Plain English Guide for 10 key objects

Arctic culture and climate
About this guide

This guide takes you on a tour of the exhibition. It looks at 10 objects.

It has a list of the objects and a map of the exhibition. The map shows you where to find the objects.

The introduction tells you what the exhibition is about. There is also a map of the Arctic.

The rest of this guide looks at each object in detail. There is a large picture of the object to help you find it.

Please let us know what you think about this guide. Tell a member of staff or email access@britishmuseum.org
object list

Each object has a number. These numbers are on the exhibition map on the next page. The map shows you where each object is in the exhibition.

1. Young woman’s clothes
2. Sled
3. Bag made of duck feet
4. Model of a winter camp
5. Suit for hunting whales
6. Mask
7. Figure of a man and child
8. Sealskin map
9. Stone landmark
10. Community project
Arctic culture and climate

exhibition map
Introduction to the exhibition

Arctic culture and climate

The Arctic is the most northerly place in the world. The land and water there is often covered in ice. The weather there is getting warmer. Within 80 years all the ice will have melted.

This is called climate change. It will affect everyone in the world.

The people who have always lived in the Arctic are called Indigenous Peoples. They have survived changes like this before. They work together to find new ways of doing things.

We can learn from them.
This map shows the countries that make up the Arctic. The North Pole is in the middle of the Arctic.
Introduction to Circumpolar views

The Arctic is made up of land from 8 different countries: Russia, USA, Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland.

Indigenous Peoples have lived in the Arctic for thousands of years. They have lots in common. This exhibition is about them.

The clothes in this section belong to some of the different groups of Indigenous Peoples.
Young woman’s clothes

These clothes are made from sealskin, beads, lace and ribbon.

They were made by skilled women a long time ago.

They were worn on special occasions.
Introduction to
At home with ice

In the Arctic ice is important. Many animals live there. Indigenous Peoples need those animals for food, clothing and travel.

Because of climate change Arctic weather is warming up. The ice is melting. Arctic animals are suffering.

How will people and animals live when the ice is gone?
Sled

This sled is made from wood.

It is shaped like a boat. This helps it slide across deep snow.

It was pulled by a male reindeer.
Introduction to Seasonal lives

In spring and summer the Arctic is full of animal and sea life. People hunt whales, walrus, birds and caribou (another name for wild reindeer) for food.

This food helps them survive the long cold winters.
Bag made of duck feet

In the Arctic, people hunt animals to eat.

They make useful things, like this bag, from what is left over.

Nothing is wasted.
Arctic culture and climate

Model of a winter camp

Reindeer herders follow reindeer for hundreds of miles.

In winter they live in camps like this.

This model shows daily life. Children are born. People trade. Dogs and reindeer rest.
5 Suit for hunting whales

A hunter wore this sealskin suit.

He jumped into the sea to catch a whale.

The suit kept him warm. It helped him float in the water.
Introduction to Embracing weather

The people living in the Arctic understand weather. This helps them hunt successfully. This means they do not get lost when it snows.

They tell stories about the weather.

They celebrate it.
Mask

This mask represents the North Wind spirit.
A person wore this mask at a winter celebration.
They danced.
They prayed for cold weather and good hunting.
Introduction to
Climates of the past

This section is about the groups of people who lived in the Arctic thousands of years ago.

They hunted on the land, snow, ice and sea.

They made tools for hunting and making art.
Arctic culture and climate

This tiny figure shows a man carrying a child on his shoulders. It is very old.

We do not know how it was used.

Was it a toy?

Was it a religious object?

What do you think?
Introduction to Resilient norths

Indigenous Peoples have been forced to change the way they live. By explorers. By traders. By invaders. And now by climate change.

They have coped by working together. They have tried new things. Sometimes they have fought back.

We can learn from them.
8 Sealskin map

This map shows the trade routes used by Indigenous Peoples.

People from outside the Arctic used the same routes. They traded with Indigenous Peoples.

It was not always peaceful.
Stone landmark

Stones like this mark important places.
It shows good spots for hunting and fishing.
It shows safe routes through the ice and snow.

It is also a sign of hope for Indigenous Peoples living in the Arctic.

This one was made for this exhibition.
Introduction to Reflections on climate change

Climate change harms the Arctic. It damages the lives of the people and animals living there.

Indigenous Peoples are fighting against climate change. Making art helps young people think about this problem.

They inspire others.

They ask people from around the world to fight climate change because it affects everyone.
Community project

This is a work of art. It was sewn by young and older people working together.

They made it for this exhibition.

They made lots of parkas (another word for coat). They stitched together sheets of special paper.

Each one has a different design printed onto it.