



Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
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The following lessons were created by **Donna Chesser**, a teacher participating in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers entitled "Exploring the Past: Archaeology in the Upper Mississippi River Region."

Archaeology: Digging Into The Past

Grade Level 4 - 7

Subjects Social Studies, Science, Language Arts

Objectives Students will identify questions that can be answered through scientific investigations.

Students will use appropriate tools and technology resources to gather, analyze, and interpret data.

Students will think critically and logically to make inferences and describe relationships between evidence and explanations.

Students will use appropriate skills to design and conduct a scientific investigation.

Students will identify roles of archaeologists.

Standards Alabama Science: 4.2, 4.5, 5.5, 6.8, 6.1, 5.4, 6.5
Alabama Social Studies: 4.2.B3, 5.2

Duration 3-5 Days, or longer

Materials/Supplies *Intrigue of the Past* activity guide, Chart Paper or KWL-Q Chart (attached), student artifacts, "Comparing Cultures" activity sheets, "Boy in the Water" activity sheets, large index cards, 8.5 x 5.5 pieces of paper, "Context" activity sheets, ten strips of colored paper, scissors, glue, "The Time of My Life," "The Life of _____," and "Stratigraphic Section" activity sheets

Vocabulary	anthropology, archaeology, archaeological site, artifact, context, chronology, culture, cultural relativism, data, ethnocentrism, hypothesis, inference, observation, stratigraphy, timeline
Background	The five lessons contained in this Unit are taken from <i>Intrigue of the Past, A Teacher' Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades</i> created by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. The purpose is to introduce students to "Archaeology" prior to learning about Native American cultures. Lesson 1, "Why is the Past Important?" will help students understand why the past is important and why archaeologists study the past. Lesson 2, "Culture Everywhere," will help students understand that all cultures have basic human needs that must be met. Lesson Three, "Observation and Inference," will demonstrate the difference between observation and inference. In Lesson Four, "Context," students will discover the importance of studying artifacts in context to learn about past people. In Lesson Five, "Chronology: The Time of My Life," students will create personal time lines to demonstrate the importance of having a proper sequence of events to understand the past.
Setting the Stage	Read "A Creative Narrative of the Archaic Period at Russell Cave" by James Holtzclaw titled, "Living in the Archaic Period at Russell Cave." (http://www.nps.gov/ruca/forkids/upload/JH%20Narrative-4.pdf) Ask students, "What genre of literature is this story?" and "How could we verify that this story is Realistic Fiction? How do we know the information being portrayed about Native Americans is accurate?" Lead students into an introduction into the Unit. Explain to students, "This week we are going to find out what archaeology is and how it allows archaeologists to analyze fragments of the past in order to create stories about people who once lived in North America, and also around the world.
Procedure	Ask students to write down what they know about archaeology. (1 - 2 minutes) Tell students to share their comments with the classmates to their left and right, and add to their list any new

information they received. (2 - 3 minutes) Next, ask students to share their information with the class. As students respond to the question, "What is Archaeology?" discuss answers and write the information on chart paper titled "What We Know." Next, pass out large index cards and ask students to draw what they think an archaeologist looks like. (Save cards for later in the Unit.)

On a second sheet of chart paper titled "What We Want to Know", write down questions students have about archaeology. Post both sheets of paper in the room to guide instruction. Discuss student responses the background information provided in *Intrigue of the Past, A Teacher' Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades*.

Introduce Lesson One, and proceed with each of the five lessons. At the end of each lesson, check the KWL-Q chart to see if any of the questions from "What We Want to Know" have been answered. Once you have written down answers on a chart titled "What We Learned," ask students if they have new questions to add to the chart. Write these questions on the "What We Want to Know" chart.

Continue with this process until the end of Lesson Five. Give students an 8.5 x 5.5 sheet of paper and instruct students to write down (3) things they have learned, (2) things they found interesting, and (1) question they still have. (3-2-1 Chart)

Write new questions on a piece of chart paper titled, "Questions We Still Have." Use this information to assess the unit; then provide computer time for students to research answers to these questions.

Closure Ask students to share what they discovered during their research. Add new information to the KWL-Q Chart. Review the KWL-Q charts and discuss content.

Evaluation Compare the information written at the beginning of the unit, "What We Know," with the information recorded in "What We Found Out." Ask students to get a sheet of paper and do a "Quick Write" comparing what they knew at the beginning of

the week with information they now have about archaeology and the work archaeologist do. Once you have collected these papers, pass out the large index cards from Day One with drawings of what an archaeologist looks like. Ask students to comment about their drawings. Were they factual and correct? Did some of the students have misconceptions about the appearance of archaeologists? Does a real archaeologist look and act like Indiana Jones? Why or why not?

Links/Extension As a follow up activity, students may work in groups to make posters explaining "What Archaeology Is" and "What Archaeology Is Not." Another group could do similar posters describing, "What an Archaeologist Is" and "What an Archaeologist Is Not."

The following websites contain materials that may be incorporated into this unit on archaeology, or to be used as resources for creating a longer unit of study on past cultures.

<http://digonsite.com/>

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/>

<http://archaeology.mrdonn.org/powerpoints.html>

<http://www.saa.org/publicftp/PUBLIC/home/home.html>

<http://bama.ua.edu/~alaarch/Whatisarchaeology/index.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/inde/forteachers/upload/ArcheologyLessonPlans1-16-07.pdf>

http://smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/decoding_the_past/index.html

<http://www.pasthorizons.tv/tv/view/519/cultural-heritage-and-the-bureau-of-landmanagement/>

Find Your State Archaeologist <http://www.uiowa.edu/~osa/nasa/>

Find Your Project Archaeology State Coordinator <http://projectarchaeology.org/>

Find your Society for American Archaeology State Education Coordinator

<http://www.saa.org/publicftp/PUBLIC/resources/coordinators.html>

References

Smith, Shelley J, Moe, Jeanne M., Letts, Kelly A., and Paterson, Danielle M., 1996, *Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades*, United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management: 9 - 25.

