

Featured Scientist - Bree Doering



Meet Dr. Bree Doering! Bree is an Anthropological-Archaeologist. She studies how humans lived thousands of years ago by looking at the artifacts they left behind. Bree uses field and lab science to understand how people adapt to environmental changes.

Bree's love for studying the past began at a 10,000-year-old hunting camp near Gristle River, Alaska. For six weeks she camped and uncovered artifacts from the people who used to live there. Since then, Bree has received a master's degree and PhD from the University of Michigan, and now works as a professor at the University of Wyoming.

Bree has worked in Kodiak, Egypt, Madagascar, Georgia, and Mexico, but studies the most in central Alaska. She searches for things like stone tools, plants, and heat cracked quartz that used to belong to a group called the Northern Dene. These objects can show what this tribe hunted and what resources were available to them. With Bree's research, she can continue to understand the history between humans and the environment.

View Bree's Polar Scientist Spotlight Video: <https://youtu.be/XFkfcK6z6tw>

View Bree's Personal Website: <https://www.breedigs.com/cv.html>

View Bree's University of Wisconsin Webpage:
<http://www.uwyo.edu/anthropology/personnel/faculty/b-doering.html>

Learning About People from the Things they Leave Behind Activity

Anthropological-Archaeologists like Dr. Bree Doering study the things people left behind. But what DO people leave behind? In this activity you will explore things that YOU leave behind and use that to understand the kinds of items left at a dig site!

1. Find and describe one item that is meaningful to you or that represents yourself.
2. Open your kitchen trash can and look at the items at the top of the trash pile. Describe and draw what you see.
3. Either by yourself or with someone, answer these questions keeping your meaningful item and trash in mind:
 - Did people in the past leave things behind on purpose? Why or why not?
 - Do you think the objects Bree finds are mostly valuable objects or discarded objects? Why?
 - What are some challenges about learning from people's trash?
 - What would your items tell someone about you?



Bree's Polar Puzzle Activity

Background:

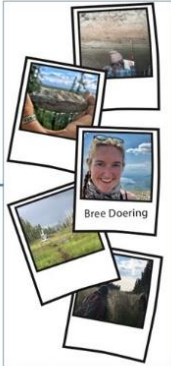
Antarctica and the Arctic are called the Polar Regions. Lots of different science happens in the polar regions because they are so unique. The Polar Puzzles introduces polar science through a fun, hands-on activity.

Each puzzle shows a polar scientist and includes images of their work like action photos and fieldwork photos. On one side, you will see a poem that describes the location and the type of work the scientist does, and an activity. On the other side, you will see a cartoon that shows where and what the scientist works on, data, and social media posts about what they find.

The contents of each Puzzle are outlined below:

Engage Activity

Photos



Learning About People from the Things they Leave Behind


Anthropologists study the things people left behind, but what DO people leave behind? In this activity, you will explore the things that YOU leave behind and use that to understand the kinds of items that we find at a dig site.

1. Find one item that you are proud of or that describes something about you.
2. Then, open the trash can in your kitchen and take a note or picture of the items lying at the top of the trash pile.
3. In a small group, show and tell the objects that you chose and describe what you found in your trash can.

Do you think that people in the past left things behind on purpose? Why or why not? Do you think that the objects they leave are typically their most valuable objects or their discarded objects? Why?


Bree learns about people that lived in the past by digging up the things they left behind and finding out how the places that they lived. This item is called a **artifact**, which is a stone tool like an arrowhead or a knife. This tool taught Bree that the people at her site were hunting and butchering very big animals, making even mammoths! What would YOU learn if someone dug up your...

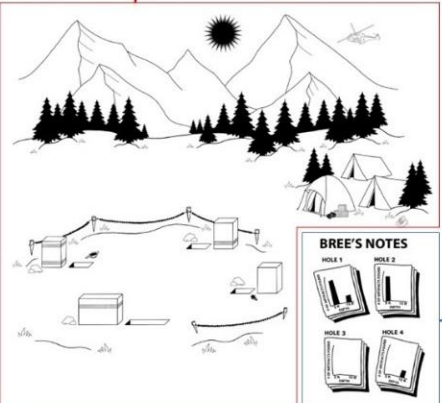
Poem



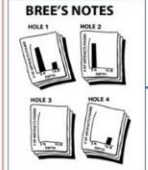
Cartoon

Social Media





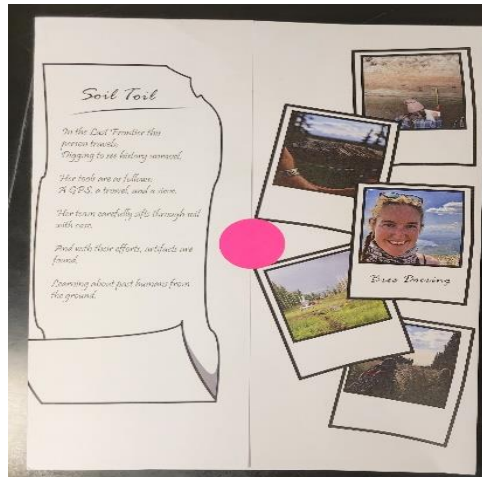
Data



Bree's Polar Puzzle Activity

Getting Started:

1. Download the Activity
2. Print out the Puzzle Activity on an 11x17 sheet of paper, double sided.
3. Fold down the edges so that Bree's photos and the poem are on the front (see the image below).



Explore (10 minutes): Spend about 10 minutes looking at the Puzzle. Find 5 things that you look to be unfamiliar, exciting, or things you may have in common with the researcher. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper

Explain (10 minutes): Answer the following questions. You can write your answers on a piece of paper or say it loud. Make sure to describe which clues in the Puzzle helped you find your answer.

1. Which tent belongs to Bree?
2. Where in the world is Bree's camp?
3. What does Bree do?
4. In which hole where you find Bree currently digging?
5. How long ago was the location settled by people?
6. You get to choose the next dig site. Which hole would you dig next to if you were looking for artifacts from more than one settlement?

Elaborate (10 minutes): When you are finished, you can share your answers and reasoning with someone. Mention which clues helped you in the puzzle. A good clue is one that you can circle on the Puzzle – like a specific social media post or a feature on the cartoon.

Evaluate: If someone else was exploring your trash to learn about you, how might their story about you be different if they (A) went through your recycling bin, (B) they went through your bathroom garbage can, and/or (C) if they went through the trash after an important family event, like a birthday party or holiday celebration?

