

**Teachers' Notes**

## **Why did Inuit survive while the explorers did not?**

*This MysteryQuest investigates how the Franklin explorers and Inuit lived in the Arctic, explaining what made each group successful or unsuccessful.*

*A critical thinking challenge to accompany  
Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History  
The Franklin Expedition*

<http://www.mysteryquests.ca/quests/42/indexen.html>

Author: Heather McGregor  
Editors: Warren Woytuck, Ruth Sandwell  
Series Editor: Roland Case

Based on an approach developed by The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC<sup>2</sup>)  
[www.tc2.ca](http://www.tc2.ca)

**Ages:** 11–14

**Courses**

Canadian history, social studies

**Key topics**

- Arctic explorers, Sir John Franklin
- Inuit life
- History of contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples

**Critical Challenges**

- Identify challenges posed by Arctic environmental conditions.
- Use primary sources to compare how Europeans and Inuit in the past used different resources, tools and skills to address Arctic challenges on a daily basis.
- Explain which strategies used by Europeans and Inuit allowed them to be successful or unsuccessful.
- Make recommendations to Europeans about what they could have learned from Inuit about daily life in the Arctic.

## **Broad Understanding**

- Students will learn about the different resources, tools and skills used by Europeans and Inuit to address Arctic environmental conditions in the mid-nineteenth century.

## **Requisite Tools**

### **Background knowledge**

- conditions in the Arctic environment
- British exploration in Arctic environments
- Inuit ways of living

### **Criteria for judgment**

- criteria for a sound recommendation (for example, supported with evidence, plausible)

### **Critical thinking vocabulary**

- evidence
- reasoned judgment

### **Thinking strategies**

- data chart for collecting evidence and facilitating comparison
- letter template for writing a convincing recommendation

### **Habits of mind**

- attention to detail

## **Independent study**

This lesson can be used as a self-directed activity by having students work their way individually or in pairs through the guided instructions and support material found at [MysteryQuest 42](#).

## **Whole Class Activities**

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

## Suggested activities

### Set the context

- Invite students to imagine they are going on a trip in the Arctic for the first time. Brainstorm ideas about what daily activities might be part of an expedition (for example, sleeping, gathering food, preparing food, setting up camp), and what supplies and tools they would need to take to survive in the Arctic.
- Using [Introduction](#) as a guide, explain to students the context of this critical challenge.

### Introduce the task

- Using [The task](#) as a guide, explain to students that they will work in small groups to learn about how the explorers and Inuit used different resources, tools and skills to live in the Arctic, and determine why the explorers were not successful.
- Instruct students to work in their groups using [Background Information: Arctic Conditions \(Activity Sheet 1\)](#) to fill in column 1 of the chart [Daily Life in the Arctic \(Activity Sheet 3\)](#). They should provide at least one challenge Arctic conditions might create for each area of daily life.

### Learn about the event

- As a class, read about the story of the Franklin Expedition by reviewing [The Mysteries of Franklin's Last Voyage](#). Ask students to begin thinking about what daily life must have been like for the European explorers in the Arctic more than 150 years ago. Invite students to share their ideas.

### Look for evidence

- Refer to [Step 2: Learn about the Franklin Expedition](#). Guide students in using the primary source material found in [Evidence list \(Activity Sheet 2\)](#) to find evidence about how the explorers prepared for daily life in the Arctic. Instruct students to record the evidence in column 2 of the [Daily life in the Arctic \(Activity Sheet 3\)](#) chart. Students may fill in column 3 individually (rating how prepared the explorers were to survive) and then discuss in their small groups whether their ratings were the same or different.
- Provide the evidence related to Inuit from the [Evidence list \(Activity Sheet 2\)](#) next. Repeat these steps with students to fill in columns 4 and 5.
- If students cannot find all the information called for by the chart, discuss with them how historical sources do not always provide answers to our questions, and parts of the past remain unknown.

### **Identify reasons for success**

- Refer to [Step 4: Identify why Inuit were successful](#). Discuss the importance of supporting explanations with evidence from the historical sources, and provide an example.
- Instruct students to complete the bottom sections of [Daily life in the Arctic chart \(Activity Sheet 3\)](#). Invite students to share their responses with the class, discussing any differences among reasons and explanations.

### **Make a convincing recommendation**

- Refer to the [Lessons in daily life letter \(Activity Sheet 4\)](#) and prepare the class by discussing the components of a strong and convincing recommendation (for example, use of evidence, relationship to conditions, clear advantage). Instruct students to write a convincing recommendation letter to the European explorers about the three most important resources, tools or skills the Franklin expedition could have learned about from Inuit.

### **Evaluation**

- The Assessment rubric, [Assessing the evidence and recommendations](#) may be used to assess the plausibility of recommendations.

### **Extension**

- Invite students to work individually, in small groups, or as a class to answer extension questions listed in the [MQ42 Extension](#) section.

### **Support Materials**

[Activity Sheet 1: Background Information](#)

[Activity Sheet 2: Evidence list](#)

[Activity Sheet 3: Daily life in the Arctic](#)

[Activity Sheet 4: Lessons in daily life letter](#)

[Assessment Rubric: Assessing the evidence and recommendations](#)