



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: What's Missing?
- Submitted by: Cheri Awtrey
- Grade Level: 4th – 8th
- Subjects: Social Studies
- Objectives: By participating in this activity students will:
1. Examine their beliefs about archaeological preservation.
2. Articulate a response to archaeological resource destruction.
- WI Standards: Social Studies B.8.4, B.8.5, B.8.9, B.8.11, C.8.7
- Duration: 35 – 45 minutes (about one class period)
- Materials/Supplies: -Four small (100-piece) jigsaw puzzles. For older students use puzzles that look very similar.
-Small boxes to hold the puzzle pieces.
- Vocabulary: -Context – The relationship artifacts have to each other and the situation in which they are found.
-Ethics – The principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group
- Background: The destruction of archaeological sites around the world is ongoing. As modern humans claim more and more space for their lives more and more history is lost forever. Individuals have the power to help prevent some of the damage that occurs. They are supported by federal and state laws that protect historical sites. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act makes unauthorized collection and/or sale of artifacts a crime. (For a summary of ARPA see Intrigue of the Past p.105.)

For students, this lesson needs to follow “Contextual Clues” and “Filling in the Picture”. These two lessons – or similar lessons – will provide the

context needed to understand how unauthorized collecting of artifacts alters the interpretations.

- Setting the Stage:** Students need to have completed “Contextual Clues” and “Filling in the Picture” or similar lessons about contextual meanings to set the stage for this lesson.
- Procedure:**
1. Open all 4 puzzles. Take about a quarter of the pieces of two puzzles and mix them together. Put the mixed pieces into a box. (Depending on the age of the students involved, you may choose to be more selective in how you mix the pieces. For younger students, you might want to be sure to give them all edge pieces or enough pieces of one section to be sure they recognize some part of what the puzzle is to avoid too much frustration.) Repeat this process for the remaining puzzles. You should end up with 8 sets.
 2. Divide your class into 8 groups.
 3. Give each group one box of puzzle pieces and have them attempt to put the puzzle together. Allow 10 – 15 minutes for this process. Do not allow groups to interact with other groups.
 4. Stop the groups when you feel that they are frustrated enough. As a group, discuss why the puzzles were so difficult to put together.
 5. Have the groups discuss how this might relate to archaeological research. Have the groups come back together to share their insights.
- Closure:** As a whole group, discuss some of the laws concerning archeological site preservation. Discuss the differences between someone going out and trying to find things on their own and a trained archaeologist excavating and recording the finds at a site. Be sure to include information about state and federal laws regarding destruction and taking of artifacts.
- Evaluation:** Have students write a brief statement about the consequences of removing artifacts from a site. They should include a statement about what they can do to help prevent archaeological destruction.
- Links/Extension:** [Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher’s Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades](#) - Lesson 20 “Rock Art Three: Protecting Our Past”; Lesson 22 “Artifact Ethics”; Lesson 23 “the Road Showdown”; Lesson 26 “Archaeology—A Conservation Issue”; Lesson 28 “Take Action—Save the Past”
- References:** Staeck, John P., 2002, *Back to the Earth: An Introduction to Archaeology*, Mayfield Publishing Company, Mountain View, CA. (See especially chapter 10 “The Preservation of the Archaeological Record”)