially after 1800 A.D., when explorers and whalers from Europe began arriving in great numbers.

## Regional Traditions

By the late 1600s, Inuit had abandoned many of their early Thule ancestors' ways of life. The practice of bowhead whale and large sea mammal hunting decreased in most areas. Kayaks and umiaks became used more for travel, fishing and hunting caribou in rivers. Technology also changed during this period. Early Thule people had created ornate tools that were very task specific. Over time, these toolkits became less decorated, and contained more broadly usable tools.

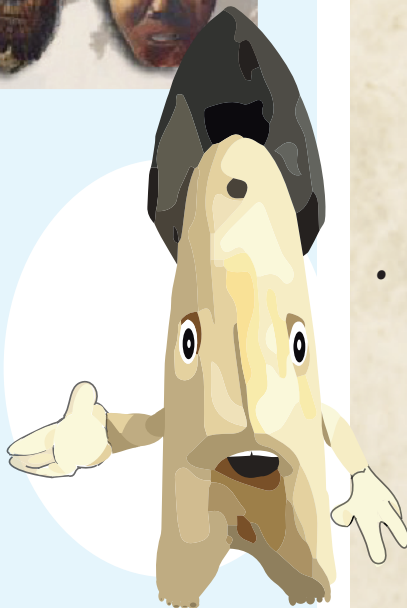
As groups of Inuit adapted to different areas and environments across the Arctic, they became more diverse. Regional variations began appearing in tools, housing, language and clothing. These variations have been passed along through generations, and can still be seen among regional Inuit groups such as the Netsilingmiut, the Umingmaktuurmiut, and the Utkuhiksalingmiut.



# Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

## Learn more about past cultures in the Arctic!

Click on this icon at the Arctic Peoples and Archaeology website. Connect to the site at [www.ihti.ca](http://www.ihti.ca)



## Topics for classroom discussion

- As a classroom review the oral history of Inuit and Tuniit encounters. What do these stories say about the meeting of these groups? What material evidence could archaeologists look for to support these stories?
- How do Thule adaptations to specific environments hundreds of years ago continue to influence modern Inuit culture? Discuss cultural differences in modern Nunavut's communities, and how these differences might have come about.
- Discuss the role that climate played on early Inuit lifestyles. Is this comparable to climate change as it is occurring today? This discussion can be further directed towards the relationship between culture and its physical environment.

# Archaeology: the Basics

## What is archaeology?

Archaeology is the study of the human past. Archaeology often involves the collection and analysis of material objects, known as 'artifacts,' that people throughout history have left behind. Artifacts can be as small as a single tool or as big as an entire house. Artifacts can also be materials such as animal bones or landscapes that have become altered by humans. Sometimes these artifacts are found on top of the ground, and other times archaeologists have to dig into, or 'excavate,' the ground to locate them.

A good way to understand archaeology is through a comparison to puzzle solving. Archaeologists see the human past as a big unfinished jigsaw puzzle. Each artifact an archaeologist finds helps them to fill in another piece of the puzzle. As the puzzle fills in, archaeologists are able to better picture the lives of past people and cultures.

## Why is context important?

Context is one of the most important ideas to the practice of archaeology. Context refers to the relationship that artifacts have to each other and to the environment in which they are found. When doing an excavation, archaeologists carefully record the exact place where every artifact is found. This helps them understand what was being done with an artifact before it fell to the ground. Finding a specific tool in a pile of butchered bones, for example, allows archaeologists to see that the tool might have been used as part of the butchering process. Context allows archaeologists to understand the relationships between artifacts on the same site, as well as how different archaeological sites are related to each other. When people remove artifacts from the land without recording their precise locations, artifacts lose all of their contextual information and have less value for reconstructing what happened in the past.



## How do archaeologists research the past?

Archaeological projects can draw on many different kinds of knowledge. Some archaeologists specialize in animal bones or old tools, while others examine DNA evidence, or compare old sites with written documents. Some archaeologists only work under water. Regardless of what type of artifact, time period, or culture archaeology focuses on, it usually employs a very similar research process:

## Topics for classroom discussion

- *How does the context of an artifact affect the story the artifact is able to tell about the past? Does removing or changing the position of artifacts on the land influence how they are understood by everybody, or only by archaeologists?*
- *Is it possible for archaeologists to ever fill in the whole puzzle of history? Can what happened in history ever be known for sure, or will there always be missing pieces and conflicting stories?*



# Archaeology: the Basics

## Step 1: Forming Questions

The first step in archaeology is to think up specific questions about the past that can possibly be answered by researching archaeological sites. Examples might include:

- How did people hunt caribou 600 years ago?
- How have people's diets changed over the last one thousand years?
- Why did people stop living in a certain area?

Archaeological sites are rare and valuable resources that are often only investigated once. It is therefore important to have a strong research question to make sure that they are dug up for a good reason.

## Step 2: Site Survey

When archaeologists have decided why they are going to dig, they have to conduct a site survey to decide where they will be digging. A survey is usually done by walking or flying over a landscape to look for sites of a particular place, time period or culture relating to the research question.

## Step 2 cont.

In Nunavut, old sites like houses are often very visible on top of the ground. Other types of sites remain buried, and must be searched for more carefully.

## Step 3: Excavation

Excavation is the act of digging up old sites to collect information. This is done by carefully removing the dirt that covers the site and recording all of the artifacts, building materials and leftovers from past uses of that area. The position of each artifact is carefully mapped to create context. Sometimes, different activities occurred at the same place over time and have left numerous layers of remains. These layers, called 'strata,' often vary in their color and content, and also have to be recorded in maps. The position of layers and artifacts is often related to age: a tool found in a layer located deeper in the ground is likely older than a tool found on the surface.



# Archaeology: the Basics

## Step 4: Data Collection

The word 'data' refers to information about any detail of an archaeological site that helps archaeologists to better understand the past. Archaeologists must collect as much of this information as possible during their excavations to make sure their interpretation of the site is as well-informed as possible. The collection of archaeological data takes place through photographs, measurements, hand drawing maps, and the analysis of artifacts, animal bones, soil samples, and any other materials found at the site.

## Step 6: Interpretation

When all the evidence from a site is collected, organized and catalogued, an archaeologist will begin to develop a story about the past using these remains. As some data will always be missing, it is impossible to know if that story actually represents what really happened. The more information and sources (such as oral history, written documents, and artifacts from neighboring sites) an archaeologist uses to develop the story, the more detailed and complete that story will be.

## Step 5: Analysis and Conservation

When an excavation is finished, all the collected artifacts and data are returned to the workplace of the archaeologist to be cleaned, studied and pieced back together. Many old artifacts are broken or fall apart easily because of their age. Conservation is the process of repairing and stabilizing these artifacts.

## Step 7: Publication

The final step of an archaeology project is to publish research results in a book, journal or plain-language document for communities. This helps other people learn about the archaeology that took place and the artifacts that were found. It also gives other people a chance to add to, or disagree with, the story that the archaeologist is putting forward about the past.

# Different Paths to the Past

## Do Inuit and non-Inuit think differently about the past?

Before the arrival of archaeology to the Arctic, Inuit still possessed a rich cultural knowledge about their past. This knowledge was developed through centuries of living on the land and observing the environment and old artifacts left by past ancestors. This is often referred to as 'traditional knowledge,' or 'Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.' This form of knowledge is often understood as being different from the scientific knowledge created and applied by non-Inuit researchers.

While differences between traditional knowledge and science are often debated in situations of environmental management and land use, the question is also relevant to the ways in which the past is understood. Some stereotypes that exist about the different ways that Inuit and scientific archaeologists consider history include:

- Inuit respect old remains as former belongings of their ancestors, while non-Inuit archaeologists respect them for the knowledge they contain;
- Inuit use old tools and skills to teach young generations how to live in the present and future, while non-Inuit archaeologists use artifacts to create knowledge about how the past used to look;
- Inuit see the past as a place always connected to the present, while non-Inuit archaeologists see the past as detached and separate from the modern day world.

Bridging scientific and Inuit perspectives about the past remains one of the best ways to create a more relevant form of archaeology in Nunavut. Attempts to bridge traditional and scientific perspectives in archaeology creates a whole new set of questions about the differences and similarities that exist between these two ways of seeing the world:



- Are Inuit interpretations of old artifacts and sites in Nunavut closer to the truth than non-Inuit archaeologists' interpretations ?
- If Inuit and non-Inuit understandings of history differ, which version should be taught in Nunavut schools?
- In what ways can traditional and archaeological stories about the past be used together to build a more complete version of history? What benefits do each bring?

## Strengthening archaeology through local traditions and knowledge

While archaeology is a strong tool for understanding history, there are other sources that many Nunavummiut rely upon for building knowledge about the past. These can be used alongside archaeology to help build a stronger picture of the past, and include:

### 1. Oral history

Oral history refers to the verbal telling of stories from both a person's lifetime and from older generations. Unlike written histories, the form of knowledge contained in oral accounts is stored in people's memories and carried on from generation to generation by word of mouth. When passed down through a culture or society, an oral history becomes known as an 'oral tradition.' The recording or study of oral histories can be a huge benefit to both contemporary communities and archaeological research projects. The recording of stories about the past alongside archaeological surveys and excavations allows:

- Knowledge about old artifacts to be built through local people's memories and firsthand experience with similar items;
- Communities to come together in an intergenerational discussion to exchange ideas, goals and beliefs about what the past was like and how the future should be;



# Different Paths to the Past

- Both scientific researchers and Nunavummiut to communicate with one another as professionals with their own specialized ways of revealing the past;
- Events that have left no physical traces to be remembered and compared against the material record.

## 2. Experiential history

Another way that Nunavummiut build knowledge about history is by participating in traditional skills and ways of life. Like archaeology, these actions bring people into contact with traditional tools and help them to understand what the past might have looked like. Unlike archaeology, however, directly participating in traditional activities gives people a strong, emotional sense of actually following in their ancestors' footsteps and keeping Inuit culture alive.

### How can archaeology help Nunavummiut better understand history and culture?

Why should Nunavummiut listen to the stories that archaeology tells when they already have a sense of their history and past? The field of archaeology is beneficial because it offers a unique perspective on human history and culture. By examining the minute details of the material world, archaeology is able to describe patterns of human change over long periods of time. Unlike oral and written forms of history, it is also able to recover information about the past lives of individuals, families and communities that have not been recorded or whose stories have been forgotten.



When archaeologists work together with Nunavummiut, they can help revive local information that is only partially remembered or has been lost to time. Examples of this include:

- Archaeologists finding old styles of tools, and working with communities to re-build them and figure out how they were used;
- Archaeologists finding artifacts that shed new light on local oral history about a specific place or event;
- Archaeologists are able to add a layer of scientific details to artifacts, like dates and details of their use, that can be combined with traditional narratives and experience to build a clearer picture of the past.

## **Topics for classroom discussion**

- *How do stories and personal experience change the ways that we understand objects? With this in mind, how might an archaeologist build a different story about an object from a non-archaeologist in Nunavut?*
- *What are some perceived differences between traditional knowledge and science?*
- *What are some ways that oral history, tool making and archaeology can be combined? Would this give a fuller picture as to what happened in the past?*



# The Role of History in Modern Day Nunavut

## Nunavut: a home for the past

Despite being a modern political territory, Nunavut relies on the tradition and history of Inuit people to shape its identity. Nunavut's geographical boundaries were drawn according to historical Inuit land use and cultural practices. Nunavut's government tries to incorporate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit or 'traditional Inuit knowledge' into its policies and operations. Heritage-inspired symbols such as the inukshuk on the territorial flag have been selected to visually represent its population's deep connection to the past.

## History and politics in Nunavut

Until the 1950's, many Inuit defined themselves in relation to the small-scale regional groups they lived and traveled with. People's identities and sense of history were often linked to

these smaller groups, which were usually named and organized according to a particular feature of the environment in which they lived. A group could identify themselves as the people of the waterfall (Kugluktuurmiut), or people of the fishing grounds (Iqaluktuurmiut). In the mid-19th century, it is estimated that about 50 of these groups were spread throughout the area currently known as Nunavut.

During the 1960s, Inuit began to rely on the common history of Inuit people as a way to bring the culturally diverse groups from across the Arctic together to form a stronger political voice. This voice was needed to define themselves against the numerous southerners, or 'Qallunnaat,' coming into the Arctic, and to challenge the oil and gas development that was taking place without consultation with local people. This united Inuit voice was strong enough to lay the political groundwork to create a land claim settlement for an Inuit homeland.





# The Role of History in Modern Day Nunavut

The process of negotiating a land claim settlement relied on being able to prove that Inuit people had a long history of using and living in the settlement area. From 1973-75, a large-scale research project known as the Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project (ILUOP) was initiated to determine where the boundaries of land settlement should be drawn. Unlike previous research projects in the Arctic, the ILUOP was organized and managed exclusively by Inuit people, who hired professional anthropologists and researchers to interview almost every Inuk hunter in the Canadian Arctic and map their knowledge of where travel, hunting and land activities took place in both the past and in their own lifetimes.

## Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

With the settlement of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the question of how to represent Inuit history in a modern political environment became a controversial topic. In 1998, the

term Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) was created to replace the term ‘traditional knowledge’ in the Nunavut Government. As a concept, IQ seeks to:

- Link the knowledge and values that have allowed Inuit people to survive for centuries in the Canadian Arctic, right up to present Inuit society;
- Function as a ‘living technology,’ or a tool that can be used by Inuit people to adapt to a rapidly globalizing world while still maintaining a foundation of traditional culture and values.
- Make sure that the government and political operations of Nunavut represent Inuit interests.

The goal of IQ, as stated by Mary Wilman, “is to understand the unique heritage that has made us the Inuit of today. This defines the importance of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. It is the priceless asset and tool that we can use to adapt to the world around us On Our Own Terms.”



# The Role of History in Modern Day Nunavut

## *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*

The word Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit translates as “that which has long been known to the Inuit people,” and has been broken down in the following way by Janet McGrath.

**qauq** is the noun meaning “forehead”; it is at the root of the following two verbs:

**qauji-** is the verb stem for “become aware”;

**qaujima-** is the verb stem “to know”;

**qaujimaniq** is the noun for “knowledge” or “way of knowing”;

**qaujimajaq** is the noun for “what is known” or “inherent/intuitive knowledge”.

**-tuqaq** is a noun ending meaning “for a long time” or “ancient”.

**-ngit** indicates the possessive: in other words, the qaujimajatuqaq of Inuit.

## History and modern identity

In a rapidly changing world, history remains an important way for people to define both their personal and group identities. Young people are increasingly finding themselves in a position where their identity as Inuk or Nunavummiuq has become disconnected from knowledge about the group’s history, culture, values and language. Participating in archaeology, speaking to elders, engaging in traditional activities and living on the land are all ways that young people can begin to educate themselves in the practices of their ancestors and those who occupied the land before them.



# The Role of History in Modern Day Nunavut

*“Youth are looking to find out where they fit in. The obvious thing is that you look at your history and that helps to develop your identity. If you are just thrown into a society, you say “who am I,” especially if you are thrown into a society down south in a city, you say “wait, I am different from everyone else here.” So then you look into history to find out who you are so that you could better represent yourself. That’s the way I see it...We are obviously not living a very traditional lifestyle anymore. So then, its kind of like who are we now?”*

*-Krista Zawadski, Nunavut archaeology student*

## Topics for classroom discussion

- As a class, brainstorm a list of symbols used by Nunavut on flags, logos, etc., that reference a traditional skill or tool. What ideas about Nunavut are these symbols communicating?
- Is there a ‘true’ Inuit identity? Discuss regional variation in Inuit culture and how these differences still fall into a category of being Inuit. What are some similarities that define all Inuit identities? Is history one of these similarities?



# A History of Archaeology in Nunavut

## How did Inuit interact with artifacts before archaeology?

Before the arrival of Europeans to the Canadian Arctic, Inuit had their own cultural traditions for using and thinking about artifacts. Old artifacts found on the land were often used as educational tools to help tell stories and teach younger generations about different hunting methods or the history of their people. Raw materials from archaeological sites were sometimes recycled, with old tools being re-shaped or sharpened for re-use. In some cases, whalebone, stones and sod from old sites were used to build new homes. Many Inuit possessed old or broken artifacts that were sewn onto clothing as amulets to bring good luck and transfer the hunting talents of their former owners onto the new wearer. While old artifacts were sometimes altered, they were always handled with the utmost care and respect. Artifacts found out on the land were considered to have been

put there for a specific reason, and were not touched out of respect for the ancestors who left them behind.

## Did archaeology change Inuit attitudes to artifacts?

Local attitudes toward old artifacts began to change with the arrival of non-Inuit explorers and whaling ships. These newcomers showed a strong interest in the region's material remains, and Inuit found they could make good money by digging up and selling collections of old tools. Inuit also began earning money as assistants on archaeological excavations. The first excavation in the Canadian Arctic happened in 1922, and since then Inuit have played a strong role in helping archaeologists locate, dig, and interpret old artifacts and sites.

During the beginnings of archaeology in the Arctic, archaeologists would spend long periods of time living with Inuit



# A History of Archaeology in Nunavut

and learning their language and ways of life. Following the Second World War, relationships between archaeologists and Inuit began to dissolve. With the building of the DEW-Line (Distant Early Warning radar), archaeologists gained increased access to airplane travel and non-Inuit settlements, so they no longer had to live with or rely on Inuit to conduct their research. Southern researchers could fly up to archaeological sites for summer work, and return to the south without even interacting with or visiting Inuit communities. While travel by airplane increased the amount of archaeological research being done in the Arctic, it meant that Inuit were less involved, and had less control over, the research being done on their own history.

## Inuit find their voice for the past

Archaeology in the Canadian Arctic began to change again in the 1970s with the formation of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and discussions around creating an

Inuit land claim settlement. As Inuit from across the Northwest Territories got together to find a political voice, strong questions were asked about both the future and past of the Inuit people. Inuit began to ask more questions about archaeology, including where the artifacts being dug up were being sent, and why Inuit did not have a say in that process. In 1976, the Inuit Cultural Institute and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada presented a report to archaeologists that was critical of their work in the Arctic. Several main arguments were made:

- Archaeology was not being made relevant for Inuit people, and was not seeking to meet Inuit objectives;
- Archaeologists were not interacting enough with local people;
- Archaeological work was more often being guided by the 'expert' opinions of visiting researchers than by Inuit ways of thinking.



# A History of Archaeology in Nunavut

Inuit began to recommend that more committed partnerships be developed between researchers and Inuit to exchange knowledge and manage historical resources in the Arctic.

## Building guidelines for a more inclusive archaeology

In February of 1994, Inuit from across the Canadian Arctic joined together in a conference to discuss ways of making archaeology more acceptable and useful to Inuit. In naming the conference *Ittarniasalirijit Katimajit*, “those who deal with the distant past,” its organizers tried to point out both the deep history of Inuit culture and the obligation of Inuit people to protect that history. This meeting produced a series of new guidelines indicating how Inuit wanted to see archaeology take place. The spirit of these guidelines was incorporated into a new set of archaeological regulations for Nunavut in 2001.

These rules make it necessary for archaeologists to:

- have their research proposals reviewed and approved by Inuit communities closest to where the project will take place;
- hire local people as field workers or other staff;
- report their project findings back to communities and the government;
- report their project findings in plain language documents.

Archaeologist-Nunavummiut relations have varied throughout time. Relationships tend to improve when these two groups work closely together and communicate. During periods when the groups do not share ideas or understand each other’s concerns, relationships tend to get worse. For this reason, the Government of Nunavut’s new rules for archaeology try to make sure that archaeologists and Nunavummiut are in communication and agreement about the archaeological projects that take place.





# A History of Archaeology in Nunavut

*“Inuit communities are becoming more involved and more outspoken, Inuit are asking more questions about archaeological work being conducted in their area and are wondering what happens to the artifacts that leave with the archaeologists after the field season. People tend to answer these questions themselves, and since they do not have all the information at hand they may come up with wrong answers.”*

*- Part of a speech given by George Qulaut, Deborah Webster and Gary Baikie at an archaeology conference in 1992.*

## Topics for classroom discussion

- **There is a famous saying that “ He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past.” Discuss the relationship between archaeologists, Inuit and Nunavut politics in context of this saying.**
- **Do traditional Inuit ways of interacting with artifacts still apply in modern Nunavut?**

# Archaeology in Nunavut Today

## Archaeology and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

The passing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) in 1993 gave rise to a new era of archaeology in the Canadian Arctic. The NLCA set out broad guidelines for how archaeology should be practiced in the territory. These guidelines are listed in Article 33, which has been written specifically for archaeology. As stated at the start of Article 33:

The archaeological record of the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area is a record of Inuit use and occupancy of lands and resources through time. The evidence associated with their use and occupancy represents a cultural, historical and ethnographic heritage of Inuit society and, as such, Government recognizes that Inuit have a special relationship with such evidence which shall be

expressed in terms of special rights and responsibilities.

In considering how archaeology within the region is carried out, Article 33 includes specific guidelines for the following areas:

- Setting up the Inuit Heritage Trust as an organization to encourage and represent Inuit participation in Nunavut archaeology;
- Creating a new permit system to monitor how archaeological surveys and excavations happen in Nunavut, and to ensure that all the artifacts recovered from those excavations are dealt with properly;
- Ensuring that Inuit who have appropriate skills or training are given priority in situations of archaeological employment;
- Clarifying who owns archaeological artifacts from both the whole Nunavut territory and Inuit-owned lands within that territory.



# Archaeology in Nunavut Today

When Nunavut officially became a territory in 1999, it required that a more specific set of regulations be drawn up to guide archaeological practice and permitting in the territory. In 2001, the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (now known as the Department of Culture and Heritage) published a lengthy set of rules for how archaeological permits are applied for and processed.

## Who is responsible for protecting and managing old sites and artifacts in Nunavut?

While both the NLCA and Archaeological Permit Guidelines are available to the public, many people find it difficult to understand the technical language used in these documents. The following section will discuss what these documents mean in terms of specific responsibilities for three different groups in Nunavut:

### 1. Responsibilities of Nunavummiut

The NLCA states that the archaeological artifacts and sites of Nunavut are considered to be of spiritual, cultural, religious and educational importance to Inuit. Because of this importance, Inuit are responsible for being involved in their identification, protection and conservation. Inuit have a special obligation not only to protect and preserve the materials their ancestors have left behind, but also to participate in and help guide archaeological work so that it is done in a respectful and relevant way. Nunavummiut in general have a responsibility to respect the material heritage of the territory. This can be done by following the regulations that have been set out to manage and protect artifacts and sites.

### 2. Responsibilities of the Government of Nunavut

The Government of Nunavut is responsible for protecting



# Archaeology in Nunavut Today

old sites and artifacts on behalf of all Nunavummiut. The Department of Culture and Heritage is the group designated to oversee archaeological work in the territory and to manage the permit application system. The Department has a Chief Archaeologist, who is specifically trained in archaeology and can help oversee more technical archaeological work and permit proposals. The Department shares archaeological information and permit responsibilities with the Inuit Heritage Trust.

### 3. Responsibilities of the Inuit Heritage Trust

The Inuit Heritage Trust (IHT) was set up as part of the NLCA to support, encourage, and facilitate Inuit participation in Nunavut archaeology. Its responsibilities include creating programs to help educate and train Inuit in archaeology. The IHT is also responsible for helping Inuit review permits for archaeological projects near their communities.

The IHT has a special position of Heritage Manager that is dedicated to facilitating community involvement in the archaeological permit process.

Protected heritage areas managed by Parks Canada (for example, national parks) are under federal jurisdiction, so the territory of Nunavut is not responsible for archaeology on these lands. Parks Canada has professional archaeologists who do much of the archaeology in Parks Canada protected areas. Other archaeologists can also work in these areas, if they get a Parks Canada research permit.

### Permits for archaeological work

In 2001, Nunavut created a new process for archaeologists to get permission to work in the territory. This permit process requires that archaeologists consult with all three groups responsible for heritage in Nunavut: Nunavummiut, the Department



# Archaeology in Nunavut Today

of Culture and Heritage, and the Inuit Heritage Trust. There are two different types of permits that archaeologists can apply for depending on the type of work they want to do:

## **Class 1 Permits**

A Class 1 permit allows an archaeologist to document an archaeological site through mapping it, recording its geographic location, or writing down the number and type of different features present at the site. An archaeologist with a Class 1 permit is not allowed to collect artifacts or other materials from a site. They are also not allowed to dig, alter or disturb a site in any way.

## **Class 2 Permits**

A Class 2 permit allows archaeologists to document artifacts and archaeological sites, as well as excavate and remove artifacts and other materials from them. Because this type of permit allows archaeological sites to be dug up and sometimes destroyed,

it requires archaeologists to prove that they are qualified for the research, and that they have specific plans to take care of and store removed artifacts while they are being researched.

Parks Canada permits do not distinguish between different classes of archaeological work, but allow for the same kinds of research activities as permits from Nunavut.

## **Topics for classroom discussion**

- *Should Inuit and non-Inuit residents of Nunavut have the same obligations toward respecting and maintaining the material heritage of Nunavut?*
- *Should Nunavummiut have the right to deny archaeological research projects that will increase scientific knowledge but do not benefit Nunavut communities?*



# Community-Based Archaeology in Nunavut

## Community archaeology

Community archaeology has been referred to as ‘archaeology by the people for the people.’ It is an approach that recognizes the past as belonging equally to archaeologists and non-archaeologists. Recognizing that the past may be understood in different ways by different people, community archaeology tries to make sure that non-archaeologists have equal control over how artifacts and sites are managed and understood. This is often accomplished by involving local communities in planning and carrying out research projects. Popular ways of doing this include:

- Collaborating with local organizations and people through open communication, meetings and plain language reports;
- Interviewing elders to recover local oral history;
- Employing and training community members with the goal of developing local heritage workers;
- Making research findings public and available to communities through presentations and easy to read papers;
- Developing educational resources, especially for young people;
- Giving communities control of the ways that heritage is marketed and promoted locally.

One of the main ideas that underlies community archaeology is that the more stories people tell about the past, the more the past (and its meaning to present-day society) will be understood.

## Nunavummiut involvement in archaeology

Whether a project specifically calls itself community archaeology or not, there are many ways





# Community-Based Archaeology in Nunavut

that Nunavummiut can become involved in how it takes place and how it impacts their community. One way to do this is to participate directly in archaeological excavations. This can include:

- Visiting archaeological excavations where archaeologists are working to ask questions and offer knowledge about the site and artifacts;
- Asking archaeologists to present their work and the findings of their excavations to the community;
- Applying for job positions to train and work on archaeological sites.

Nunavummiut can also ask archaeologists to take part in cultural programs that do not necessarily involve excavation of archaeological sites. Some ways of doing this might include:

- Asking archaeologists to supply photos or knowledge about old artifacts for tool-building workshops and technology revitalization programs;
- Asking archaeologists to pay visits to local schools to talk about the area's history or help with class projects;
- Asking archaeologists to lend their knowledge of the area's history to help build museum exhibits or write plain language books that will stay in the community. Casts can also be made of excavated artifacts and left in the community to use for educational purposes.

The final way that Nunavummiut can participate in archaeology is by helping to manage and preserve the past. This includes:

- Leaving artifacts and sites found on the land undisturbed;
- Reporting artifacts and sites that you think might be important;
- Sharing stories about the land.

## Employment of Nunavummiut in archaeology projects

Under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, archaeologists have to employ Inuit if they are qualified for a job. As there are currently few trained Nunavummiut archaeologists, many archaeologists concentrate on hiring and training youth as fieldworkers on archaeological excavations. This gives young people valuable experience in scientific research. The Inuit Heritage Trust is allowed to stop an archaeologist from receiving a permit to excavate in Nunavut if they do not intend to employ local Inuit.

# Community-Based Archaeology in Nunavut

*“You can integrate archaeology into a broader project, like cultural camps, or tool use and reproduction... I know a lot of people are becoming more interested in hunting with bow and arrows. But it is hard, because nobody knows how to do it. It is hard when you don’t know how to make a traditional tool... It is part of archaeology. You need objects to reproduce new ones. To create. I know people make harpoon heads now, but they are not made out of stone or bone. If you are doing more traditional tool making, or if you are actually doing archaeology with students, that would be part of learning how to create these tools.”*

*-Krista Zawadski, Nunavut archaeology student*

## Topics for classroom discussion

- *What is the benefit of having many different versions and voices about the past? What can these different perspectives tell us that a story created by a professional archaeologist can not?*
- *Should archaeologists have to work with communities? Community archaeology work is often more about relationships with modern communities than building knowledge about the past. Should this be part of an archaeologist’s job?*
- *Can archaeology be useful beyond creating knowledge about the past? What are some ways that archaeology might be used to benefit modern communities?*



# The Past as a Profession

## Heritage employment in Nunavut

The heritage sector is an important and growing source of employment for Nunavummiut. This sector includes jobs in archaeology, archives, museums, tourism and cultural centers. Nunavummiut are encouraged to become employed in this field so that the territory's heritage can be managed by local people. An organization called the Nunavut Heritage Network exists in Nunavut specifically to build skills and train Nunavummiut in heritage work.

## Why become an archaeologist?

Archaeology is an important part of the heritage sector. Working in archaeology can be especially exciting and rewarding for Nunavummiut who want to learn more about their own culture and history. Some of the reasons that people are attracted to jobs in archaeology are:

- It allows you to work out on the land;
- It allows you to travel;
- It allows you to research your own ancestral past, or the past of other cultures and geographic areas you are interested in;
- It is always exciting, because you never know what you will find during an excavation;
- It allows you to become a detective, using artifacts as clues to solve what happened in history.

## Are there different types of archaeological work?

Archaeology is incredibly diverse because it blends together sciences, cultural studies, history and geography in its goal to better understand the human past. Some archaeologists study historic cultures in very specific time periods or countries, while others focus on studying subjects less directly related to humans, such as what certain landscapes, animal populations or weather patterns



# The Past as a Profession

were like thousands of years ago. All of these studies help build a better picture of the human past.

One of the biggest differences in types of archaeological practice lies in the reason behind the work. Much of the archaeology done today can be broadly divided into two main areas: archaeology which answers specific research questions, and archaeology in support of cultural resource management (CRM). Research archaeology, which is usually based in universities, involves studying old sites and artifacts specifically to build more knowledge about the past. CRM is the business side of archaeology. CRM work is done by both private companies and government, who must investigate old sites and artifacts when they are in areas that are going to be developed. When a development project such as a new road or mineral mine is being planned, the developers must hire archaeologists to go into the area and find out whether there are any old sites that will be disturbed by construction. If sites exist, the

archaeologists will describe what type of sites they are, how important they are, and make recommendations as to how the impact of development can be avoided or limited. If a site will be greatly impacted, archaeologists will excavate it to collect the artifacts and information before they can be destroyed. If sites are too important to disturb, the development cannot take place at that location.

## How much schooling is required to become an archaeologist?

The amount of schooling required for archaeology depends on the kind of archaeology job you want:

- If you want to work on excavations or do archaeological lab work as part of a team, you usually need your Bachelor of Arts degree, or B.A., in Archaeology, Anthropology or another related field such as History or Environmental Sciences. A



# The Past as a Profession

B.A. usually takes about 4 years of university education.

- If you want to lead archaeological investigations at different levels of government or at a cultural resource management company, you will need a Master of Arts degree, or M.A., in Archaeology, Anthropology or another related field. An M.A. usually takes about 6 years of university education.
- If you plan to be a research archaeologist, you usually have to teach at a college or university and will need a Doctor of Philosophy degree, or PhD, in Archaeology, Anthropology or a related science field. A PhD usually takes about 10 years of university education.

## Inuit Heritage Trust and archaeology

The Inuit Heritage Trust (IHT) is a Nunavut organization that offers programs to build local skills and employment in archaeology and heritage-related professions. These programs range from archaeological field schools, to heritage management institutes and scholarships for Inuit beneficiaries interested in pursuing heritage-related fields in university.

To become involved in an IHT archaeology project or to find out more about what we do, visit the Inuit Heritage Trust's website at: [www.ihti.ca](http://www.ihti.ca).





**“I never knew about archaeology or anthropology before I went to college. I had no idea that was what I wanted to do, because I didn’t know what it was called. Or what it was about. I knew that I loved being outdoors. When I went out on the land, I loved seeing the old sites. But I didn’t realize that it is a profession where I could study my own history. Something I think is important, is educating our students about Inuit history and where our ancestors came from.”**

**-Pam Gross, Cambridge Bay**

**Do you know Nunavummiut youth looking to work at an archaeological excavation or other heritage jobs in Nunavut?**

The Inuit Heritage Trust has created a new website to link Nunavummiut youth with researchers who want to employ people for archaeology and cultural projects in Nunavut. The site will give you:

- Advice on preparing and submitting a c.v., or resume, to the website
- Access to a list of heritage job positions being advertised for Nunavut;
- A list of scholarships available to Nunavummiut youth looking to further their education in a heritage field.

# A Year in the Life of a Research Archaeology Project

## Project planning

The first step to beginning an archaeological research project in Nunavut is to make contact with Inuit organizations and communities nearest to the location where archaeological work will take place. Communication with these groups helps make sure a project will be built with local support and knowledge from its very start. While archaeologists can suggest research questions to be answered through excavation and fieldwork, they should be open to community input on what local knowledge exists about the questions, and how they can be made more relevant to community interests and needs.



## Permit applications

Before any archaeologist is allowed to conduct research in Nunavut they must get permission from Nunavut authorities in the form of a permit. This permit process was set up in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and is overseen by the Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage and the Inuit Heritage Trust. A permit application must be sent in at least 90 days before fieldwork starts, and by March 31<sup>st</sup> at the very latest. When an application is sent in, it goes through the following steps:



1. The Territorial Archaeologist at the Department of Culture Heritage reviews the application, and sends it back if it is incomplete;
2. Complete applications are translated into Inuktitut and

# A Year in the Life of a Research Archaeology Project

sent to the Inuit Heritage Trust. The Inuit Heritage Trust reviews the applications and sends them out to communities close to where the project will take place;

3. Community organizations such as hamlet councils, regional Inuit organizations, and local heritage societies review the applications again;

4. If no objections are raised to the applications, they are sent back to the Department of Culture and Heritage who review them one last time to make sure the archaeologist is qualified and the research is justified;

5. The Department of Culture and Heritage decides whether or not to issue a permit for the work outlined in the application. They have three choices to make:

- Issue a permit for the project;
- Issue a permit with conditions attached;

- Refuse to issue a permit, and provide the reasons for the refusal to the applicant.

Archaeologists who want to do surveys, inventories or excavation in areas managed by Parks Canada must obtain a Parks Canada permit, instead of a permit from the Government of Nunavut. The application must be submitted through the Parks Canada on-line Research and Collection Permit System. For more information about permit requirements, go to the Parks Canada Research Permit web page at [www.gc.ca/apps/rps](http://www.gc.ca/apps/rps).

## Fieldwork

If an archaeologist applies for and receives the permits they need to do research, they are licensed to begin their project in Nunavut. If archaeologists plan to do surveys or excavations, this usually happens during the months of July and August, when the weather is warm and the snow is gone.



# A Year in the Life of a Research Archaeology Project

## Analysis, conservation, interpretation

After archaeologists have excavated artifacts and gathered artifacts and information from a site, they are responsible for putting them all in order. The process of cleaning, conserving and cataloguing finds is usually done in a laboratory, and can often take months of hard work. It is during this part of the project that archaeologists begin building many of their ideas about the past.



archaeologists must send site forms to the Department of Culture and Heritage. Site forms list details about all the archaeology sites discovered or visited during their work and must include a map or set of GPS coordinates showing the locations of all the sites. Archaeologists must also send a plain language summary of the fieldwork and two photographs to the Department of Culture and Heritage for use in public education programs and the annual report of fieldwork.

## Project reporting phase 1

Sixty days after fieldwork is complete, archaeologists must begin to report back to Nunavut about what they found. For the first round of reporting,



## Project reporting phase 2

The second round of reporting must take place before the end of March of the following year. By this time, archaeologists must have sent a report about their fieldwork to all the Inuit organizations listed on the permit and to the community nearest to the research. Archaeologists must also have cleaned, catalogued and numbered all of the artifacts and material samples collected during their fieldwork and sent it to the storage center specified on their permit.



## Topics for classroom discussion

- *As a class, review the more detailed permit application section in the companion booklet ‘A Guideline to Nunavut Archaeology and Artifacts for Northern Communities.’ What are some of the reasons that can be used to deny archaeologists a permit? Are these good reasons?*
- *As evident in the time-line presented on this page, most of an archaeologists’ year is spent reporting on and cataloging finds rather than digging them up. Why is this part of the project so important?*

# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Artifacts

## An overview of archaeological artifacts

An archaeological artifact is a human-made object from the past. Archaeological artifacts are everywhere in Nunavut, and can be found in museums, on the land, and in personal and family collections. While many Nunavummiut know old artifacts when they see them, few recognize that the territory has created important guidelines about how these artifacts should be interacted with. These guidelines were developed to help make sure that:

- The context of archaeological artifacts is well preserved, so that both archaeologists and non-archaeologists can use it to build a better picture of the past;
- Nunavut's archaeological artifacts are properly recorded, so that information exists about what kind of artifacts have been discovered, and where those objects are stored;

- Archaeological artifacts do not become the property of individual people. These artifacts are part of a cultural heritage that belongs to Inuit and should be made accessible as learning tools to Inuit and non-Inuit alike.

## What is considered to be an archaeological artifact in Nunavut?

Despite its name, an archaeological artifact does not belong to archaeologists. The Government of Nunavut defines an archaeological artifact as:

“Any tangible evidence of human activity that is more than 50 years old, in respect of which an unbroken chain of possession or regular pattern of usage cannot be demonstrated.”





# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Artifacts

This means that an archaeological artifact is:

- Any form of material object that has been used by humans, not just old tools and old tent rings. Examples of archaeological artifacts include clothing, inuksuit, animal bones, and old garbage dumps;
- An object that was made more than 50 years ago;
- An object that has not been inherited, or handed down through families or from person to person;
- An object that is no longer being regularly used by Nunavummiut.

## How is an archaeological artifact different from an ethnographic artifact?

An ethnographic artifact is similar to an archaeological artifact in that it is something made, modified or used by humans. Both types of materials are collected and documented by researchers trying to better understand human

culture. While archaeological artifacts are old, ethnographic artifacts have usually been made more recently, so there are fewer guidelines that describe how they should be collected. Examples of an ethnographic artifact might include a homemade tool or parka, a soapstone carving, or a modern qamutik. Like archaeological artifacts, ethnographic artifacts do not always have to have been made by Inuit. To be considered as significant to Inuit heritage, however, an ethnographic artifact must at least have been used or worked on by Inuit.

Ethnographic artifacts can be owned by individual people or museums. Special laws have been put in place that allow the Inuit Heritage Trust to request the return of ethnographic artifacts from museum collections outside of Nunavut, as long as it can be proved the objects will be transported and displayed under safe conditions.



# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Artifacts

## Who owns archaeological artifacts?

In most cases, Inuit own the artifacts of their ancestors. The Government of Nunavut and the Inuit Heritage Trust are responsible for overseeing the collection, research and storage of all archaeological artifacts except for:

- Public records;
- A person's private property;
- Artifacts in an area managed by the Parks Canada;
- Artifacts collected and owned by museums or individuals prior to the signing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in 1993.

Nunavut has no territorial facility to store and look after its artifacts. Because of this, artifacts are often loaned to other institutions such as universities and museums.

Archaeologists can not keep and do not own the artifacts they find during their excavations.

However, they are required to study and report on the artifacts they find, and are allowed to borrow them from Nunavut for that purpose. An annual loan agreement for the artifacts must be signed if they are borrowed longer than a year after their collection. If the Government of Nunavut and Inuit Heritage Trust both agree, an artifact can be loaned to a museum or another institution for a long period of time.

## Where do the artifacts collected during archaeology get sent?

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement specifies that a new building has to be constructed in Nunavut to house the archaeological collections from the territory. This building has not been made yet, so archaeological collections are currently stored in other facilities outside of Nunavut.

Most archaeological collections are stored in either the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in



# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Artifacts

Yellowknife, or the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec. If an archaeological collection comes from Inuit Owned Lands, the Inuit Heritage Trust decides where it will be sent. If an archaeological collection comes from lands other than Inuit Owned Lands, then the Government of Nunavut decides where it will go.

Artifacts collected from archaeological investigations in Parks Canada protected areas are stored in a specialized building in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The temperature and humidity in this building is set at levels which help to preserve very fragile artifacts.

In some cases, an archaeologist will need some or all of the artifacts, animal remains and original documentation from their project for continued research or to write publications. In such a case, the archaeologist has to arrange an agreement to loan these artifacts from the storage facility that has been chosen by either the Inuit Heritage Trust or Government of Nunavut.

## Can artifacts be kept if found on the land?

Old artifacts should always be left undisturbed when they are found. When an artifact is moved it loses its context, or relationship with the place it was left by past generations. Lack of context makes an artifact's history more difficult to understand. The rules in Nunavut do not allow an artifact to be taken home.

## Can archaeological artifacts be sold?

It is illegal for anybody--Inuit or non-Inuit--to sell an archaeological artifact that was removed from an archaeological site on or after June 15, 2001. While it is legal to sell artifacts found before this date, it is illegal to take artifacts from an archaeological site.



# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Artifacts

## Do artifacts get destroyed when archaeologists study them?

Archaeologists are specifically trained to be careful while collecting or handling artifacts. It is very rare that an artifact will purposely be broken or destroyed. In some instances an archaeologist will request the removal of a small piece, or sometimes a whole artifact, for tests. This is done for various reasons. For example, measuring the amount of carbon in a piece of bone will destroy it, but will also tell us how old the bone is. This helps to infer the age of the site where the bone was found.

As scientific techniques are improved, smaller and smaller pieces of an artifact are needed for analysis. Some kinds of testing can be done without affecting the artifact at all. Today, it is rare that an entire artifact would be destroyed by analysis.

The Government of Nunavut has developed a specific permit that allows archaeologists to destroy an artifact. On the permit application, an archaeologist must describe:

- The type of destructive analysis they are seeking authorization for;
- Where, and by whom the analysis will be performed;
- Justification for the proposed destructive analysis.

If the Department of Culture and Heritage is satisfied with the archaeologist's application, they will be allowed to destroy part or all of the artifact.

## What should I do if I find an archaeological artifact, or have artifacts at home?

Old artifacts should always be left undisturbed if they are found on the land. Sometimes artifacts are collected by people unaware of regulations which say they should be left on the ground. Other times, artifacts are handed down through



# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Artifacts

friends and families. The best thing to do with these objects is to keep them in a way that makes sure that they are both respected and safe. What the regulations in Nunavut try to prevent is the continued removal of artifacts from the land.

If you have questions about any artifact at your house, you can bring it to a local heritage center or museum, or see if local elders know more information about it. If you find an artifact on the land that you have questions about, take a photo of it on your phone or camera rather than bringing it with you. If taking photos, it is important to know that images of archaeological artifacts can not be taken for commercial purposes without applying for a Class 1 archaeology permit first. Photos taken of archaeological sites without a permit are not allowed to be sold.

## Topics for classroom discussion

- *There is currently no territorial museum for housing archaeological or ethnographic artifacts. As a class, discuss what a Nunavut museum should look like, what artifacts it should include, and how it should represent Inuit culture through material exhibits.*
- *If Inuit are the owners of archaeological artifacts, why are they not allowed to sell them? Discuss how giving monetary value to artifacts might affect their value as heritage items.*





# Photographing Archaeological Artifacts and Sites





# Photographing Archaeological Artifacts and Sites

## 5 tips for photographing archaeological artifacts and sites

### 1) Be resourceful

Just because you don't have your camera with you doesn't mean that you can't take a photograph. Cameras are built into many cell phones, ipads, mp3 players and computers. Don't have any of these? Draw a picture.

### 2) Create scale

To show the size of an artifact or site, place something of known size beside it for the photo, like a coin (in closeups) or a person.

### 3) Capture context

An artifact's location is often connected to the area that surrounds it. Is an artifact near an old tent ring? Is it close to other objects that might have been used alongside it? Try and demonstrate these relationships in pictures.

### 4) Objects and sites have many sides

Take pictures of an artifact or a site from multiple angles. Sometimes different perspectives will shed new light on an object and its original use.

### 5) Location, location, location

Try to remember where your photographs were taken and include this information with the photo. Sometimes it helps to capture a visible landmark in the photo or to take a GPS reading.



# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Sites

## What is considered to be an archaeological site in Nunavut?

In Nunavut, an archaeological site is considered to be any site where an archaeological artifact is found. A site can be as big as a whole ancient campground, or as small as a scattering of old antler flakes from somebody making a tool hundreds of years ago. It is important to note that archaeological sites are not only areas formerly used by Inuit people, but can include areas with non-Inuit artifacts such as explorers' cairns and trading post goods.

## Who is allowed to excavate or alter an archaeological site?

No one is allowed to excavate, alter or disturb an archaeological site unless they have a Class 2 permit. This means that Nunavummiut and other people without permits should not:

- Dig up old antler and bone from archaeological sites;
- Remove artifacts they find at archaeological sites;
- Remove stones from old tent rings, inuksuit and other structures.

Many modern camping spots, cabins and outpost camps are near archaeological sites, and these sites can become threatened by modern camp activities. It is recommended that camp residents take extra consideration of not accidentally disturbing or damaging their archaeological heritage. If you go to a camp or cabin and you come across archaeological evidence nearby, please contact IHT for advice on how to manage your camp activities without threatening any old structures or artifacts.

Even if an archaeological site is under water, a permit is still needed to disturb or take things from it. This includes shipwrecks, fish weirs and areas where artifacts have fallen to the bottom of lakes or the seabed. With the exception



# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Sites

of search and rescue operations, no one should go within 30 meters of an underwater site unless they have a Class 1 permit.

## What happens to an archaeological site when an excavation is finished?

A person who excavates an archaeological site has to restore the site as close to its original state as possible once the excavation is finished. As part of Class 2 permit applications, an archaeologist must specifically describe what measures will be taken to restore a site once it has been modified or excavated. Even if a site has already been fully excavated and restored, it is still considered an archaeological site, and a class 2 permit is needed by anyone who wishes to dig there again.

## What happens if development and construction projects occur near archaeological sites?

There are many forms of development that can endanger the archaeological sites of an area. These include:

- Projects that cut lines through the landscape, such as the building of roads, winter roads, and pipelines.
- Projects that take things out of the ground, such as mining, gravel and sand removal and the creation of landfills.
- Projects that create heavy traffic on certain parts of the landscape, such as recreational areas, residential areas, and the use of heritage sites in tourism.
- Projects that establish large scale camps and infrastructure on the landscape, such as oil, mineral and gas exploration.



# Best Practices in Nunavut Heritage: Sites

Before a development project even begins, there are several steps that a developer has to follow in relation to the area's archaeological sites:

1. Developers must have an initial heritage study done on the land where work is going to take place. This study roughly identifies the number of archaeological sites in the area, and the likelihood of it being an important archaeological area.
2. A list is made of all the sites that might be changed or damaged if development takes place. It is the obligation of the developer to hire and pay for a qualified archaeologist to obtain an archaeology permit and perform this study. The developer will use the results of the inventory to figure out costs and the best way to proceed with the development project.
3. The number and type of archaeology sites near the proposed development area are used to come up with an archaeological value that decides what measures will be taken either to avoid and fully protect the sites, or to lessen the amount of harm that development does to the sites.
4. A mitigation plan has to be built between developers and the Department of Culture and Heritage to continue development in the area. Options might be to protect the area's sites and relocate development, or to excavate and record the sites and continue with development as planned.
5. Over the course of construction, development areas often have to be monitored to make sure that no new sites appear, and that known sites are being managed according to the mitigation plan.



## **Are Inuit allowed to harvest bones and ivory from archaeological sites to make carvings or artwork?**

In Nunavut, digging up old sites to remove items without a permit is not allowed. Even if the whalebone and ivory found in old sites has not been carved or visibly altered, they are still considered to be archaeological artifacts.

## **Topics for classroom discussion**

- *Should the old have to make way for the new in Nunavut? Have a classroom debate as to whether new development projects in Nunavut should be allowed to build over old sites or put them at risk? Should new developments such as mines, roads, and houses be considered more important than old sites that no one uses anymore?*
- *Should Inuit be allowed to re-use their ancestors' belongings as they see fit? Discuss the pros and cons of recycling old materials into new art.*



# Classroom Archaeology

## Thinking about migration

As a class, consider the entry of Inuit into the Canadian Arctic from the perspective of migration. Research what conditions in Alaska would have been like for the early Thule people: What were their settlements, jobs and daily lives like? What new challenges did the Canadian Arctic environment represent? Refresh students' memory of early conditions in the Canadian Arctic by playing the Arctic migration game on the *Arctic Peoples and Archaeology* website or CD ROM. Following this research, discuss current challenges that face Nunavummiut when they move to another community or country.

## Future archaeology

If the community you live in was suddenly abandoned, what would archaeologists find there in 500 years? Have students write a fictional archaeological report detailing the excavation of part or all of the community in the year

2515. What material traces would archaeologists find? What kind of past society would archaeologists interpret from these items? What messages about present day culture and society would they draw from these items? The Archaeological Institute of America lesson plan found at the URL below can also be used to introduce ideas of organic and inorganic materials into this activity:

[www.archaeological.org/sites/default/files/files/What%20Will%20Survive-edited.pdf](http://www.archaeological.org/sites/default/files/files/What%20Will%20Survive-edited.pdf)

## Tools of the trade: identifying artifacts through research, stories and experience

Present each student with a tool (or photo of a tool) alongside a description of the setting where the tool was found. Examples could include a modern tool from a carpentry shop, or an old tool from a local museum. Students should research the tool sufficiently to describe what





the object is, and how it is used. They should then collect personal stories related to that item from family, elders, or other community members. If possible, students should try using the item (or a similar item) themselves to better understand how it works. Students should then prepare a short paper or presentation describing if and how adding stories and personal experience to the item changed the way they understood that tool.

## Signs of the times

Have students design an inaugural exhibit for the opening of the new Nunavut territorial museum. What five objects would they include to represent the whole of Nunavut and its history? Have them explain what objects they chose and why these objects are important to the territory and its history.

## CSI Nunavut

As an exercise in storytelling, have students create a short story based on the following scenario: A team of archaeologists visiting a community unearths a mysterious artifact during their excavation. This artifact may hold the clue to an unsolved event that happened in the community's past. Have students write this story with at least three references to the information learned about the yearly research schedule of an archaeologist. References can be made to the timing of fieldwork, the processes of analysis or the reporting deadlines for archaeological research.

## Picture perfect

How can stories be told through photographs? Using this booklet's guidelines for photographing archaeological artifacts and sites, have students practice capturing context through photography. Students should take turns with a digital camera to photograph



# Classroom Archaeology

one item in the classroom or school. Their photographs should concentrate on communicating as much information as possible about the item without using any words. Following the activity have a classroom slideshow, with each student explaining the information they tried to capture in their photo.

## The art of fiction for art-i-facts

If artifacts actually spoke to archaeologists, what would they say? As a way to gain perspective on the life history of artifacts, have students write a short piece of fiction following the life of an artifact from its initial creation from raw materials to its various uses and eventual discard. Have students write this story in the first person from the perspective of the artifact.

## Lost in translation

The oral tradition is a valuable tool for passing along knowledge about the past. As a class, discuss what, if any, cultural rules apply to passing along stories and knowledge to make sure that their messages travel through generations unchanged.

As a practical activity to explain how messages can become altered through time have the classroom engage in the following game:

Before starting the lesson, find or make a set of blank paper booklets so that each person in the classroom has one. There should be one page in the booklet for each person in the room. On the first page of each booklet, have the students write a simple, one sentence statement or piece of knowledge. Have each student then pass their book to the right. The next student must then draw an image that represents the sentence that was just written. The books are again passed to the right,



and the next student (without looking at the preceding page) must translate the image back into a sentence. The alternation between image and sentence continues until the booklet has reached its original owner.

Finish the activity by comparing the difference between the first sentence and the final sentence, noting the gradual progression of miscommunication regarding the first sentence's original meaning.

## To each their own past

As a classroom, discuss the idea of single vs. multiple histories. How do personal experiences and modern politics change people's understandings regarding the past? How can different people understand a historical event or artifact in completely different ways?

As an example of how history can have many opposing truths, watch the National Film Board documentary movie *Qimmit: A*

*Clash of Two Truths* (2010). This movie runs for approximately 70 minutes and explores multiple narratives that exist around the killing of sled dogs by RCMP from the 1950s-70s in the Canadian Arctic. The video is available for free online at the nfb website: [www.nfb.ca/film/qimmit-clash\\_of\\_two\\_truths](http://www.nfb.ca/film/qimmit-clash_of_two_truths).







# References and Resources

## Booklet References

- Mary Wilman. 2002. “Governance through Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Changing the paradigm for the future of Inuit society.” In *The Power of Traditions: Identities, Politics and Social Sciences, Keynotes presented at the Fourth International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences*, edited by Murielle Nagy. Quebec: AGMV Marquis.
- Janet McGrath. 2003. “Interview: Janet McGrath on IQ.” *Meridian. Canadian Polar Commission*. Spring/Summer 2003: pp.5-10.
- Douglas Stenton. 2003. *Guidelines for Applicants and Holders of Nunavut Territory Archaeology and Palaeontology Permits*. Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage available at: [www.ch.gov.nu.ca](http://www.ch.gov.nu.ca)

## Teaching Resources for Archaeology and Community Research Relationships in Nunavut

- **Taloyoak Stories of Thunder and Stone by Inuit Heritage Trust**

This virtual exhibit explores the history of the thunder house and related archaeological sites around the community of Taloyoak. The website has many teaching resources included for Nunavut classrooms, and can be found at: [www.taloyoaknunavut.ca](http://www.taloyoaknunavut.ca)

- ***Arctic Peoples and Archaeology by Inuit Heritage Trust***

This multimedia CD outlines the history of arctic peoples in Nunavut. The CD-ROM can be purchased, or tried for free, at the IHT website.



## References and Resources

- ***Working in Research: A Community Guide to Understanding and Participating in Research Programs* by Brendan Griebel and Nunavut Arctic College**
- ***Ancient Harpoon Heads of Nunavut, and Ancient Stone Tools of Nunavut*, by Robert Park and Douglas Stenton**

This two volume teacher's manual and course textbook is designed to introduce advanced level students to various research methodologies and the skills needed to conduct research projects in their communities.

These booklets introduce readers to the history of two types of artifacts commonly found in Nunavut. They can be purchased from the Nunavut Arctic College or Inuit Heritage Trust website.

- ***Negotiating Research Relationships: A Guide for Communities* by Nunavut Research Institute and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.**

This booklet informs Nunavummiut about their rights and responsibilities when participating in research.



**“When we speak about the origins and history of our culture, we do so from a perspective that is different from that often used by non-Inuit who have studied our past...Our history is simply our history and we feel that the time has come for us as Inuit to take more control over determining what is important and how it should be interpreted. To be of value, our history must be used to instruct our young and to inform all of us about who we are as Inuit in today’s world”**

- Inuit Tapirisaat Kanatami 2012

[www.itk.ca](http://www.itk.ca)