

# Turtle Effigy

Understanding it's significance to the Blackfoot language and culture.

Presented at the Blackfoot Confederacy Education Conference  
October 7, 2021

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# Disclaimer

- ▶ All information presented is merely for educational information purposes. The content is intended to be used for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for professional education advice. The information obtained and shared is conducted by amateur videographers. The information obtained in this presentation has been verified to the best of our abilities and knowledge; we cannot guarantee its accuracy. Should you decide to act on any of the information provided, please refer to references, and conduct further research.




# Brief overview of this lesson plan

- Present a lesson plan titled: A Turtle Effigy in West Lethbridge
- Objectives of Lesson Plan:
  - To explore effigies and their significance to the Blackfoot culture and language
  - To understand the importance of turtles in the Blackfoot language and culture
- Alberta Education Blackfoot Language and Culture Program of Studies outcomes
- Focus is on the language - learning and retention of Blackfoot words/phrases. Culture is secondary to this lesson plan
- Instructional Strategies
- Resources



# What is an effigy?

## Who created the effigies?

- An effigy is an often life-size sculptural representation of a specific person, or a prototypical figure.
  - Effigies are found in several forms, including cairns, walls and petroforms, as well as shaped individual stones and boulders.
  - For this presentation the effigies we focused on are rock configurations found in Blackfoot Territory which are laid down on the earth depicting an animal or human that are significant to our culture.
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# What is an effigy?

## Who created the effigies?

Cairn effigy



Medicine wheel effigy

*Fig. 5  
Ellis Medicine Wheel,  
southeastern Alberta; note  
central circle and lines  
radiating outward; stone  
circles (tipi rings) lie in the  
distance.*





## Blackfoot Turtle Effigy

West Lethbridge Turtle Effigy, present day.

# Turtle Effigy

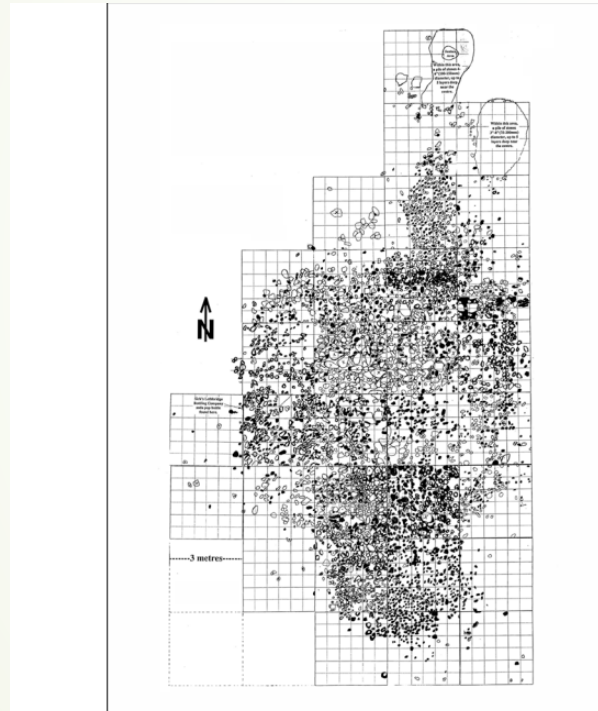


Figure 22: DJPF-128: Map of the "West Lethbridge Turtle" feature produced by Archaeological Society of Alberta (2000). It is important to note that this image recorded all stones in the area and its original shape was probably more like the following outline that has been overlain on this map.

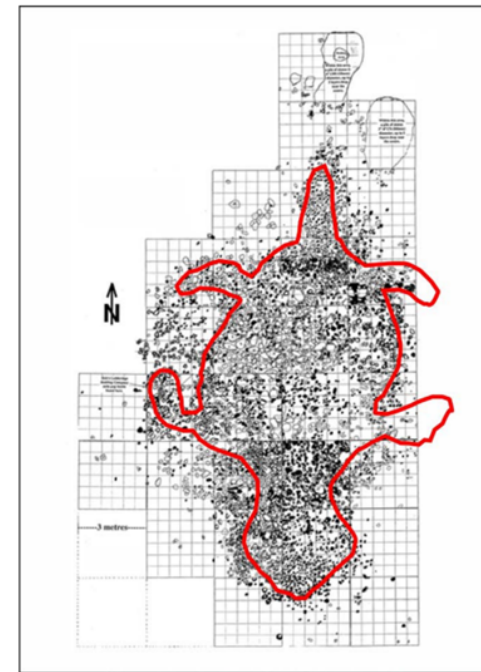


Figure 22A. This is an interpretation intended to more represent what the geoglyph probably looked like when it was first recorded by using the arrangement of stones in the previous image and attempting to eliminate the effects of prior disturbance. For example, it appears that the first Euro-Canadian farmers in the area did not recognize the site's significance and deposited rocks on top of it while clearing rocks from adjacent fields.



# Video



- Introduction: Video and Elder
- Ask students to notice the following points as they watch the video “Turtle Effigy”
  - Blackfoot language used by story tellers
    - Provide word list to student prior to the video viewing
  - the distance of the effigy from the river valley
  - what types of rocks are in the immediate area ie. color, texture, size etc.
  - what is the distance to rock supplies?
  - What is the landscape and vegetation in the immediate area?

# Blackfoot Turtle Effigy

Turtle – spoo pii  
Head – o'tokaan  
Body – oistom  
Legs – ohkatsiss  
Tail – ohsoyis

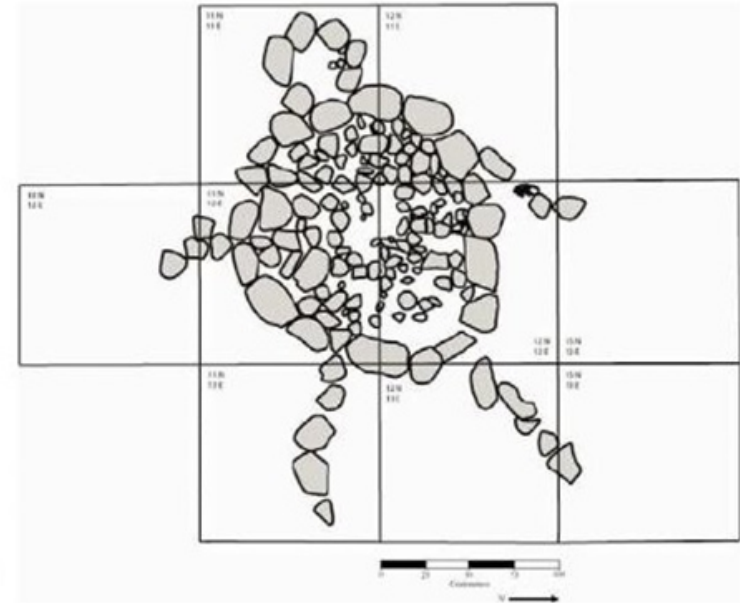


Figure 6: Digitized plan of the Noble Point effigy.



Insert Video here





# Pre-Instructional Assessment

- What do you know about effigies?
- What do you know about the West Lethbridge Turtle Effigy?
- What words could be translated to Blackfoot from the answers?



# How was the Turtle effigy created, materials used?

- How do you say ...?
  - Rock – oohkotok
  - Earth - ksaahkomm
- Directions:
  - East - pinaapoohtsi
  - South - aamskaapoohtsi
  - West – aami'toohktsi
  - North - apatohsoohtsi



# Did the location determine the size of the turtle effigy?

Large Turtle Effigy




Small Turtle effigy







# How can the West Lethbridge Turtle Effigy help with the language

- Blackfoot words/phrases
  - Land based learning and language retention
  - Higher Transmission and continuity
- 



# Why the Turtle Effigy is Important to the Blackfoot Culture.

- Origin
  - Identity
  - Beaver Bundle
  - Continuity
- 



# What importance is the location and landscape to the turtle effigy?

- Blackfoot words
  - Visible - Hill
  - Near Water
  - River- Oldman River
  - Rocks – size is important
  - Grass / Prairie
  - East – Sunrise
  - West - Sunset
- 



# Post Instructional Assessment



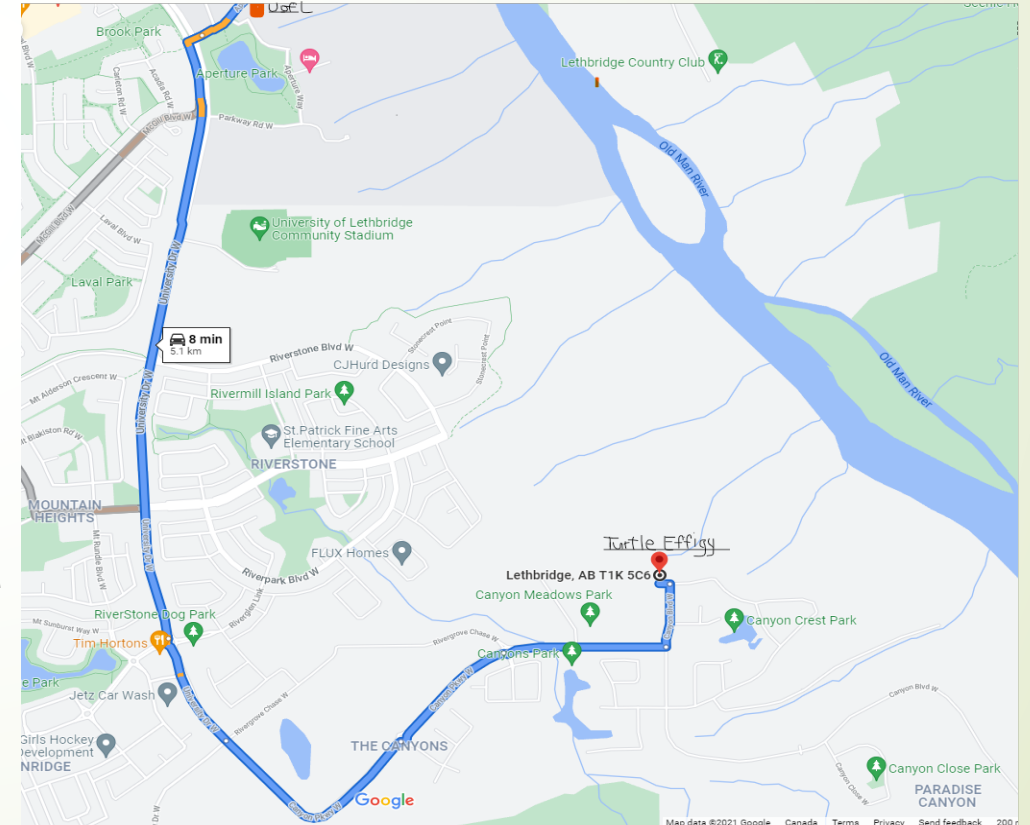
- Land based instruction calls for a more interactive instruction and assessment
- In a Treaty based education the focus would be on First Nation world-view and experience
  - Interactive post-instructional assessments – for example working in a group to build a model of a turtle effigy
  - Incorporate Blackfoot words (from this lesson) at every possible opportunity

# Map: Directions to the West Lethbridge Effigy Site

## Directions:

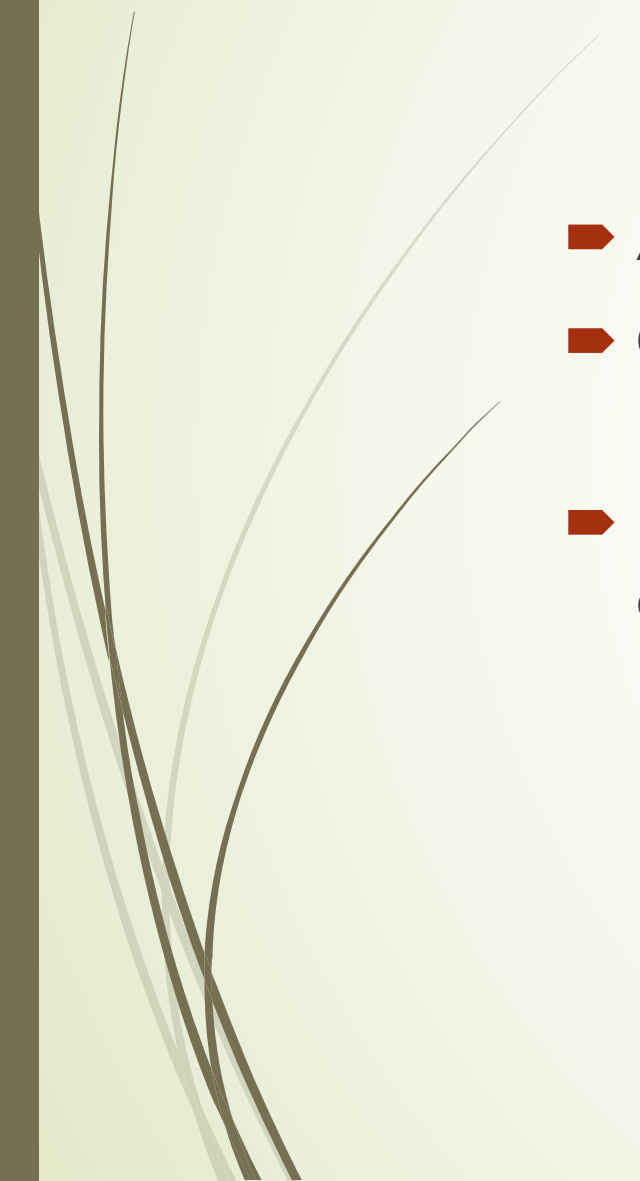
- Start - University of Lethbridge
- University Drive West  
South bound
- Canyon Parkway West  
East bound
- Canyon Blvd West  
North Bound
- Canyoncrest Point West  
West bound
- Walk – Pathway – Enclosed fence  
North bound

## Map:





# Treaty Based Education

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- Acknowledge and value stories from the student's home
  - Continuously reminding students to practice the Blackfoot words from lessons
  - Help students recognize Indigenous world view is different from the Western "scientific" world view


## “References”

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df](https://www.lethbridge.ca/Doing-Business/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/Documents/SSRP/Traditional%20Knowledge%20and%20Land%20Use%20Assessment%20Final%20Report%20Revision%201.pdf)




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I hope you enjoyed the  
presentation and gained  
knowledge.

Thank you for attending.