



Highlights of the First Peoples Gallery



DISCUSS

What other forms of indigenous technology can you see in the gallery?

Treasures from the Deep

Near the pithouse

Dentalia are mollusks found only in a few places off Vancouver Island. Their shells have been collected by First Nations communities for over a thousand years to be used as decoration and currency. Collecting these shells is not easy task, but communities created a genius way to reach them. Look in the case to find out about the 'dentalium broom'.



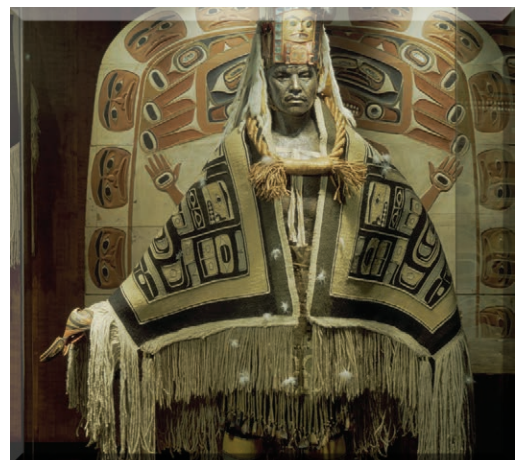
Leadership and Status

On the upper level

The Nisga'a chief is a hereditary chief of the community. His status is partly shown by the Chilkat robe that he wears (it takes a year to make one). In contrast, the Nlaka'pamux village headman is not chosen based on family lines, but the respect they gain from judgment, wisdom, and skills at hunting. You might notice his necklace is made of dentalia shells (see above), that were highly sought after by interior communities.

DISCUSS

How is leadership decided in your community?
How is someone's status displayed?





Post Contact

In the hallways around the Totem Gallery

In the 19th and 20th centuries, First Nations communities faced the devastating effects of colonial legislation and religion. The banning of traditional ceremonies and the introduction of residential schools for First Nations children tried to eliminate traditional languages, customs, and beliefs. Find the burned mask, and read a Kitimat woman's account of what her family was faced with.

DISCUSS

What are some thoughts and feelings that you have after reading this account?

First in the Collection

In the Totem gallery, find the 'Haida House Post' with '1' on its label. This was the first object to be recorded into the museum's ethnology collection.

DISCUSS

Why do you think the museum started to collect cultural objects like these in the first place?



How Do You Represent Culture?

The Nisga'a Treaty Display

Take a look at the Nisga'a display next to the Big House. The collection of Nisga'a cultural materials is shared between the Royal BC Museum and the Nisga'a Nation. Some of the cultural objects have been transferred back to their community, while others are kept in the First Peoples Gallery to display to the public.

What are the benefits of cultural objects being displayed in a museum? What are the benefits of cultural objects being returned to the Nisga'a Nation?

Tweet your response with **#museumquestion** to **@RoyalBCMuseum**, and search the hashtag to check out what other students had to say.

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