



Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
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This lesson was created by a teacher participating in a Wisconsin ESEA Improving Teacher Quality grant entitled *Inquiry Based Technology-Mediated Teacher Professional Development and Application*.

Title: Pieces of the Past

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Grade Level: 6-8

Subjects: Language Arts, Science

Objectives: Students will understand the importance of preserving the archaeological record.

WI Standards: Science B8.5, C8.4, E8.5

Duration: Two 40-50 minute class periods

Materials/Supplies: Writing paper, 8.5x11 piece of tag board and one zip-loc bag for each student.

Vocabulary: Preservation, archaeological record

Background: The teacher needs to understand the importance of preserving archaeological sites.

Setting the Stage: Students will have had a lesson on tools of archaeology and how they relate to the archaeological process. Prior to this lesson students will have turned in a picture of an object that has significant meaning to them. This picture will be drawn on the 8.5x11 tag board. Tell students their picture must cover most of the tag board as they will be cutting them into puzzle pieces.

Procedure: Give students the pictures they have turned in. Tell them not to let anyone see them. Instruct students to write a paragraph describing the object and why it is important to them, again not sharing this information with other students. On the back side of their pictures have them draw 15-20 puzzle pieces. Then cut out the pieces. Students should keep 3-4 key pieces of

the puzzle and place the rest in their zip-loc bag. Collect puzzles and give them to different students, it is best if they do not know whose puzzle they have. Now each student must reconstruct the puzzle as best as they can and then write a paragraph describing the object and telling why they think it might be important to someone. When all are finished students can go find who has their puzzle. Each student must then compare their own puzzle paragraph to the paragraph of the person who received their puzzle. Remember each student will have to do this twice so you may want to limit comparison times to just a few minutes. Each student should then return the puzzle and their second paragraph to the owner. Now as a class discuss what made this activity difficult. What would make it easier? Did you feel it was important to try to get it right? Now you can relate this to archaeological sites. Discuss the importance of preservation and getting it right.

- Closure: Students must write a paragraph discussing the importance of preserving the archaeological record.
- Evaluation: By reading these paragraphs you will know if students have met the objective.
- Links/Extension: This could be linked to any lesson on the scientific method. After this lesson students should have a better understanding of why it is important to make careful observations, and record all data properly so that there is a clear picture of what has happened.