Port au Choix: A ‘Choice’ Place for First Nations
Continuous Settlement in the Gulf of St. Lawrence Region

Lesson Overview
In this lesson, students will explore why Port au Choix, which is located near the Strait of Belle Isle entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland and Labrador has been a choice place for people to live for thousands of years. Over the centuries, many different cultural groups have regularly settled in the region to harvest the rich resources of the sea, land and air. The Maritime Archaic Indians first migrated to the area almost 7,000 years ago during a period of global warming. Some 3,000 years later, during a period of climatic global cooling, the Groswater Paleoeskimo and Dorset Paleoeskimo migrated to the area to live on the headlands to hunt seals and walrus. Today, Port au Choix is still a vibrant fishing community.

Grade Level
Grades 9 - 12 (secondary school)

Time Required
Two 60-minute lessons

Curriculum Connection
Atlantic Provinces Curriculum for Social Studies: Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAME): Prince Edward Island
Canadian Geography and Canadian History

**Can be modified to meet the curriculum needs of any province

Link to the Canadian Atlas Online (CAOL)
• Explore by Theme: Early Survival
  http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/

• Students can also check out the following map websites:
  Historical Atlas of Canada
  http://www.historicalatlas.ca/website/hacolp/browse.htm
  Atlas of Canada Website
  http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/topo/map

Additional Resources, Materials and Equipment Required
• Computer Lab or access to the Internet or photocopies of information from the websites listed below:
  Port au Choix National Historic Site of Canada:
  http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/portauchoix/index_e.asp
Memorial University: [http://www.heritage.nf.ca/aboriginal/maritime.html](http://www.heritage.nf.ca/aboriginal/maritime.html)

**The Rooms Museum** (Dr. Priscilla Renouf’s article on the Dorset and Groswater Palaeoeskimo and photos of “Phillips Garden”.)


**The Rooms Museum Notes #12**: (Dr. Jim Tuck on the Maritime Archaic Indians)


Check out fun and games activities about ancient people:
[http://www.heritage.nf.ca/games/arts/spuzzle1.html](http://www.heritage.nf.ca/games/arts/spuzzle1.html)

Map of archaeological sites in Newfoundland and Labrador:
[http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/pao/Arch%20Sites/Palaeoesk.htm](http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/pao/Arch%20Sites/Palaeoesk.htm)

Check out Tim Rast’s website: (Tim is an archaeologist who has perfected the Palaeoeskimo skill of tool making or flint knapped. He often demonstrates those ancient skills at The Rooms in St. John’s and designs jewellery based on the artefacts.)


- Maps – See listing of maps under [Link to the Canadian Atlas Online](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas) (above).
  - Atlantic Region - Port au Choix on the Great Northern Peninsula of NL (Point Riche Peninsula)
  - Eastern Seaboard and the Arctic region of North America
- **Student Activity Sheet #1** - [Summary Chart of activity at Port au Choix: A Special Place](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas)
  
  **NOTE for Student Activity Sheet #1**: Included are completed and blank versions to be used as an answer key as well as a source of background information for teachers to use for their general introduction to the lesson.

- **Student Activity Sheet # 2** - [Mapping Skills](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas)
- **Student Activity Sheet # 3** – [Technology & Settlement Patterns](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas)
- DVD or VCR copies of one of the following videos could be used if available:
  - “*Quest for Ancient Footsteps*” – 49 min. Curzon Village Productions Inc. doc.
  - "*Ancient Cultures, Bountiful Seas*“ - Parks Canada interpretive video (13 min.)
  
  (For information see the public library video collection at:
  [http://www.nlpl.ca/services/videocollection.php](http://www.nlpl.ca/services/videocollection.php) or contact Parks Canada.

**Main Objective**
The primary goal of the lesson is to have students better understand the physical and human factors that have made Port au Choix, on the Great Northern Peninsula of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, a choice location for Aboriginal and European people to settle over the centuries.
**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the settlement and migratory patterns of the Ancient Aboriginal groups who settled at Port au Choix, near the Strait of Belle Isle, Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Identify the physical features of the Port au Choix region that influenced different ancient cultural groups to settle in that northern region of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Identify how the Maritime Archaic Indians, the Groswater Palaeoeskimo and Dorset Palaeoeskimo adapted to life on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland and Labrador including: settlement patterns, economic activity and technology, migration and transportation etc.
- Examine how environmental changes or global warming and cooling affected the different cultural groups’ abilities to adapt and live in the region.
- Identify (influences of migration on the settlement of the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador)- push/pull factors involved in migration.
- Access information using online web-based resources.
- Analyze information form photos and maps.
- Organize information using charts, maps, and reports.

**The Lesson**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Activity</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. After listening to the teacher’s Power Point or general introduction to Port au Choix students should view one of the two recommended videos.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
<td>2. After viewing the video students could take part in a brief discussion about the topic and continue to take jot notes on the worksheet provided prior to going on to other activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Teachers can get the background information needed for the presentation from the websites listed above plus the videos listed.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Use one of these approaches:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Give a PowerPoint or general introduction to Port au Choix as a choice location for people to settle for thousands of years. Go to the Canadian Atlas Online website at <a href="http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/">http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/</a> to show students where Port au Choix is located and the route the different cultural groups took to reach the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Hand out the “Student Activity Sheets #1 - Summary Chart of activity at Port au Choix: A Special Place” prior to watching the video to use to take jot notes.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. If available show the 13 min. Parks Canada video titled, “Ancient Cultures, Bountiful Seas” or the 49 min. documentary, “Quest for</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**THE CANADIAN ATLAS ONLINE**

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND – GRADES 9 – 12**

www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas
### Lesson Development Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>There are three attached Student Activity Sheets which teachers can give the students for independent work. Teachers can choose to use all or select the Activity Sheets that best meets the needs of the class. One Activity Sheet could be completed the first day and two on the second day. OR: If a computer lab is available students can work individually or in groups to search the recommended Internet websites to answer the questions on the worksheets provided. For example, search the Canadian Atlas Online website: <a href="http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/">http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/</a> and check out Early History and Heritage to find information about the area. OR: If a computer lab is not available teachers should photo copy 3 sets of the material from the Internet sites recommended above and divide the class into groups to work on the material in the classroom. OR: If using photo copied handouts of the Internet material, students could work in groups of 4 or 5 and rotate from one station to another, to do the research needed to complete the assigned worksheets. 3. Complete assignments as instructed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Review material introduced last day. Assign another of the Student Activity Sheets. Supervise and assist students with the activities. 4. Students should continue their research on the Internet or use the in-class handouts to complete the following worksheets:  - <em>Student Activity Sheet # 2: Mapping Skills</em>  - <em>Student Activity Sheet # 3: Technology &amp; Settlement Patterns</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

5. Initiate a discussion of what the class has learned about the ancient cultural groups who lived in Port au Choix.

6. Either review the answers to the activity Sheets as a group in class or collect and mark individually.

5. Report and discuss their findings to the class.

6. Students may either hand in the completed Student Activities Sheets to the teacher for marking or answers can be corrected as a class.

Lesson Extension

Archaeologist and geographers have spent many years surveying and studying the Port au Choix area. Profile the work of two of the scientists who have carried out major research in the area.

Archaeologists:  
Dr. Priscilla Renouf  
Dr. James Tuck

Geographers:  
Dr. Trevor Bell (Geomorphology)  
Dr. Selma Barkham (Historical Geography)

Assessment of Student Learning

- The student activity sheets could be collected and marked for completeness.
- Maps can be marked for completeness and accuracy.
- Students can create their own PowerPoint presentation that can be evaluated.
- Teacher can monitor students as the work independently or in groups for understanding.
- Students can be assessed on their participation in the class discussion.

Links to Canadian National Standards for Geography

**Essential Element #1:** The World in Spatial Terms  
- Map, globe, and globe use.

**Essential Element #2:** Places and Regions  
- Physical and human processes shape places and regions  
- The importance of places and regions to individual and social identity  
- Changes in places and regions over time

**Essential Element #4:** Human Systems  
- Impact of human migration  
- Changes in human settlement patterns over time
Essential Element #5: Environment and Society

- Use and sustainability of resources
- Environmental issues (e.g. global warming)

Geographic Skills #1: Asking Geographic Questions

- Plan and organize a geographic research project.

Geographic Skill #2: Acquiring Geographic Information

- Use a variety of research skills to locate and collect geographic data
- Use maps to collect and/or compile geographic information

Geographic Skill #3: Organizing Geographic Information

- Select and design appropriate forms of maps to organize geographic information
- Select and design appropriate forms of graphs, diagrams, tables and charts to organize geographic information

Geographic Skill #4: Analyzing Geographic Information

- Make inferences or draw conclusions from maps or other geographic representations
- Interpret and synthesize information obtained from a variety of sources i.e. graphs, charts, photos, text and diagrams
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maritime Archaic Traditions</th>
<th>Groswater Paleoeskimo</th>
<th>Dorset Paleoeskimo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>Called &quot;Archaic&quot; because these people were hunters and gatherers and &quot;Maritime&quot; because they relied on the sea and its products to sustain themselves.</td>
<td>The term &quot;Paleo-Eskimo&quot; (paleo=old) is used to refer to the peoples of the Arctic who lived before the Thule.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time of occupation</strong></td>
<td>7500 to 3500 years before present (B.P.)</td>
<td>2800 to 1900 years before present (B.P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of Origin – Migration Pattern</strong></td>
<td>Lived throughout Atlantic Canada and Maine. They migrated north into parts of Northern Labrador during periods of global warming.</td>
<td>An Arctic culture who migrated south from the Arctic to Newfoundland during a period of climatic cooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location - Where they lived.</strong></td>
<td>Lived in sheltered coves instead of the exposed coastal headlands of Phillip’s Garden on the Point Riche Peninsula.</td>
<td>Lived on the headlands at Phillip’s Garden on the Point Riche Peninsula in the spring to hunt seals and walrus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources - What they used, hunted.</strong></td>
<td>Northern Hunters and Gatherers – caught fish, seabirds and picked berries during the summer. Went inland during winter to hunt caribou and to fish in rivers.</td>
<td>Marine specialists - lived on the headlands and hunted seals, walrus.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tools - Technology</strong></td>
<td>Larger stone or ivory adzes and stone gouges were probably used for shaping bowls and dugout canoes. Fine woodworking was done with small knives made from beaver teeth in wood or antler handles.</td>
<td>Tiny finely crafted tools to harvest the marine resources. Including bone, ivory and antler side-notched harpoon endblades and micro-blades as well as small, sharp stone flakes like razors or pocket knives. The tools were made from Ramah chert and other stones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living Quarters</strong></td>
<td>Some evidence suggests they built wooden houses.</td>
<td>Seasonal Occupation – They lived in small family groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural &amp; Religious Beliefs</strong></td>
<td>Port au Choix had a large Maritime Archaic Indian cemetery that was discovered in 1967. Archaeological excavation uncovered well-preserved human remains and many grave goods. The items provided information about the Maritime Archaic society including their magical and religious beliefs and practices.</td>
<td>Carved bone, antler, ivory, and soapstone figurines of polar bears, humans, and birds found from the middens (garbage dumps) at the sites tell us much about the spiritual beliefs of those ancient people.</td>
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</table>
**Student Activity Sheet # 1**

**Summary Chart of Activity at Port au Choix: A Special Place**

Name: _____________________________

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<td>used, hunted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tools - Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living Quarters</td>
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</table>
Student Activity Sheet # 2:  
Mapping Skills

Name: _________________________

1. Find the location of Port au Choix in a Gazetteer or on the website:  
http://www.heritage.nf.ca/aboriginal/maritime.html  
What is the latitude and longitude for Port au Choix?  
__________________________________________________________

2. Look at the map of the Maritime Archaic Indians on the website:  
a. Name four sites or communities where the Maritime Archaic Indians may have lived in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.  
1. _________________________  
2. _________________________  
3. _________________________  
4. _________________________  
b. How far north did they migrate?  
__________________________________________________________  
c. How far south did they migrate?  
__________________________________________________________

3. Look at the map on Dr. James Tuck’s website of the Palaeoeskimo:  
a. Name four sites or communities where the Palaeoeskimo may have lived in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.  
1. _________________________  
2. __________________________  
3. ________________________  
4. __________________________  
b. How far north did they migrate?  
__________________________________________________________  
c. How far south on the island of Newfoundland did they migrate?  
__________________________________________________________

4. Read the information about the Maritime Archaic Indians on The Rooms Museum Notes #12 website:  
a. Create a blank outline map (http://www.geographynetwork.ca/website/black_outline/viewer.htm) or draw a map on the back of this handout to show the migration pattern of the Maritime Archaic Indians to Port au Choix.  

b. Describe the pattern below naming the provinces or territories they crossed.
c. When did this happen? Why?

d. On the map provided draw the migration pattern of the Groswater and Dorset Palaeoeskimo to Port au Choix.

e. Describe the pattern below naming the provinces or territories they crossed.

f. When did the Groswater Palaeoeskimo migrate to this area? Why?

g. When did the Dorset Palaeoeskimo migrate to this area? Why?

5. Draw a map of the Point Riche Peninsula and indicate on that map the location of each of the following. (See the Parks Canada site map of the area: http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/portauchoix/visit/carte-map_e.asp)
   
   i. Phillips Garden (Palaeoeskimo site)
   ii. Gould Site (Maritime Archaic Indian habitation site)
   iii. Spence Site (Recent Indians site)
   iv. Point Riche Lighthouse
   v. Maritime Archaic Indian Cemetery
   vi. Location of what was the island

How is where the Maritime Archaic Indian groups lived different from the Groswater and Dorset Palaeoeskimo groups? Why?
Student Activity Sheet # 3

Technology & Settlement Patterns

Name: _________________________

Technology - Tools

1. Look at photos and read the description of the Maritime Archaic tools on the website: 
http://www.elfshotgallery.com/maritime_archaic.htm
   a. Briefly describe and name of two tools that the Maritime Archaic Indians used.
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

   b. For what did they use those tools?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

   c. What materials did they use to make tools? Where is ‘Ramah Chert’ found?
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. Look at photos of the Groswater Paleoeskimo tools and Dorset Paleoeskimo tools on the Parks Canada website:
   http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/portauchoix/natcul/cultur_e.asp
   a. Briefly describe the size and shape of the Paleoeskimo tools. How do they compare to the size of the Maritime Archaic Indian tools?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

   b. Draw a picture to show the difference between a Groswater Paleoeskimo and Dorset Paleoeskimo endblade:

<table>
<thead>
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</table>
c. What specific part of the endblade helps archaeologist identify which tool belongs to each cultural group?

_________________________________________________________________________

d. What does the material that the Paleoeskimo used to make tools tell us about the migration or trading practices of those ancient people?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

e. How are the Dorset Paleoeskimo more specialised than the Groswater Palaeoeskimo in the technology they used to harvest the marine resources of the area? See The Rooms Museum Notes # 5 website http://www.therooms.ca/museum/mnotes5.asp

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Settlement Patterns – Living Space

1. Look at the painting of a Dorset Paleoeskimo dwelling on the website:

http://www.elfshotgallery.com/ancient.htm

Also check out the Parks Canada website:

http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/portauchoix/natcul/dorset_e.asp

a. Describe where the Dorset Paleoeskimo lived at Port au Choix. Why did they choose that location?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

b. What did the archaeological evidence found at the site tell us about the way the people lived and hunted in the region?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

c. How many house depressions are found at the Phillips Garden site?

_________________________________________________________________________

2. In 1967 residents of Port au Choix discovered an ancient Maritime Archaic Indian cemetery when digging a basement for a local theatre. Archaeologist then excavated the site.

a. How many skeletons were found in the cemetery?

_________________________________________________________________________
b. What kind of artefacts did the archaeologist find in the cemetery besides human remains?

_________________________________________________________________________

c. What does it tell us about their technology and the resources on which the people lived?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

d. Why were the bones and artefacts so well preserved? What kind of soil condition is found in the region?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

5. How is the Maritime Archaic Indian settlement pattern different from the settlement pattern of the Dorset Paleoeskimo who lived in the region? Why?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

6. Port au Choix has been a choice place for many different cultural groups to live over the centuries.

a. What are the dominant geographic (landforms and waterforms) features of the Port au Choix area?

_________________________________________________________________________

b. Summarize how the physical environment provided people with a means to live comfortably in the region (meet their needs and wants).

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________