

Connecting With the Past Post-Visit Activity

Grades: 4 to 8

Subject: Social Studies

Life in Britannia's mining community before the coming of the railway in 1956 and the highway in 1958 was very isolated. Workers came from far and wide to make a living here. Keeping in touch with friends and family meant relying on the mail coming in on the Steamship, and many relations of the workers from far away had probably never visited because of the time and cost involved in travel.

This activity will encourage your students to imagine living at Britannia at this time. Their research will help them to more accurately envision what it would have been like, giving them more of a foundation on which to develop the imaginative side of the activity.

Resources

Students can use the following resources to aid their research into what it was like to live and work at the Britannia Mines. This is suitable for individual or group work. To focus their research, they can choose to research an individual topic, e.g. homes, clothes, technology, before combining this with information from others in a group. These topics are outlined in the KWL student worksheet. The downloadable resources below can be found on our website – www.britanniainemuseum.ca.

- Visit to the Museum
- A to Z of the Britannia Mines (downloadable)
- Extracts from the book 'Britannia – The Story of A Mine' (downloadable)
- Historical photographs and our What's In A Photo? Activity (downloadable)
- Historical letters, articles and stories (downloadable)
- KWL student worksheet (next page)

Activity Suggestion

Have your students imagine they live and work at the mine. They have been there for a few months. They should write a letter to send to their parents who have never been able to visit, describing what it's like to live in this isolated community. What aspects of life there do they like? What don't they like? Where are they living – in a home or a bunkhouse, in one of the mining camps or at Britannia Beach or Mount Sheer? What's the food like? What do they do in their spare time? Do they like their job? What jobs do their friends there do?

When choosing a job for themselves at the mine, remind your students that not everyone worked as an underground miner. Here are some examples of the jobs people had at Britannia: miner, mucker, mill worker, locomotive driver, teacher, nurse, chef, foundry worker, waitress, doctor, night watchman, manager, telephone operator, engineer, mechanic and butcher.