

**ASSIGNMENT: Then and Now: Who was the Bog Man?**

On a hot August day in 1984, Andy Mould was gathering peat moss from a bog in northern England. As he was about to throw a load of peat into a shredder, something strange caught his eye. He dropped the peat and took a closer look—a human foot was sticking out of the wet moss.

Mould reported his discovery, and scientists rushed to the site. They found the head, torso, and arms of a man who had died 2200 years earlier. Although the bones of the Bog Man had dissolved, the peat had turned his flesh to leather. He was so well preserved that scientists found traces of his last meal in his stomach. And they could even reconstruct the expression on his face.



Many different scientists worked to find out who the Bog Man was and what had happened to him. Archaeologists looked at the first puzzle. The Bog Man had died horribly. His throat had been cut and his skull smashed

before he was thrust under the water. Yet, he apparently died with a peaceful expression on his face. The archaeologists decided that the Bog Man had been sacrificed in a religious ritual. The ancient Druids, who lived in England thousands of years ago, sacrificed humans to their gods. They believed that each god wanted his victims killed in a certain way. Sacrifices to Esus had their throats cut; those offered to Teuttates were drowned. The Druid priests honored Taraninis by bludgeoning his victims to death.

Since the Bog Man had been executed all three ways, the scientists concluded that he had probably been sacrificed to all three gods. Therefore, he was an important man, perhaps even a priest. A priest might also have considered it an honor to be sacrificed, which would explain the peaceful expression on his face. Other investigators noted that the Bog Man had no calluses on his hands. This made it even more likely that he had belonged to the elite group of Druid priests.

Other evidence confirmed that the Bog Man was a priest. The scientists found the remains of a burned barley cake in the Bog Man's stomach. Archaeologists knew that Druid priests had a special use for burned barley cake. They would burn part of the cake, then break the whole cake up and put it in a bag. They passed the bag around and each priest took out a piece. Whoever drew the burned piece would be sacrificed. A chemist tested the electrons in the cake and showed that it had been cooked for eight minutes—exactly what the Druid ritual called for.

The study of the Bog Man shows how scientists must be detectives to shed light on the shadowy past. By recreating how the Bog Man died, they uncovered new evidence about life in ancient Europe.

**Assignment Purpose:** to build an appreciation for the interdisciplinary nature of social studies.

**Procedure**

1). Create a *Google Doc*. Name it Unit\_1\_Bogman. Share the document with your teacher giving them full editing privileges ([rdelaine@lcbi.sk.ca](mailto:rdelaine@lcbi.sk.ca)). Create written answers for each of the questions below. Ensure answers are sufficiently detailed (do not try to pass off any single word answers and always write using complete sentences). Ensure you use the headings and question numbers to organize your answers.

**Responding to the Reading**

**1. Validating the Veracity of a Claim**

**What evidence led scientists to think the Bog Man was an important person?**

**2. Placing Arguments in Context**

**How does the case of the Bog Man show that knowledge of both science and culture is needed to unravel the mysteries of the past?**

**3. Considering Point of View**

Whenever we discover something in the world we try to explain it. When did it exist? How does it work? Why does it exist? Interestingly, there are times when people study the exact same thing but arrive at completely different conclusions.

For example people who call themselves "creationists" argue that the universe (and Earth) was created by God about 6000 years ago. They even pinpoint the exact day and year of creation—October 23rd, 4004 BCE. By contrast people who are trained "astrophysicists" have used the scientific method (conducting tests, making use of observation and mathematics) concluding the universe is much, much older, e.g. 13.82 billion years.

Taking this fundamental disagreement into consideration, please complete the following tasks and answer the associated questions:

**Why do creationists and astrophysicists arrive at such vastly different conclusions?**

**4. Critical Thinking**

There are at least two contrasting intellectual stances a person can take: they can say they "believe in science" or they can say they "accept or reject science on the basis of the available evidence."

For example, a creationist might argue that "I believe the Earth is thousands of years old". However, an astrophysicist could argue that "I think the Earth is at least many millions of years old given what we know about the speed of light and how long it takes for light to travel to us from distant stars."

**Which of the two stances is easier to defend effectively? Explain.**