

Think Like an Archaeologist



Archaeology is the study of past people through the things they left behind. Archaeologists study artifacts, or objects made or modified by past humans, to make inferences about the people who left them behind. In this activity, students will watch a video about an artifact. x Students will learn archaeology is

- x Students will employ archaeological methods to study the past, understanding the same process is used whether examining ar-3 (t) 11fa-1.9 (al (t) 1-1.3 ()-11.2.(u)f0.6 (e)ro)3 (s)-6.4 ()-54.9 (h)0w

Relevant Standards:

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rd Grade: SS10.3.13.1 Identifying roles of archaeologists and paleontologists

8th Grade: SS 10.8.1 Explain how artifacts and other archaeological findings provide evidence of the nature and movement of prehistoric groups of people.

Key Terms:

- x Archaeology: The study of past human life through things people left behind
- x Artifact: Something portable that was made or modified by humans
- x Analysis: Detailed examination of the elements or structure of something

Lesson Procedures:

1. Explain that archaeology is the study of past human life through the things people left behind, such as artifacts. One way archaeologists study the past is through analyzing, or studying, artifacts, which are objects that were made or modified by past humans. Each artifact is a clue that helps us better understand what life was like in the past.

Resource [What is Archaeology](#) YouTube Video

Note: This video is part of our series “Ask an Archaeologist,” which includes other short videos about key archaeological concepts



2. Ask each student to choose an artifact from the [Artifact Stories playlist](#). These artifacts were all excavated near downtown Mobile during the [180 Mobile River Bridge Archaeology Project](#).

Scan QR code for Artifact Stories playlist or visit our YouTube Channel at @USAarchaeology and select the playlist "Artifact Stories."

3. Give each student an Artifact Analysis worksheet. Ask them to watch the video on their chosen artifact and then fill out the worksheet.
4. Think, Pair, Share:
 - a. Think: Ask students to reflect on the artifact they chose. When was it made? Who used it? What was it used for? Encourage them to use their imagination to interpret the artifacts.
 - b. Pair: Ask students to share their observations with their neighbor and compare their artifacts. How are they similar? How are they different?
 - c. Share: Allow students to share their thoughts with the class as:
 - o How old are the artifacts?
 - o What were they used for?
 - o Are the artifacts similar to any objects they use?
 - o What do the artifacts tell us about the people who used them?
5. Optional: In class or as a take-home assignment, task students to write a story about the history of their artifact using their observations from the artifact analysis worksheet. This could be a fictional imagining of how the artifact was used and how it was discarded or lost through time or a scientific report on their findings from the worksheet.

Got any questions? Have feedback on the lesson? Want to find more opportunities in archaeology? Get in touch with us at cas@southalabama.edu or visit our [website](#)

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