FRYSK

8+ · 1-6 · 40-60

Frisia (Fryslân/Friesland) has a unique history dating back many centuries. The Frisians have shaped their environment like no other people. Sometimes working alongside nature, but often also with the determination to conquer it. In the salt marshes pioneers built terps (artificial mounds) to keep their feet dry, peat diggers ventured into swampy peat wildernesses, and monasteries acted as a kind of medieval landscape architects. A large water network of waterways and lakes arose throughout Frisia. Forests were planted in sandy areas and, with the help of mills and pumping stations, wetlands or marshes were made suitable for more intensive use. Generations have worked on the Frisian landscape and this process is still ongoing. After all these centuries of pioneering, development and resource extraction, a province has emerged with its own unique identity and a great diversity of landscapes. Depending on the soil, altitude and developmental history, a diverse patchwork of landscape types emerged, each with its own characteristics, forms of housing and traditions.

Frisia's soil is broadly divided into three types: clay, peat and sand. These soil types are reflected in the game FRYSK. In this game, you will cultivate clay lands (salt marshes) into fields and pastures, convert sand into a coulisse landscape, excavate peat for turf, and allow hayfields or lakes to form in the peatlands. You will grant city rights, construct waterways, build farms and stables, and erect churches on terps; in short, you will build your own province of Frisia!

For the purposes of the game, the landscapes, reclamation and construction of land are simplified representations of reality. The game contains two peat tiles, one of which can be played to extract peat (brown), as happened in the Frisian Woods and the Lower Middle region, while the other can develop into a peat reclamation landscape, such as marshy hayfields where lakes can also form (blue), as happened in the Lower Middle region. The salt marsh area in the Wadden Sea is also divided into salt marshes on which terps were built, salt marsh embankments (light clay) that were mainly reclaimed as farmland, and salt marsh basins (heavy clay) that were largely converted into pasture. For more detailed information about the history of the Frisian landscapes and the history of the Frisian language, see page 6 onwards.
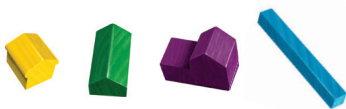
- Game Components -

87 87 landscape tiles:

20x peatland/hayfield (blue)
18x light clay/farmland (yellow)
16x heavy clay/pasture (green)
11x salt marsh/terp (purple)
11x peatland/turf (brown)
11x urban area (red)

32 wooden buildings:

12 farms (yellow)
12 stables (green)
8 churches (purple)

55 waterways (blue)

1 arrow tile

10 overview cards (Frisian and Dutch)

1 score pad

2 game rules booklets (Frisian and Dutch)

38 action cards:

7x develop peatland (blue)
6x develop light clay (yellow)
5x develop heavy clay (green)
4x develop salt marsh (purple)
4x develop peatland (brown)
4x develop a landscape tile of your choice
2x swap two tiles
2x move a tile to an empty space
4x fierljep (pole vault) card
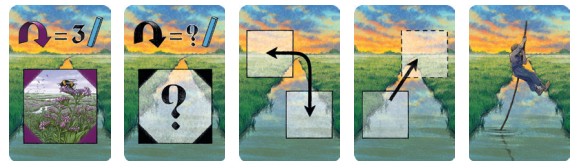
54 tokens:

11x city rights
16x lakes
15x sand/coulisse landscape (for certain scenario cards)
12x nature/lighthouses (for certain scenario cards)

- The game in short -

In this game, each player creates their own province of Frisia out of landscape tiles. Starting with four landscape tiles, in their turn, a player takes one landscape tile and one action card from a central row and places the tile in their province. This continues until each player has formed a pattern of four by four tiles.

The different landscape tiles form areas that each score points depending on their size, shape, or location in relation to other types. The action cards can be used to develop landscapes (which yields waterways, which act as currency in FRYSK) or give players the opportunity to move tiles at a later stage.

After playing the action card and placing the tile, players can build buildings, grant city rights, create lakes and/or construct waterways. This costs water (waterways or lakes), but also yields points at the end of the game.

For additional rules for one or six players, see SOLO PLAYER VARIANT or RULES FOR SIX PLAYERS.

- Goal of the game -

De speler die aan het einde van het spel de meeste pompeblêden (punten) heeft, wint het spel.

- Preparation -

● Determine who will be the starting player.

● Shuffle the landscape tiles, deal each player four random tiles, and place the remaining tiles in one or more draw piles in the centre of the table. Take the top five tiles from the (front) pile and place them (with the undeveloped side facing up) in a row next to the draw pile. Note: The red tiles (urban areas) are already developed on both sides so it doesn't matter which side is up.


still undeveloped   developed   urban area

● Shuffle the action cards and place them face down as a draw pile next to the draw pile of landscape tiles. Take the top five cards from the deck and place one **face-up** action card above to each tile in the row.

● Place the arrow tile at the beginning of the two rows (of tiles and cards), on the opposite end of the rows from the draw piles. The arrow points to the beginning of the rows.

● Each player takes two overview cards, in either Dutch or Frisian, and places them face up in front of them.

● Each player takes five waterways. Place the remaining waterways next to the draw piles, along with all lakes, city right tokens and buildings – sorted by type if desired.

● Each player places their four landscape tiles in front of them, however they like. They can be arranged in any shape, as long as each tile has at least one side adjacent to another tile and the four tiles form a contiguous area. Tiles are placed face up in front of the player with the undeveloped side facing up. The red tiles (urban areas) are an exception to this rule: they only have developed sides (and they can be built on immediately).
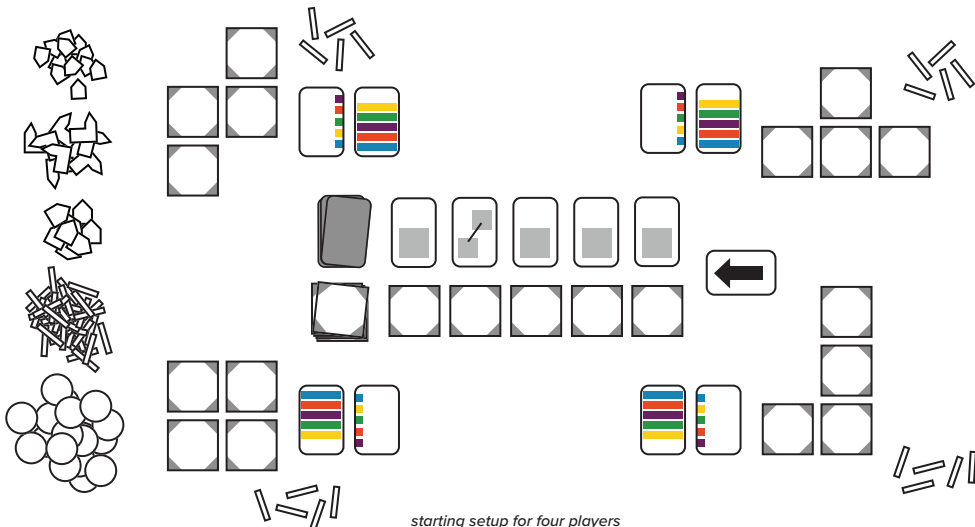

starting setup for four players

– Playing the game –

In the rules, we use the term "build" to refer to the construction of buildings (churches, farms and stables), the creation of waterways, the granting of city rights and the creation of lakes.
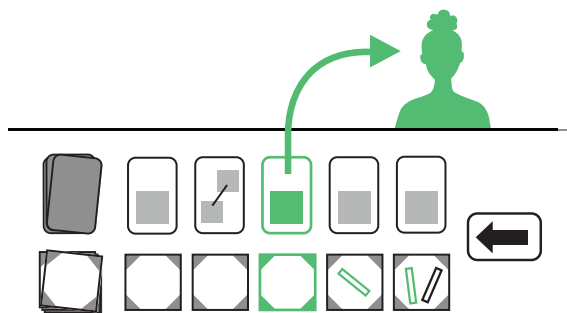
In FRYSK, water has a dual role. Players can build waterways and lakes in the game, but they also form the currency which pays for the building of churches, farms, stables, city rights and the waterways and lakes themselves. In addition, the waterways also serve as currency in the central auction. A lake is worth 5 waterways.
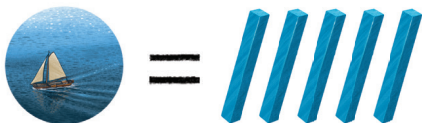
The game is played in turns, starting with the starting player. Players take their turns in clockwise order. During your turn, you must take a landscape tile with its accompanying action card from the auction rows, and then you may construct one building/city right/lake and, or one waterway.

The Auction

● The auction consists of two parallel rows of tiles and cards. Each tile forms a fixed pair with its adjacent action card.

● You can always choose the front pair (the tile and action card closest to the arrow card) at no cost. If you prefer a combination further down the row, you must place one waterway on each tile-card combination that you skip. If a combination is skipped by multiple players, a waterway is added each time. If, during your turn, you choose a tile-card combination that already has waterways on it, you collect those.

● After a player has selected their tile and card pair, move the pairs after the picked set forward to fill up the gap, and place a new face-up action card and undeveloped tile as the fifth pair.
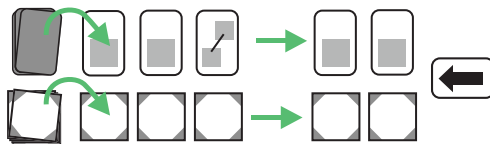
The gap in the row is filled by moving tile and card pairs forward. A new tile-card combination is placed at the back of the row.

● The chosen landscape tile must be placed next to another tile. The basic rule applies: each tile must connect with an existing landscape one on at least one side.

● Tiles are placed with the undeveloped side facing up, excluding the red tiles (urban areas), as these are always developed).

Pattern of four by four tiles

-Each player starts with four tiles, put together however they chose. After twelve turns, each player has added twelve tiles from the auction, placing them one by one into their province. These sixteen tiles must ultimately form a square pattern of four by four tiles, leaving some space between the tiles to allow for the construction of waterways.

-Depending on their placement in relation to the other tiles, the tiles will yield a certain number of points at the end of the game. See **Overview**.

-Tiles must always be placed so that the drawings on them are "upright" for the player: the symbol for development or building must be at the bottom of the tile.

Player A skips two tiles and places waterways on them. There was already a waterway on the first tile of the row.

four by four   *symbols at the bottom of the tile*

● Action cards (development, movement or fierljep) must be used **in the turn they are chosen**. Developing a landscape tile is done by using an action card that applies to that specific landscape. Doing so you collect the amount of waterways indicated from the 'central bank' and flip over the tile to its developed side. The action card with a question mark lets you develop any tile of your choice.

-A development action card can be used on any undeveloped tile of its colour, including the tile you just selected, provided it is of the same colour.

*-***Please note***: red tiles (urban areas) cannot be developed. Placed red tiles have already been cultivated (without the use of an action card) and therefore a city right can be built on them right away (for the price of 9 waterways).*

● Some action cards do not develop a landscape tile but give the player the option to move a tile or swap two tiles. An action card must be used in the turn in which the card is taken; action cards may not be saved for a later turn.

With this action card, you may move a tile to an empty space in your province. The placement rules remain in effect: the tile must connect to at least one other tile and remain within the required 4x4 tile pattern. Any built object on the tile moves along with it.
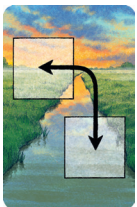
With this action card, you may swap two tiles within your province. The tiles do not change their development status, and any built object moves along with it.

The fierljep card gives the player four waterways immediately. **(Some scenario cards that can be collected at museums and heritage partners give the fierljep cards a different function).**

● Used action cards are placed on a discard pile. If you cannot or do not want to use an action card that turn, you discard it unused.

● Note: Players may choose the order in which they place the landscape tile and use the action card!

BUILDING

● After placing the chosen tile and using the action card, if applicable, you may build one waterway and/or build one object (farm, stable, church, lake or city rights) . In other words: You can build between zero and two objects in a turn; if you build two objects, one of them must be a waterway and the other must be a different type of object.

● Objects may only be built on **developed** landscapes (the side with the round coloured border). A maximum of one object may be built on each landscape tile. The colour of each object (building, lake, city right) corresponds to the colour of the tile on which this object may be built. The costs vary per object and are indicated on the developed landscapes and on the overview cards.

● To build an object, take it from the supply and pay the corresponding costs (waterways) to the "bank". If a certain type of object is out of stock, that type of object can no longer be built.

● **Note**: You cannot build on developed brown tiles (peatland/turf), however developing brown tiles yields more waterways than other landscapes (see **Overview**). In addition, once developed, it yields one waterway at the start of each subsequent turn. This income must be taken from the "bank" by the owner at the start of their turn; if a player forgets to do so, they cannot do so after their turn ended.

● In addition to building one other object, you may build one waterway per turn. This costs one waterway, so by taking a waterway from your own "money supply" and building it, you have paid for it immediately. The waterway is placed between two tiles or next to one tile. You may build waterways wherever you choose. They **do not** have to be connected to other waterways.
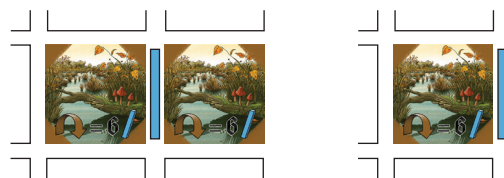
The waterway is placed between two tiles or next to one tile.

Note: The front (the undeveloped side) of a tile shows how many waterways developing it will **yield**, while the back (the developed side) shows how many waterways it **costs** to build the corresponding object there. Action cards that develop one of your tiles therefore yield you waterways, while building on it costs you waterways.

– End of the game and scoring –

Once all players have taken their twelve turns, the game is over. Players count the victory points (🌑) for all landscape tiles and the points for all buildings, lakes, city rights and waterways and record them on the score pad (see **Overview**). The player with the most points wins the game. Waterways that have not been built are not worth any points at the end of the game, but in the event of a tie, the player with the highest score who has the most waterways wins.

– Game rules for six players –

The following changes to the rules apply:

● Each player receives two starting tiles instead of four, and ten turns are played instead of twelve.

● Form a pattern of three by four tiles (or four by three) instead of four by four.
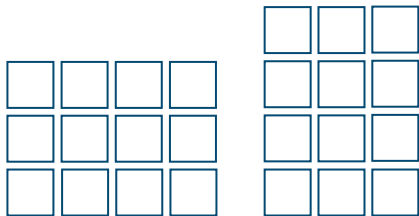
three by four

– Solo game variant –

All the rules described above still apply, with a few adjustments:

● You play against a so-called automaton, a fictional opponent that acts according to fixed rules. Set up the game as normal. As usual you start off with four starting tiles and five waterways.

● You take the first turn and pick a tile and action card pair. After your turn your 'opponent' takes the front two pairs of tiles and cards, along with any waterways you placed on them. Set these tiles aside. Refill the rows as usual.

● Repeat this until you have laid a pattern of four by four tiles. After taking the last tile, set aside the two front tiles for the automaton.

● Count the points of your tiles and your objects as in a multiplayer game. To determine the bonus for who has the most blue tiles (peat/hayfield), compare your number of blue tiles to the amount collected by the automaton.

● The amount of water lily leaves (victory points) you collected:

Less than 60 water lily leaves:	*you can do better.*
60-69 water lily leaves:	*reasonable.*
70-79 water lily leaves:	*could be less.*
80-89 water lily leaves:	*well done.*
90-99 water lily leaves:	*exceptional!*
100 water lily leaves or more:	*you are the ultimate pioneer!*

Colofon

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– Overview –

Areas

● An area is a number of contiguous landscape tiles of the same type. Areas are contiguous when all tiles in that area connect to at least one side of another tile in that area.

● Both undeveloped and developed landscape tiles count towards the scoring of areas. Whether or not there are objects on them is irrelevant.

● The brown tile (peatland/turf) does not yield any points itself, but it can contribute to the scoring of for example a salt marsh/terp. In addition, turf yields one waterway at the start of your turn.

Blue tiles (peatland/hayfield)
You receive two points for each tile of this type. In addition, the player with the most blue tiles receives a bonus of seven points. The player with the second highest number of blue tiles receives a bonus of three points. If several players have the highest number of blue tiles, the ten points are divided equally among those players, with the amount per player rounded down.
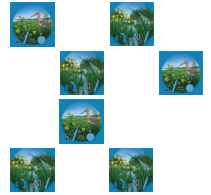

Yellow tiles (light clay/farmland)
Each area is counted separately. The bigger the yellow tile area, the more points it is worth:

Amount of tiles:	1	2	3	4	5	6	+1
Victory points:	2	5	8	11	15	19	+4

Green tiles (heavy clay/meadow)
For your longest horizontal row **or** your longest vertical row, you receive three points per tile. A row must consist of at least two consecutive green tiles. A single green tile does not yield any points.
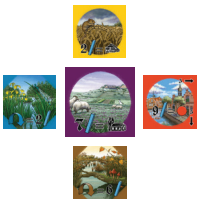

Purple tiles (salt marsh/terp)
For each unique type of tile adjacent to the purple tile, horizontally or vertically, you receive one point, except for a purple tile. Multiple tiles of the same landscape type together yield only one point to the adjacent purple tile.

Red tiles (urban area)
A red tile has already been developed and can be built on immediately after placement. For each red tile, you receive the number of points indicated on that tile for **each building** (church, farm or stable) on an immediately adjacent tile (horizontally and/or vertically) to which an arrow points. Note: just like each other tile, red tiles must always be placed with the building symbol at the bottom right; you cannot rotate the tiles to point the arrows in a different direction!
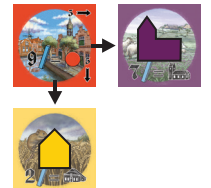
Brown tiles (peatland/turf)
Developing a brown tile yields six waterways. After that, you receive one waterway for each developed peatland/turf tile you own at the beginning of each subsequent turn. This income must be taken from the "bank" at the beginning of each turn; if you forget to do so in your turn, you cannot do it afterwards.

Objects

● Objects are a waterway, a lake, city rights or a building (church, farm or stable). One waterway and/or one object that is not a waterway may be built per turn.

● Non-waterway objects may only be built on a **developed** landscape tile.

● Waterways may be built between two tiles or next to one tile.

● Once a certain type of object has been used up, that type of object can no longer be built.

amount	landscape	developed
18	light clay	farmland
16	heavy clay	pasture
20	peatland	hayfield
11	salt marsh	terp
11	x	urban area
11	peatland	turf
87		

| amount	object	cost	points
12	farm	2 waterway	2 water lily leaves
12	stable	3 waterway	3 water lily leaves
16	lake	5 waterway	4/5/6/7 water lily leaves*
8	church	7 waterway	5 water lily leaves
11	city rights	9 waterway	7 water lily leaves
	x		
58			

*Lakes

A single lake, constructed on developed peatland (hayfield), yields 4 points. If two lakes are connected to each other via one or more waterways each of those two lakes is worth 1 point more. The waterways cannot be used to connect other lakes and they need to run along areas **other than** the two lakes they connect.
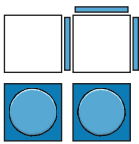
Two connected lakes, now each worth 5 points.
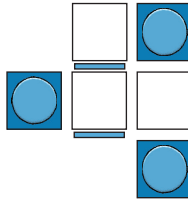
The central lake is connected to two lakes, and the two outer lakes are connected to one lake (in the middle); this gives 5 + 6 + 5 = 16 points.
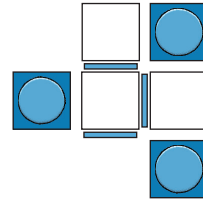
Three lakes, each connected to two other lakes: 6 + 6 + 6 = 18 points.
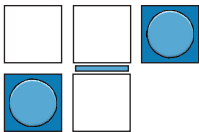
Two connected lakes, now each worth 5 points.
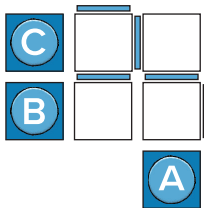
Lake A is connected to either lake B or lake C. Alternatively, lake B is connected to lake C, but then it is no longer connected to lake A, due the overlap of waterways that would be needed for the route. This results in 5 + 5 + 4 = 14 points.
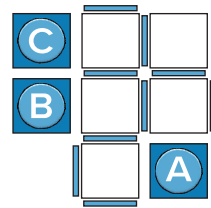
[Now all three lakes are connected to each other with separate routes of waterways: 6 + 6 + 6 = 18 points.

Waterways

There are 55 waterways. Placing a waterway in your tableau costs one waterway. By taking a waterway from your "money supply" and placing it in your pattern between tiles, you have built a waterway and paid for it immediately. Each waterway that is located between two developed landscape tiles at the end of the game earns you one point.

The old grandeur of these estates can still be experienced in places such as Oranjewoud. In the 19th century, the Frisian Woods also contained extensive heathlands and sand drifts. Day labourers and unemployed peat workers built turf huts on the heath. These were later replaced by small farms: the so-called wâldhúskes. Around Appelscha and Bakkeveen, heathlands and sand drifts were afforested, partly to stabilise the drifting sand. Today, a few heathlands and sand drifts have been preserved as nature reserves.

Gaasterland

The Gaasterland region is a naturally raised boulder clay hill that was covered with sand during the last ice age. It consists of a central part surrounded by several boulder clay islands (including Koudum). The highest grounds are found around Rijs and Oudemirdum and, at 13 metres above sea level, are among the highest in the province. Gaast means "higher sandy ground". In the central part of Gaasterland, the highest grounds were forested by estate owners. Centuries of erosion had formed cliffs along the Zuiderzee coast. Near the coastal dunes, there were also sheep fences; these small walls served to keep the sheep within the plots. The coastal dunes and estate forests give Gaasterland a unique character within Frisia.

Wadden Islands

Most of the Wadden Islands were inhabited in the Middle Ages and have remained inhabited ever since. On Ameland and Terschelling, small village polders with low dikes were created, and on Vlieland, Ameland and Schiermonnikoog, monastery farms were present in the late Middle Ages. Due to their isolation from the mainland, the islands developed their own culture and landscape: fishing and whaling were important in harbour villages, cranberries were grown in the dunes, cattle were sometimes allowed to graze everywhere ("oerol") and beachcombing was practised on the beaches. The islands have traditionally been open in character, but in the 19th and early 20th centuries, coniferous forests were also planted in the dunes. The islands have been part of the dynamic Wadden Sea region for centuries. Most of the islands are shifting very slowly in an easterly direction. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Wadden Islands became tourist attractions.

Hayfields and land reclamation

Farmers in the Low Middle often had pastures near their farms. Further away from civilization, there were vast hayfields. In the winter months, these undiked hayfields were often flooded. In late spring and summer, the water receded and herb-rich hayfield grasses sprouted. Seasonal workers from Germany ('hannekemaaiers') were then hired to mow the hay meadows with scythes. In the 20th century, many hay meadows disappeared due to land reclamation. In the 1960s, a large part of the Lower Middle region flooded for the last time. Nowadays, the water level can be precisely controlled with the aid of pumping stations. In places such as the Blaugerzen near Akmarijp, you can still catch a glimpse of the old, herb-rich hay meadows.

Wet peat extraction

From the 18th century onwards, peat was extracted on a large scale in the east and south-east of the Lower Middle region. On the subsided peat soils, the peat was dug from below the water table. With the arrival of the Gieterse peat extractors (peat diggers from Giethoorn and the surrounding area), this so-called 'slagturven' became commonplace. After peat extraction, unprofitable and water-rich soils remained. Wave action even created small peat lakes such as the 'Nannewiid'. In the mid-19th century, many marshy areas were drained and turned into peat polders. Peat areas that were never reclaimed are now often wet nature reserves.

SAND - Frisian Woods, Gaasterland and Wadden Islands

Around the year 1000, large parts of the Frisian Woods still consisted of a natural raised bog. Parts of this peat were reclaimed in the Middle Ages from rivers such as the Tjonger. Unlike in the Lower Middle region, the sandy subsoil soon came to the surface on sand ridges. On the crest of the sand ridge, peat often remained for several centuries after the construction of the first dike. These and other unexploited peat bogs would be cut away as peat between the 16th century and the early 20th century.

Frisian Woods

Over time, the Frisian Woods region transformed from a largely open peat and shrub (heath) landscape into a tree- and forest-rich cultural landscape. Trees sprouted spontaneously along drainage ditches (alder hedges) and small walls with trees (hedgerows) were constructed on boulder clay soils. This cosy and shady (coulisse) landscape is still clearly visible today, especially in the Northern Woods region. From the 16th century onwards, undeveloped peat areas were cut up and sold as peat. In order to drain these peatlands, wealthy peat bosses had an infrastructure of peat canals and connecting channels constructed. These were called "wijken", a word that means "city districts" as well as "side channels". The old wijken structure is still visible near villages such as Drachtstercompagnie and Ravenswoud. The Fochteloërveen was ultimately the only natural raised bog to be spared. In the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, wealthy families had country estates built and forests planted.

- The Frisian Landscapes -

Natural landscape

The foundation
The Frisian landscape has undergone several metamorphoses. For a long time, Frisia was a natural landscape in which humans played no or only an insignificant role. Structures were formed in this natural landscape that still influence how we perceive the landscape today.

Ice ages
Frisia has been covered by glacial ice several times. During the penultimate ice age (approx. 370,000 - 130,000 years ago), a thick mass of ice spread across Frisia in several stages from Scandinavia. Under this land ice, a stiff layer of boulder clay was spread over the soil. At the edges of the ice front, the soil was pushed up. This is why Gaasterland is so high up. After the ice age, the earth warmed up and the glacier ice melted. The meltwater carved out valleys in the ground. In the south-east of the province, this formed the prehistoric predecessors of stream valleys such as the Tjonger.

During the last major ice age (approx. 115,000 - 11,700 years ago), the glacial ice sheet did not reach Frisia. In the coldest phases, Frisia resembled a polar desert with sparse vegetation. The wind had free rein in this barren landscape. Grains of sand were loosened and deposited in other places on the boulder clay subsoil. Where there was some vegetation, the sand was trapped and sand ridges were formed. Pingos also occurred in this landscape. These are ice hills that could tower metres above ground level. When the pingos melted, a small crater remained in the landscape. These pingo ruins can still be recognized today as large pools in the Frisian Woods.

Heating and peat formation
After the last major ice age, the current climatic era began: the Holocene. Sea levels rose and the landscape gradually became overgrown again: first with birch and coniferous trees, later mainly with broad-leafed trees. Hunter-gatherers moved through this landscape and indulged themselves on the natural resources available, such as berries, fish and game. They chose strategic locations, such as the edges of pingo ruins, to set up camp. About 5,500 years ago, the first farming cultures appeared in Frisia. Pieces of primeval forest were then cleared for the construction of fields and farms. The landscape took on a more semi-open character.

Roughly 6,000 years ago, large-scale peat formation began in Frisia, which would continue for several thousand years. In places with stagnant water (low-lying areas), plant material was not broken down and peat formed. The peat expanded further and further: peat mosses soaked up rainwater, grew into thick peat cushions and began to overgrow the sand ridges. A large part of Frisia was transformed into an uninhabitable high moor with peat rivers winding through it.

Terps, churches and monasteries
Rising sea levels created a tidal mudflat and salt marsh area in the north and west of Frisia that was regularly flooded. The salt marshes consisted of salt marsh walls, salt marsh plains, depressions and a web of winding salt marsh channels. Around 600 BC, salt marsh pioneers moved towards these treeless salt marshes. They used salt marsh sods to build terps: a kind of residential mound that kept their homes dry during spring tides. In the open salt marsh landscape, terp dwellers had to be inventive. They grew food on small fields and used manure cakes as fuel. Further away from the terps were hayfields and pastures, and on the mudflats they caught fish and gathered shellfish.

Until the early Middle Ages, the terp dwellers still adhered to a "pagan" religion. With the arrival of Christianity, the Frisians gradually abandoned this. The first churches in Frisia were founded in the 9th and 10th centuries, and in the 11th and 12th centuries, more and more were built. Many parishes split off from the mother church and were established on the Frisian clay and in reclaimed peat areas. From the 12th century onwards, monasteries and 'uithoven' (monastery farms) also appeared in the Frisian landscape. The monasteries and their lay brothers were involved in all kinds of landscape interventions. This included the construction of sea dikes, the reclamation of estuaries, the digging of waterways and the reclamation of land. They were, in fact, the landscape architects of the Middle Ages.

Cultural landscape

The Frisians shape their environment

CLAY - Oostergo, Westergo en Middelzee
In the 11th or 12th century, work began on constructing dikes along the Frisian coast. From that moment on, the terp was no longer necessary as a place to live. After the dikes were built, the clay dwellers continued to shape the landscape. Canals (waterways) were dug and old salt marsh channels were converted into ditches. After the medieval dikes were built, the mudflats outside the dikes silted up locally to form new salt marsh land. This "new land" was sometimes reclaimed by the clay dwellers and used as agricultural land.

Depending on the geographical location and soil, a number of zones developed in the clay area, such as arable farming areas on salt marsh embankments and open meadow areas in the salt marsh plains.

Light clay (salt marsh shores)
The salt marshes, with their light clay soils consisting of clay and sand, are easy to work and therefore suitable for arable farming. In the past, crops such as flax, chicory and various types of grain were grown on the fields. The former salt marshes were characterised by a certain openness, with terp villages, farmyards and here and there a stately home where the notables resided. The villages were connected to the Frisian water network via waterways. Unpaved roads ran across the salt marshes, which were later paved. There were also many orchards around villages such as Berlikum. Smallholders -cotters- and 'gardeniers' mainly grew potatoes, vegetables and fruit here. Fishing villages sprang up in places with good sea connections behind the dike. For a long time, people lived from fishing and gathering mussels, cockles and shrimps on the mudflats. Many authentic fishermen's cottages can still be found in the village Moddergat.

Heavy clay (salt marsh plains)
When the salt marshes were reclaimed, former salt marsh channels were converted into plot ditches. The stiff, heavy clay soil proved difficult to work. In addition to scattered terp villages and farmsteads, the salt marshes also featured small lakes, reed beds, clay extraction sites (for brick manufacturing) and duck decoys. The land was used as pasture or hayfields (meadows) and some of the lakes were also used for fishing. To promote drainage, a fine network of ditches was constructed over the centuries. This resulted in the Frisian ditch landscape, which is still clearly visible, especially in the Greidhoek. In times when there was a need for extra agricultural land, lakes such as the Hempenser lake were drained and divided into rectangular plots. Livestock farming and dairy farming dominated the clay meadow area for centuries. Initially, milk was processed in milk cellars at home, but from the late 19th century onwards, this process moved to the dairy factory. Improvised bridges were built over the ditches and the pole vault was used to jump from pasture to pasture during the aisykjen (egg hunting). The vast clay meadow areas of Oostergo and Westergo are still characterised by their open nature, with a church tower visible in every direction.

Middelzee
Several sea or tidal arms ran through the natural salt marsh landscape of Oostergo and Westergo. The best known was the Middelzee, which separated the salt marsh island of Westergo from Oostergo. The Middelzee reached far inland, almost to present-day Sneek. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the southern part of the sea arm silted up. In phases, silted-up areas were dammed and reclaimed. The villages on the adjacent old land added a piece of reclaimed Middelzee (new land) to their village area. The dug ditch, the Zwette, became the new border between Oostergo and Westergo. Over the centuries, the new lands have always had an open character with a very low population density.

The estuary of the Middelzee remained without dikes until the late Middle Ages. Around 1500, Dutch polder workers began reclaiming this area. In the following centuries, the Bildt expanded several kilometres to the north. This created a new agricultural landscape with block-shaped plots and intersecting, straight roads. Villages such as Sint Annaparochie and Vrouwenparochie developed along the polder roads. Many typical dike houses still stand along the Oude and Nieuwebildtdijk.

Frisian cities
In the late Middle Ages, most Frisian cities were granted city rights. Almost all of these cities were located on clay soil, sometimes close to the transition to peat. The towns owed their status mainly to trade. Over time, some towns flourished while others declined in importance. Places such as Harlingen, Leeuwarden, Sneek and Dokkum acquired an urban allure, with fortifications, city gates, warehouses and market squares. Leeuwarden was home to the steward's residence of the House of Orange for a while. Franeker was famous for its universities and the astronomers who were trained there. And Hindeloopen, with its former location on the Zuiderzee, experienced a period of prosperity in the 17th and 18th centuries and had a large fleet of ships at the time. The Frisian cities were independent administrative units for a long time. However, the cities had little influence in the rural municipalities (formerly known as 'grietenijen'). Today, the Frisian cities are connected to each other through events such as the 'Elfstedentocht'.

PEAT - Lower Middle region
In the early Middle Ages, the Lower Middle region still consisted of an immense area of raised bog. Around the year 1000, peat farmers began to cultivate this peat by digging ditches at regular intervals from small rivers. This drainage caused land subsidence. The Lower Middle region actually became low-lying and changed into a landscape with lakes and wet hay meadows.

Friese meren
After the peat reclamation and the subsequent land subsidence, the Lower Middle region soon began to resemble a bathtub. During storm surges, water could flow into the area with great force and wash away the peaty soil. Lakes formed in a number of places. The fact that these lakes formed after the peat extraction can be seen from the continuous parcelling on both sides of, for example, the 'Sneeker-meer' and the 'Langweerderwielen'. The lakes expanded due to waves and storm surges and often remained relatively shallow. Later, the Frisian lakes would become a popular spot for recreational boating and a competition venue for water sports such as skûtsjesilen.

– A brief overview of the history of the Frisian language –

The Frisian phrase "*Bûter, brea en griene tsiis, is good English and good Fries*" is perhaps better known in a slightly different form. In the early 16th century, the Frisian freedom fighter Grutte Pier had his opponents recite the following sentence: "*Bûter, brea en griene tsiis, wa't dat net sizze kin, is gjin oprjochte Fries*". With this tongue twister, he singled out the Dutch, whom he then impaled on his large sword. At least, that is the myth. The English phrase "*Butter, bread, and green cheese, is good English and good Fries*" shows how closely Frisian and English are related. The further back in time we go, the clearer this becomes. This relationship between Frisian and English also explains why Frisian clearly differs from Dutch, even today, after centuries of Dutch influence on Frisian.

Old and new Frisians
Languages are constantly changing. Sounds are pronounced differently over time, resulting in linguistic differences. Dutch, English, Frisian, German and the Scandinavian languages belong to the Germanic language family. Proto-Germanic is the oldest reconstructable common ancestor of all these languages. It has not been written down, so when we write down Proto-Germanic words, we use an asterisk (*) before those Proto-Germanic words to indicate that we think they sounded that way. When we talk about Proto-Germanic, we are referring roughly to the period between 500 BC and the first centuries AD. During that period, the coastal strips of the northern Netherlands and north-western Germany were inhabited by a people who were called "Frisii" in Roman times. It is still unknown whether they spoke a Celtic or a Germanic language. After 300 AD, these Frisii moved away for reasons that are still unclear.
The Frisians who settled along the then virtually uninhabited North Sea coast in the 4th century AD were closely related to the Angles, Saxons and Jutes who colonized England at the same time from what is now northern Germany and Denmark. They probably arrived in the area as "Saxons" and were referred to as "Frisians" in written sources from around 550 AD onwards. These "new" Frisians had thus taken over the name of the "old" Frisians (the Frisii). The new Frisians inhabited the entire coastal strip on the edge of the North Sea: the entire coast of the Netherlands and part of the coast of Germany (up to the river Weser).

Engeland en de Noordzeekust
omstreeks 500 n. Chr.

North Sea Germanic
The languages spoken by the Anglo-Saxons (Angles and Saxons who had crossed over to England) and the new Frisians are called North Sea Germanic or Ingweons. They were offshoots of Proto-Germanic. North Sea Germanic was spoken approximately between 400 and 1000 AD. The peoples around the North Sea – Frisians, Anglo-Saxons and Jutes – were all distant relatives. Not only did they speak closely related languages, but the speakers also shared some common DNA. They sailed across the North Sea, traded with each other and exchanged stories. The Frisians and Anglo-Saxons were the first to establish a joint monetary economy after the fall of the Roman Empire, and they also shared a variant of the runic script known as Anglo-Frisian runes.

South of the Frisians lived the Franks. They spoke another derivative of Proto-Germanic: Old Low Franconian or Old Dutch, the precursor to Dutch. When the Franks advanced from the south into Frisian territory, the Frisians moved further east. After the Franks had conquered most of their land, many Frisians settled in North Frisia and the German coastal region of Schleswig-Holstein, including the associated islands, below the border with Denmark at the end of the 8th century AD. The language spoken in what is now Holland and Zeeland thus changed from Frisian to Frankish/Dutch during the Middle Ages.

Brea and brood, ljeppe and lopen
Below, we discuss the most striking characteristics of North Sea Germanic. We use the expression "*Bûter, brea, en griene tsiis*" as a prelude to our overview. We begin with *brea*, which resembles the English word "*bread*", but sounds very different from the Dutch word "*brood*". This is because the Proto-Germanic au-sound developed into a long a (the line above it indicates a long sound, so "aa") in closely related English and Frisian. In Old Frisian, the medieval Frisian language (ca. 1100-1500), we find the word *brād* (pronounced braad). Later, this long aa developed into the diphthong ea in English and Frisian. So it became *bread* in English and *brea* in Frisian.
It is remarkable that, apart from sound development, the development of the meaning of words can be unpredictable: the Frisian word *brea* underwent a change in meaning, so that it is now the word for "rye bread". So if you order a *brea* in your best Frisian in the shop today, you will get rye bread. If you want bread, you have to ask for *bôle*, a word that originated from the round shape of the bread. In Frankish (Dutch), the Proto-Germanic au sound did not become ea, but o (long oo): hence *brood* as opposed to *bread* and *brea*. This sound development also explains the difference between *read* and *red* in Frisian and English as opposed to *rood* in Dutch, and the Frisian *beam* and English *beam* as opposed to the Dutch *boom*. In the case of *beam*, it is the English word that has undergone a change in meaning, to "beam" and "ray".

The well-known Frisian word *ljeppe* is the counterpart of the Dutch *lopen* (to walk) due to the same sound development. Here too, the meaning of the words has changed, because the Frisian *ljeppe* now means "to jump" (and *fierljeppe* therefore means "to jump far" or "pole vaulting"), just like its English counterpart *to leap*. If you simply want to walk in Frisian, you have to use *rinne*. The related Dutch word *rennen* means "to run", while in Frisian this is *hurd rinne* or *drave*.

Griene tsiis
Griene tsiis means "green cheese". To explain the difference between the Frisian and English *grien* and *green* and the Dutch *groen*, we must realise that words in the older language phases were often longer than they are now, and that many sounds have "worn away" over time. However, the sounds that disappeared sometimes influenced the sounds that remained. In the case of *grien/green* versus *groen*, this concerns the Proto-Germanic word **grōni*, in which the i later disappeared, causing the o to change to an ø sound and later to an ē-sound (ee). In Old Frisian, we therefore find *grēne* for "green". This long e evolved in modern Frisian and English into a Frisian and English ie sound, so it became *grien* (pronounced griejun) and *green*, as opposed to an oe sound in Dutch: *groen*. The same development also explains why modern Frisians and English speakers say *swiet* and *sweet* and the Dutch say *zoet* (from the Proto-Germanic **swoti)*.

Then there is the *tsiis*. With *brea*, we already saw that the Proto-Germanic long ā could become a long ē-sound in North Sea Germanic, and with *grien* that this long ē-sound became a Frisian ie sound in modern Frisian. In Frankish/Dutch, that Proto-Germanic long ā often remained. This explains why the Frisians say *skiep, tsiis, sliepe* and *died* (and the comparable English *sheep, cheese, sleep* and *deed*), while the Dutch today have *schaap, kaas, slapen* and *daad*.

Let's stay with cheese for a moment, because the consonants also have a story to tell. The Frisians and the English say *tsiis* and *cheese* for cheese, and also *tsjerke* and *church* for church. The Proto-Germanic k-sound became a ts(j)-sound in Frisian and English, whereas in Frankish/Dutch the k-sound (*kaas*) was retained. To make cheese with a k-sound, *kaas*, you have to *churn* milk (which became *tsjernje* in Frisian and *karnen* in Dutch) in the *churn* (*tsjerne* in Frisian, *karnton* in Dutch). But, as we now know, the development of meaning is unpredictable: *buttermilk* is *karnemelk* in Dutch, and *sûpe* in Frisian...

Five geese
Another interesting difference in sound change in the consonants between Frisian and English on the one hand and Dutch on the other can be seen in the development of Proto-Germanic words containing a combination of a vowel and an n + th, f or s. Whereas the n was often retained in Dutch, it disappeared in Frisian and English, but it lengthened the preceding vowel. A good example of this is the Dutch *gans*, which is *goes* in Frisian and *goose* in English. The n has disappeared, and the preceding sound has become longer. It also explains why the Dutch *ons* is *ús* in Frisian and *us* in English. Or why the English say *other* for *ander*. Note! We can therefore see that the Dutch d in *ander* was originally a th sound. Compare *leather* with *leder*. The fact that *leder* in current Dutch speech has often been worn down to *leer* explains why *ander* in Frisian has now been worn down to *oar*: in Old Frisian it was still *other*. The last example of this phenomenon: the Dutch *tand*, without a worn-out n, is *tooth* in English, with a worn-out n and a longer vowel.

In Old Frisian, it was also *toth*, but there was another form, *tosk*, which prevailed in modern Frisian (see another nice parallel with the English word *tusk*, which means "battle tooth"). Sometimes there are words in Dutch that are actually North Sea Germanic. This is the case, for example, with the Dutch word *vijf*, which resembles the Frisian *fiif* and the English *five*. The Proto-Germanic word for "five" is **finf* (compare the German *Fünf*), so you would expect that in Dutch the n would not have been worn away. However, this did happen: languages and peoples will always influence each other...

A thief walks on the terp
In northern Germany, Platt, or Low German, was spoken for centuries. Dutch (Frankish) and Low German formed and still form a huge language area that runs south of the entire Frisian language area and has continuously influenced the Frisian language. English, on the other hand, was first influenced by Danish when the Vikings invaded the country, and from 1066 AD onwards by French when William the Conqueror invaded England from Normandy. As a result, Frisian and English became increasingly distant from each other.

Finally, a few words about the influence of Dutch on Frisian. One of the many examples of this influence is the word *thief* (*dief* in Dutch). We have already seen that there was a th sound in Frankish in Old Frisian. This sound has remained in English, but disappeared in the first two languages. In Frankish/Dutch, this always became a d sound, while in Frisian it became a t sound. Hence the difference between the Dutch *door* and the Frisian *troch* (in English *through*). All these forms go back to the Proto-Germanic **thur(u)h*. Similarly, the difference between *dorp* and *terp*: both come from two related forms: **thurpa* and **tharpa*. The first became the Dutch *dorp*, the second became the Old Frisian *therp*, later the current *terp*. But what about that thief, on that terp? In English it is *thief*, so we would expect something similar in Frisian. The Old Frisian is *thiaf*, which gives us the more modern Frisian form *tsjêf*. This was still used in Frisian in the 17th century, but was subsequently replaced by the Dutch *dief*. Anyone who now says, "*Der rint in tsjêf op de terp*" (There walks a thief on the terp), will no longer be understood by a contemporary Frisian. A similar Dutchification occurs with *dak* (*roof*, compare the English to *thatch*, which means "to cover a roof"). The Frisian *tek* faces stiff competition from the Dutch *dak*. Both forms coexist, but anyone searching the online dictionary Frysker.nl will mainly find forms with *dak*.

Will Frisian remain Frysk?
There are many more examples of Frisian words being replaced by Dutch ones: *neus* (nose) is increasingly winning out over *noas*, *sleutel* (key) over *kaai*, *befoarbeeld* ('for example') over *bygelyks*, and *wang* has already won out over *tsjeak* (cheek). What does this mean for Frisian? Will it continue to exist as a language or will it gradually merge with Dutch? People have been pessimistic about the future of Frisian for at least a century, and yet the language still exists. Of course, it is undergoing changes, but the same is true of Dutch, which is under pressure from the English language. Thanks to a positive attitude towards the language and a political policy that supports it, the future for Frisian looks bright for the time being. There is Frisian radio and television, people sing, write and compose poetry in Frisian, and many newcomers want to learn the language. In recent years, Frisian has become more popular than ever before.