

## ʔeləw̓kʷ Belongings



Belongings in progress, 2014. Courtesy of secəlenəxʷ—Morgan Guerin.

“ We need to be respectful and remember that these belongings are somebody’s. ”

čəmqʷa:t — Larissa Grant, 2014

“ They belong to someone. They didn’t just appear in some pile of dirt, already carved or shaped. It belonged to someone. That’s how it was always explained to us. ”

sʔəyəʔəq — Larry Grant, 2014

“ You see their artwork, what’s in the archaeological digs from čəsnaʔəm, and that gives you a real insight into the talent and the abilities that they had. ”

Sialamaltan — Merv Point, 2014



## Ancestral Belongings

Have you ever felt that a word did not capture the importance, meaning, or relevance of a thing, event, or experience you were trying to describe?

For us, that is the case with the words “object” and “artifact.” They do not communicate the importance or ongoing relevance of our connections. Instead, we use the term “belonging.” A belonging is something that people own, families cherish, and communities hold as important. Belongings are important to our people because they represent a piece of our history and aspects of our cultural heritage and our continuing relationships.

Since the late 1800s, our ancestors’ belongings have been excavated and removed from our land by archaeologists, grave robbers, and the general population. Displaced belongings and ancestral remains were treated as trade goods by museums and institutions across the world.

Our community encourages the return of such belongings to their home so that we may care for them and learn from them. The returning of cultural belongings does not have to be adversarial. We have received belongings in a number of ways, including personal returns where we have shared a meal together and gathered the stories about how people came to have the belongings. We have even had someone return belongings through the mail and attach a handwritten story of explanation. Mindsets have changed over the generations and we have approached every return on a case-by-case basis. Our teachings tell us to go into this type of sensitive work with an open heart and an open mind.

### We encourage you to:

- Use the term belonging(s)
- Remember that our ancestors used belongings in their everyday lives
- Understand that belongings are still important to us
- Learn that belongings help us know our history
- Appreciate that belongings show the skills and talents of Musqueam people, both in the past and in the present

**Big Ideas**

The belongings unearthed in archaeological digs once belonged to someone and carry value and importance to our community.

**Understandings**

Students will understand that our ancestors' belongings continue to hold value to our community today.

**Materials**

- Ancestral Belongings Panels

**Activity**

- As a class or in groups, students can read and discuss the information shared on the Ancestral Belongings Panels included in the kit. Discuss the implications of colonial settlements, the excavation of belongings, and the distribution of those belongings to museums. You can also connect to *tə ʔi ɲa leqəməx*—Animation History of the Fraser River Delta (online), that shows increasing amounts of land colonized by settlers.

**Suggestions for starting a discussion**

- What do you think the difference is between an object and a belonging?
- Consider the types of materials that would be able to survive for thousands of years.
- What do you think the term “excavation” mean?
- How would you feel if your grandparents' skeletons were in someone's private collection?
- What do you think is the role of a museum?

**Connections**

- Community Voices Video: *sʔəyətəq*—Larry Grant talks about belongings ([www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit](http://www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit)), p. 102
- Wayne Point (Smokey) Community Profile, p. 24
- *tə ʃxʷʔaməts tə ʃxʷməθkʷəyəm*—Musqueam's Ancestral Territory map, p. 76
- *tə ʔi ɲa leqəməx*—Animation History of the Fraser River Delta ([www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit](http://www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit)), p. 87

## Ancestral Belongings Extension

In groups or as individuals, students can research the various institutions shown on the Ancestral Belongings Panels (#2) with the global map showing museums that now house our belongings. Discuss the implications of our belongings being taken away from us and housed at institutions across the world. Some institutions (including MOA) have online collections which can be searched for Musqueam belongings.

<http://collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/collection-online/search?keywords=musqueam>

### Extension Questions

- What do you think is the role of a museum?
- Who do you think should own the belongings kept in museums, especially those removed from our ancient villages?
- What if you had to travel across the world to see the belongings of your family and ancestors?
- Consider the types of materials that would be able to survive for thousands of years. Ask what is missing and why?

### Resources

- Musqueam website – ʕəsnaʔəm  
<https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/our-story/public-education-outreach/musqueam-gallery/>
- Museum of Anthropology Collection Online Database  
<http://collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/>

### Connections

- Community Voices Videos ([www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit](http://www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit)), p. 99
  - sʔəyəʔəq — Larry Grant talks about belongings
  - xʷən yəʔe:ý tə ʂxʷtəhimʂ kʷə syəwəneʔ — Our ancestors' ways continue
- Vigil at ʕəsnaʔəm: Critical Media Analysis, p. 122
- tə ʔi nə ʔeʔəməx — Animation History of the Fraser River Delta ([www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit](http://www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit)), p. 87

## Belongings Activity Cards

**\* To begin, use the quotes by community members to engage the class in discussion.**

“ When you’re making something, their words come back. Our ancestors are not gone. They are kept alive through our work. ”  
secəlenəx<sup>w</sup>—Morgan Guerin, 2015

“ I’m still learning the precise process of making such tools, even after nine years of hard work. My ancestors had to have a lot of patience and knowledge to make these tools. ”  
Wayne Point (Smokey), 2015

“ It’s not just the act of doing things. It is how we do them that makes us who we are. ”  
secəlenəx<sup>w</sup>—Morgan Guerin, 2014

“ With every tool I make, I learn about my ancestors, my culture, and myself. ”  
Wayne Point (Smokey), 2015



## Belongings Activity Cards

Included in the teaching kit are images of tools and materials made by Wayne Point (Smokey) and secəlenəx<sup>w</sup> — Morgan Guerin. The makers view traditional tool-making as a way to learn about our ancestors and our culture. In turn, their work can help to educate others about our ancient technologies. These tools and materials are referred to with the term “belongings” because they, too, are valued belongings of their makers and of our community.

The contemporary belongings displayed in this teaching kit demonstrate the ingenuity of our people and help teach us that ancient knowledge has a place in the 21st century. The technologies developed by our people were integral to our survival and it is important to preserve these traditions as a connection to our cultural heritage.

### Big Ideas

Traditions help us to learn about our ancestors and maintain our culture. Teachings and knowledge are shared through traditional practices.

### Understandings

Students will understand that the makers are working to learn how to create the tools made by their ancestors. They will also gain a better idea of why traditional tools are relevant in the 21st century.

### Materials

- Belongings Activity Cards

### Activity

Divide students into groups and hand out the Belongings Activity Cards. Encourage students to engage with their object by looking closely, imagining the texture and weight of the material, and discussing their thoughts with each other. Each activity card includes quotes from the makers and open-ended questions to help deepen student engagement. Students can report on their findings to the rest of the class.

The questions provided are meant to inspire and to encourage students’ own inquiries. We encourage you and your students to consider “Why?” after each answer or shared thought.

### Suggestions for starting a discussion

- When do you think these belongings were made? What makes you say that?
- Have you ever made something by hand? Share something about the process of making it or how you felt about the finished product.
- Review the makers' profiles and ask why both feel it is so important today to make the tools of their ancestors.
- Can you think of anything that you, your parents, and your grandparents all do in the same way or manner?
- How do you think these belongings are connected? Be creative!
- Sharing these belongings is a sign of respect. Discuss how, as a class, you can provide a safe temporary home for our belongings.
- Ask yourself, if this was your belonging how would you want others to treat it?

### Connections

- Community Profiles, p. 18
  - Wayne Point (Smokey)
  - secālenəx<sup>w</sup>—Morgan Guerin

### Belongings Activity Cards Extension

“The majority of my work is done using traditional tools. Some of the resources I use are very scarce and difficult to access.”

secālenəx<sup>w</sup>—Morgan Guerin, 2015

“Many of the material types are disappearing. We need a huge volcano to erupt to get some more basalt!”

Wayne Point (Smokey), 2015

secālenəx<sup>w</sup>—Morgan Guerin and Wayne Point (Smokey) have both expressed concern about the scarcity and unavailability of natural resources used when making traditional tools. There are many contributing causes for this lack of material resources, including limited Aboriginal rights that extend to natural resources, logging and other natural resource extraction processes like mining, climate change, and many more.

As a class consider these issues with regard to how they impact traditional practices and makers like secālenəx<sup>w</sup>—Morgan Guerin and Wayne Point (Smokey), as well as the general public.

### Extension Questions

- Where do you think the makers found the materials to make these belongings? Do you think they can be found locally? Why or why not?
- List everything you can think of that could influence the accessibility of these resources to our community.

### Resources

- Climate Change Impacts  
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=BE3D1E436EE14ADE8255FA0AD060659C>
- Effects of Climate Change in British Columbia  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/climate-change>
- Article: “Climate change to impact B.C. agriculture: study”  
<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/Climate+change+impact+agriculture+study/8455586/story.html>
- Article: “Climate change looms as major threat to key B.C. industries”  
<https://www.biv.com/article/2015/2/climate-change-looms-major-threat-key-bc-industrie/>
- Overview of Canada’s forest industry  
<http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/industry/13311>
- Article: “Canada Largest Contributor to Deforestation Worldwide: Study”  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/09/05/canada-deforestation-worst-in-world\\_n\\_5773142.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/09/05/canada-deforestation-worst-in-world_n_5773142.html)

### Connections

- Community Voices Videos ([www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit](http://www2.moa.ubc.ca/musqueamteachingkit)), p. 99
  - qiyəplenəx<sup>w</sup> — Howard E. Grant talks about environmental impact
  - Louise Point (Weeze) talks about plants
- tax<sup>w</sup>təna:t — Wendy Grant-John Community Profile, p. 21