



Norse Profiling

This MysteryQuest examines the likely characteristics of Norse common-folk by trying to interpret ancient stone writing about the death of a Norse man. Students learn about Viking society, political and economic structure, and culture through a careful investigation of sources.

A critical thinking challenge to accompany

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History
Where Is Vinland?

<http://www.mysteryquests.ca/quests/30/indexen.html>

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based on an approach developed by The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC²)
www.tc2.ca

Ages

11–14

Courses

Canadian history, social studies, civics, law

Key Topics

- Family and community life in Norse society
- Viking political and economic structure
- Norse values and culture

Critical Challenges

- Infer characteristics of Norse society, politics, economy, and culture from evidence in the sources.
- Create a realistic profile of a typical Norse man.

Broad Understanding

- Students will draw inferences using evidence found in a selection of sources.
- Students will learn about the politics, economy, culture, and social organization of the Norse people.

Requisite Tools



Background knowledge

- knowledge of the political, economic, cultural, and societal structure of the Vikings



Criteria for judgment

- criteria for evaluating whether inferences are sound (e.g., plausible, imaginative)



Critical thinking vocabulary

- inference
- evidence



Thinking strategies

- data chart



Habits of mind

- attention to detail

Independent Study

This lesson can be used as a self-directed activity by having students individually or in pairs work their way through the guided instructions and support material found on <http://www.mysteryquests.ca/quests/30/indexen.html>.

Whole Class Activities

On the following pages are suggested modifications of the self-guided procedures found on the MysteryQuest website for use with a class of students. For convenience, each item of support material and a set of procedures are linked to the relevant suggestions for whole class instruction.

Suggested Activities

Set the context

- You may wish to introduce runestones and runic script to students by using [Step 1: Learn about runes and runic script](#) as a guide.
- Explain what a profile is by showing students some examples of profiles (e.g., psychological, criminal, astrological) or by discussing “generational profiling” (e.g., The “Me” Generation). You may even wish to have students take a [psychological profiling test](#). Discuss the elements included in most profiles (e.g., generic wording, wide-stretching statements, comments not exact yet would apply to a large number of people in that group).
- Using [Introduction](#) as a guide, explain to students the background to their investigation.

Discuss the challenge

- Using [The Task](#) as a guide, explain to students that their challenge, working in small groups, is to create a profile of the common Norse man, including his beliefs and values along with a description of the political, economic, societal, and cultural context he would likely have lived within.

Learn about drawing inferences

- Using [Step 2: Learn about drawing inferences](#) as a guide, explain the concept of “inferences” and use an example from the documents about the Vikings to illustrate how to draw an inference from the information provided. Ensure students understand the criteria for evaluating an inference that they should keep in mind as they make inferences.

Gather evidence and make inferences

- Distribute copies of [Analyzing Norse Life](#) to each student.
- Divide the class into groups of six. Using [Step 3: Gather evidence about Norse life](#) as a guide, assign one document to each student to read. Once they have finished reading, making inferences, and providing supporting evidence, instruct students in each group to share their findings with each other.
- You may wish to have students peer assess their classmates’ inferences using [Assessing the Evidence and Inferences](#).

Create the profile

- Using [Step 4: Prepare your profile](#) as a guide, review with students the concept of a profile. Divide student groups into pairs and instruct each pair to write a profile using the inferences and evidence on their chart. Be sure to ask students to keep in mind the criteria for evaluating sound inferences, that is, that they are both plausible and imaginative.
- Once pairs have completed their profiles, invite them to return to their larger groups, which can then peer assess their work using [Assessing the Profile](#).
- Invite students to revise their work given the results of the peer assessment.

Evaluation

- Use the rubric [Assessing the Evidence and Inferences](#) to evaluate students' gathering of evidence and drawing of inferences about Norse life.
- Use the rubric [Assessing the Profile](#) to evaluate students' profiles of the Norse man.

Extension

- Invite students individually or as a class to pursue the suggested activities listed in [Extension](#).