



# CONNECTING CANOES

Understanding **Seascapes**  
in the **Classroom**

New Approaches to Studying  
**Caribbean History**  
& **Social Studies**

**Primary &  
Secondary** Schools



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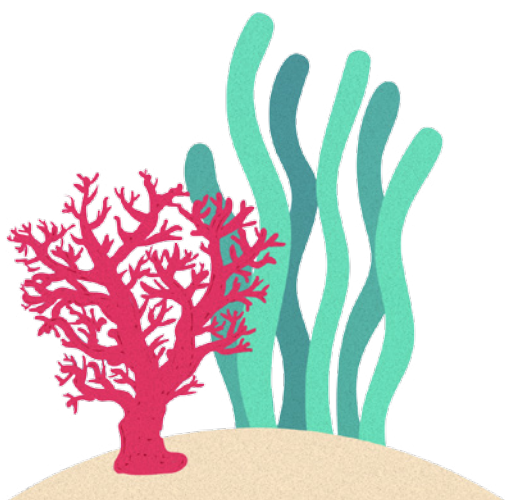
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# HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL



## 1 **Why** use archaeology and why seascapes?

Archaeology allows a new way for students to approach Caribbean history before the Europeans arrived in the region. By studying the exchange of objects by the Amerindians who at the time lived on the different islands, it is possible to teach how movement, facilitated by canoes, enabled them to access regional interaction networks. The connections between these widespread pre-colonial communities are shown in the archaeological record by both everyday and specialty items, such as shells, stone tools and pottery. These connections can also be seen in the ways these objects were used and how groups were linked through shared practices.

The canoe trips that were performed in order to enable these exchanges were carried out in a 'seascape', or the water environment that linked the various island communities. These seascapes also provided a space to teach navigation, tell stories, catch fish, and even interact in ways comparable to how the canoers behaved in their homes on land. Opening up this area of teaching allows for a discussion of how archaeological objects were moved, who moved them, and why.



## 2 **How** your students can benefit from a seascapes approach in the classroom?

Students will be able to look at examples of how the indigenous peoples of pre-Columbian times interacted on a regional scale by connecting ideas of exchange of different materials with notions of subsistence practices. This combines practical knowledge of the environment with social science reasoning. By using seascapes it is possible to break down issues of social dynamics (interaction, economics, formation of family units, as well as the valuing of objects and relationships) and facilitate an understanding of culture in the pre-colonial period. These ideas can then be applied to thinking about other examples from history.



# THE INS AND OUTS OF CANOES

PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL



## Applied skills:

**Core Skills:** listening, speaking, role play, questioning, participating and understanding.

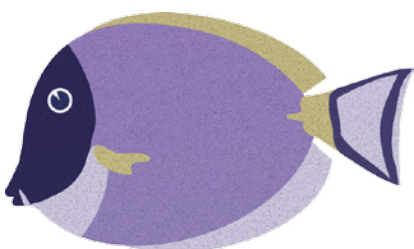
- ▶ Spatial reasoning
- ▶ Understanding the concept of community
- ▶ Caring about the sea as a natural resource
- ▶ Understanding change over time
- ▶ Deductive reasoning



## Worksheet checklist

- 1 Set up students with **materials**
- 2 Give a brief explanation of the movement of the **Amerindian peoples**

There is a long history of archaeologists studying the sea and sea related materials. These materials can include both the technology that allowed for people to travel across water, such as boats and paddles, but also the materials that were carried with them, such as trade goods, shell remains, and food.



Archaeology from several islands in the Caribbean has shown that people were trading or moving objects from one place to another. This handout is one example of a possible trip carried out by people from the Greater Antilles or Lesser Antilles. During this trip they were taking materials from several islands in their region in order to carry them to their home village for use there. Canoes often engaged in fishing on these trips so it is required that one fishing spot is visited while moving between material resources to represent both the collecting and eating of sea resources.

For this exercise your students will need to put themselves in an Amerindian canoe. To do this they will need to think about things that would have been valuable to the canoers, but also things they can draw from their own experiences of what is important to them. This will enable them to think of life in the canoe in a more personal way.

## Activity Overview

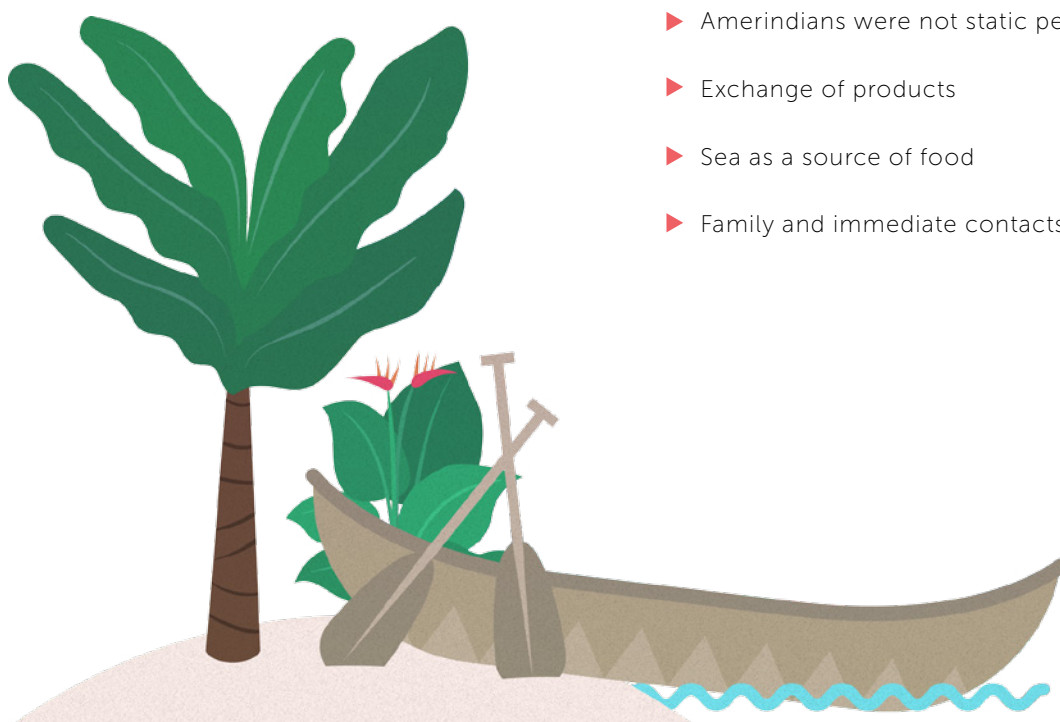
- 1 **Learning areas:** Social studies, history, geography, mathematics.
- 2 **Age group:** 6-9 years old.
- 3 **Time framework:** ½ hour.
- 4 **Learning Strategy:** Collaborative learning and problem solving: divide students into groups of 2 to 5 students.

### Setting up the activity:

- ▶ Printed-out work-sheets
- ▶ Paper, colors, markers
- ▶ Map of the Caribbean
- ▶ Pictures of examples of what you can put in the canoe

### Learning outcomes:

- ▶ Students will learn about inter-island interactions
- ▶ Amerindians were not static people,
- ▶ Exchange of products
- ▶ Sea as a source of food
- ▶ Family and immediate contacts





# THE INS AND OUTS OF CANOES

SEASCAPES AND AMERINDIAN PEOPLES





# THE INS AND OUTS OF CANOES

## SEASCAPES AND AMERINDIAN PEOPLES



### Activity 1:

Imagine you have to organize a **trip through the Caribbean Sea by canoe**.

You should consider the following four aspects before embarking on your trip.

Please complete the questions indicated in each quadrant.

<b>Objects</b> What goods and belongings will you take with you on the trip?	<b>Travel</b> Where will you go and why?
<b>Community context</b> Who will you bring with you?	<b>Environment</b> What resources could you get from the sea?



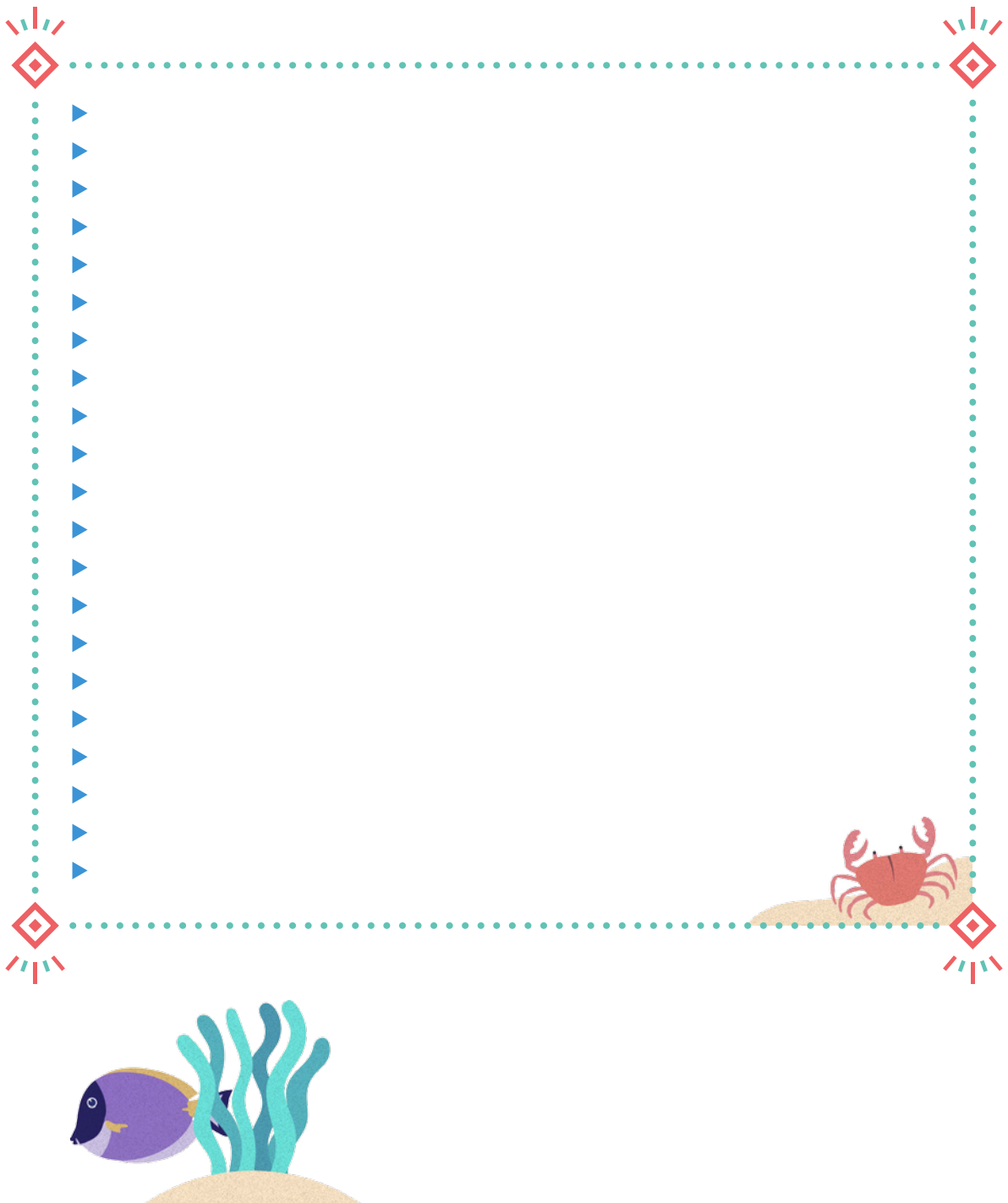
# THE INS AND OUTS OF CANOES

## SEASCAPES AND AMERINDIAN PEOPLES

### Activity 2:

The Caribbean Sea has served as a channel for interisland communication from Amerindian times. Besides the exchange of products, cultural elements have also been part of these trips. Please complete the following instructions:

Make a list of possible reasons on why the pre-Columbian peoples conducted these trips by canoe.





# CALCULATING CANOE ROUTES

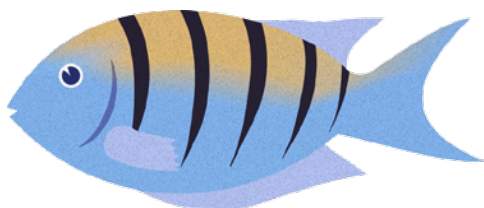
## SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL



### Applied skills:

**Core Skills:** classifying and organizing data, problem solving and critical thinking.

- ▶ Map skills and spatial reasoning
- ▶ Mathematical skills
- ▶ Understanding mobility and exchange processes
- ▶ Understanding social relationships
- ▶ Regional and inter-island geographical dynamics
- ▶ Understanding the relationships between people and the environment



### Worksheet checklist

- 1 Set up students with **materials**
- 2 Give a brief explanation of the movement of the **Amerindian peoples**

There is a long history of the study of archaeology and that of sea related materials. The latter can include both the technology that allowed for people to travel across water, such as canoes and paddles, but also the materials that they carried with them, such as trade goods, shell remains and food.

Archaeological objects from several islands in the Caribbean have shown that people were trading or moving objects from one place to another. This handout is one example of a possible trip undertaken by people from the Greater Antilles or the Lesser Antilles. During this trip canoes were used to take materials from several islands in the region and carry them to the home village for use. Canoers often engaged in fishing while on these trips and as such they were

required to visit a fishing spot when moving between the islands.

These voyages could take several days, but the longer you were out in your canoe, the more dangerous it was because of dwindling supplies and possibly dangerous weather. For this reason you should look for the shortest route between the points of departure and arrival to ensure a safe voyage for the crew.

**Goal for activity:** To gather all the required resources in the least amount of time.



## Rules

- ▶ Must start and end the exercise at the red dot
- ▶ Must collect for **Map 1** either two different ceramic resources or two different lithic resources and one fishing resource.
- ▶ Must collect for **Map 2** one ceramic resource, one lithic resource, and one fishing resource.
- ▶ Each dot represents a unique type of resource, for example one lithic resource represents flint and the other a greenstone.
- ▶ Must follow island coastline or connect across large channels using a blue stopover dot if the connections are less than 75km, then round up to the nearest 75km.

## Activity Overview

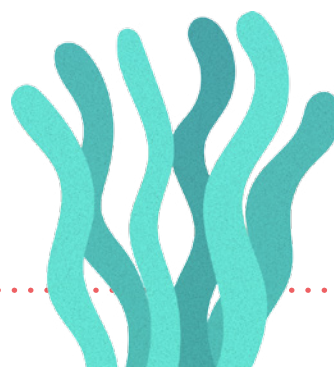
- 1 **Learning areas:** Social studies, history, geography, mathematics.
- 2 **Age group:** 14-15 years old.
- 3 **Time framework:** ½ hour.
- 4 **Learning Strategy:** Collaborative learning and problem solving: divide students into groups of 2 to 5 students.

### Setting up the activity:

- ▶ Printed-out maps both uncompleted (Maps Greater Antilles 1 and Lesser Antilles 2) and completed (Maps Greater Antilles 1A and Lesser Antilles 2A) for comparison
- ▶ Ruler
- ▶ Possibly calculator
- ▶ Paper and pencil

### Learning outcomes:

- ▶ Students will learn about inter-island interactions
- ▶ Amerindians were not static people,
- ▶ Pan-Caribbean relationships of mobility, exchange of products and culture.
- ▶ Sea as a connector for past communities.
- ▶ Distance and space in terms of travel time.

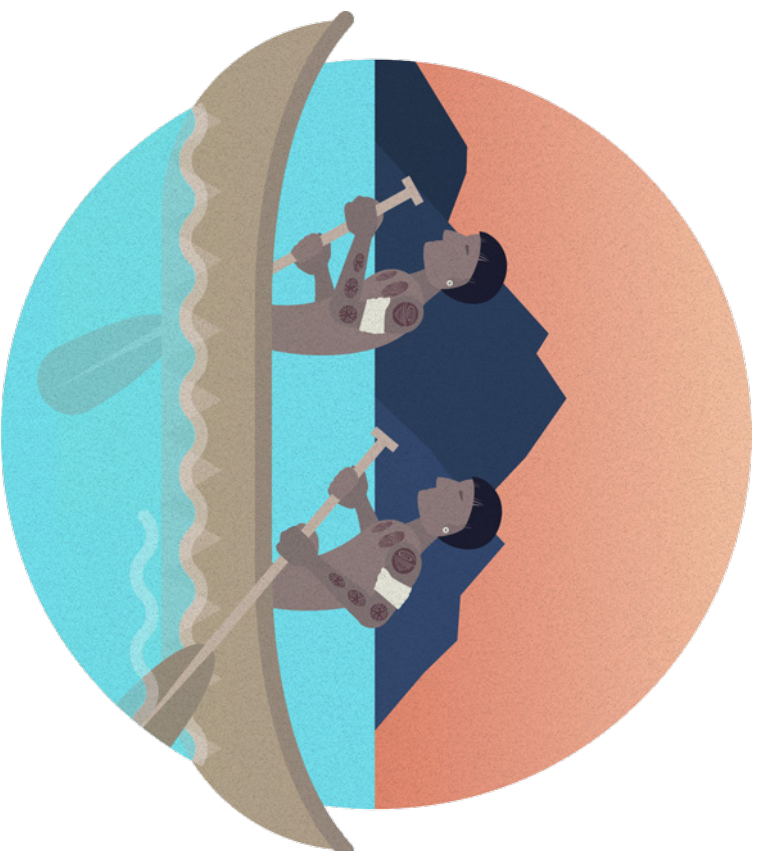






# CALCULATING CANOE ROUTES

## GREATER & LESSER ANTILLES







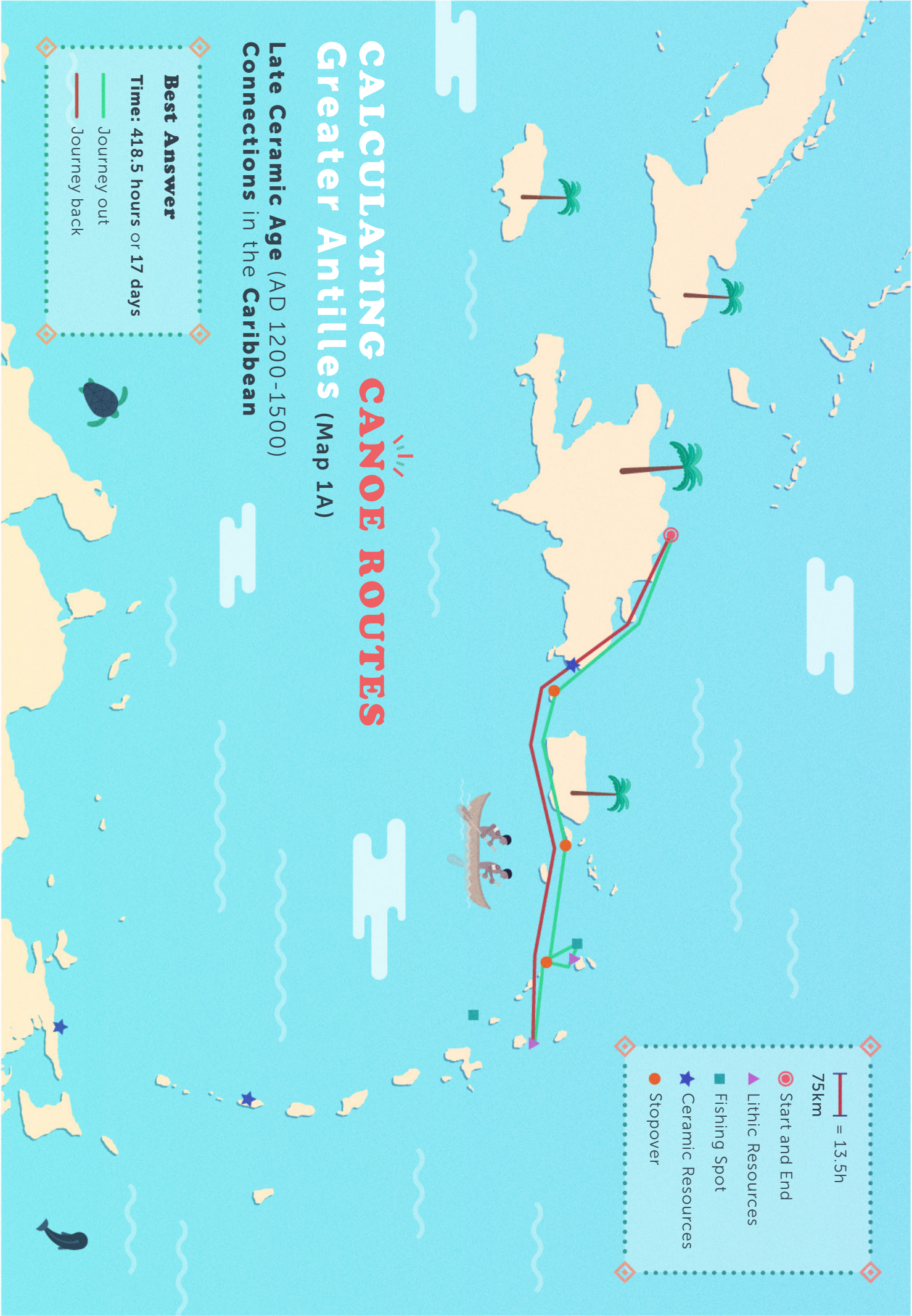
# CALCULATING CANOE ROUTES

## Greater Antilles (Map 1)

**Late Ceramic Age** (AD 1200-1500)  
**Connections in the Caribbean**

The points depicted here are examples of possible resource locations during this period. The map is not wholly representative of all the layers of social action present during this period.

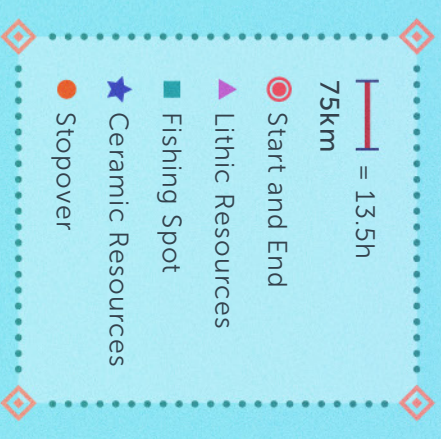




# CALCULATING CANOE ROUTES Greater Antilles (Map 1A)

Late Ceramic Age (AD 1200-1500)  
Connections in the Caribbean





# CALCULATING CANOE ROUTES Lesser Antilles (Map 2)

**Late Ceramic Age** (AD 1200-1500)  
**Connections in the Caribbean**

The points depicted here are examples of possible resource locations during this period. The map is not wholly representative of all the layers of social action present during this period.





# CALCULATING CANOE ROUTES

Late Ceramic Age (AD 1200-1500)  
Connections in the Caribbean







# GLOSSARY OF ARTIFACTS

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**Fig. 1.** Turtle effigy bowl from Guadeloupe.

Most ceramic vessels in Amerindian society were used as household utensils. Besides, there are many examples of beautifully sculptured effigy pots, which primarily served ritual and ceremonial functions. Approximate size 20-25cm. Morel, Guadeloupe. Photo, courtesy Corinne L. Hofman and Menno L.P. Hoogland.



**Fig. 2.** Bird-shaped adorno from Martinique.

Adornos are modelled zoomorphic or anthropomorphic representations that typically occur on ('adorn') the rims of Amerindian ceramic pots. The iconography of these figures is highly varied, and includes symbolically important animals such as bats, frogs and monkeys, but also birds, dogs, and turtles. Approximate size 7cm. Illustration after Direction des Antiquités de la Martinique, Fort-de-France, 1983.






# CONNECTING CANOES

## Understanding **Seascapes** in the **Classroom**

This booklet is the result of participatory activities of school communities from Monte Cristi and Valverde in the Dominican Republic organized within the ERC-Synergy 1492 NEXUS Project. This booklet contains worksheets that aim to serve as support to both primary and secondary school teachers interested in enhancing their lessons of Social Sciences, History and Geography with information about the way past Amerindian communities made use of canoes to explore their surroundings. Archaeology is an important subject to apply in classrooms as it is a manner to engage students in both the physical history of the islands as well as the expansive capabilities and practices of past island communities. These peoples were not static and continued to move about and between the islands long after the first colonization of the region. Looking at canoes and canoe travel is a way to not only explore this topic but also to bring to life the Amerindian activities associated with the sea that are mirrored in modern practices, such as fishing and sailing.



This booklet provides a unique way for teachers to help students explore the past and understand their environment through the lens of social interaction. These worksheets aim to broaden the knowledge of both Amerindians and Archaeology within the primary and secondary school curriculum. Though these worksheets can be used by teachers who work with students of different age groups, they can also be used together in order to bring about a fuller understanding of past canoe voyages and the Amerindians who made them. Skills that are enhanced by these exercises include: Mathematics, Social Sciences, and Geography. The exercises included in this booklet encourage inquiry learning and the application of collaborative instructional strategies, providing teachers with all necessary information step by step to make the best use of these worksheets in the classroom.



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