

### Sending Messages to People in the Far Future

Radioactive waste, ray cats, and the mystery of how languages change over time

Video link:

<https://lab.sapienship.co/sending-messages-to-people-in-the-far-future/>

The craziest thing I learned today is that radioactive waste stays dangerous for tens of thousands of years. The question is: How do we warn people in the far future to not go near a place where such waste is buried? Standard warning signs won't cut it: just try reading English from 500 years ago.

Here's a wild idea: In the 1980s, two philosophers proposed genetically engineering cats to change colors or even glow when exposed to radiation. Then, by creating a cultural folklore around these ray cats, future societies would know: a color-changing cat signals danger ahead. There are many more out-of-the-box suggestions for this puzzle. Got any?

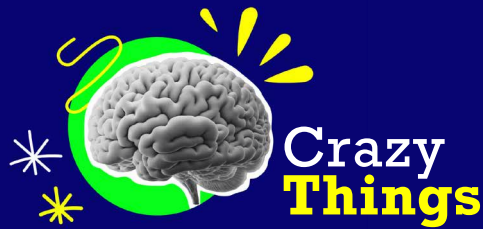
## Activity

1. Display the video linked above to the group using a projector or a screen.
2. Divide the group into several teams.
3. Pick one of the questions from the list below. Let each team discuss it and then present their thoughts to the group. Alternatively, assign a different question to each team.  
When they present their findings, ask the remaining teams to share their thoughts as well.

## Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think we should care about people in the far future?
2. How can we ensure that folklore or legends, like those proposed around 'ray cats,' would not be forgotten or dismissed as mere myths?
3. How can we create a message that transcends language and can be understood tens of thousands of years into the future?
4. Can the arts (literature, music, visual arts) be used to convey a message of warning to the far future?

5. Try coming up with more ideas on how to warn people tens of thousands of years from now about nuclear waste.
6. Read about some of the solutions proposed in the past for this problem  
(some are available here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long-term\\_nuclear\\_waste\\_warning\\_messages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long-term_nuclear_waste_warning_messages)).  
Which of these seems more plausible to you? Which seems wrong?
7. How might future archaeologists interpret our radioactive waste sites?



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