



Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
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The following lessons were created by **Paul Eckheart**, a teacher participating in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers entitled Touch the Past: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Region.

Uncovering Archaeology

Grade Level: 4th-7th

Subjects: American History, Math, Minnesota or Wisconsin History

Objectives: Learn about the process of field and laboratory archeology

Standards: Interpreting data, inferring data, synthesizing information

Duration: 2-3 days

Materials/Supplies: playdough, plastic sandwich containers, small plastic baggies, pottery tools, popcorn kernels, wild rice, white rice, and anything else you want to bury for excavating, also a mapping paper divided into two levels to draw-out what they find.

Vocabulary: excavation, artifact, archaeologist, evidence

Background: Pedagogy has been given over the various dates and peoples of North America pre-history.

Setting the Stage: Going over pgs. 4-12 from DVD, Digging and Discovery (Wisconsin Archaeology)

Procedure: Teacher will have prepared the excavation sites which consists of 2 layers of different colored playdough pushed into the plastic sandwich containers to mold. The teacher has also placed the various artifacts into the playdough layers. This activity will be done in groups of 2, so that each student gets a chance to unearth a layer, while the other sifts. Each group will also receive a metal pottery tool used to

"scrape" off the layers and a wooden tool to level each layer, and two small baggies to put the "artifacts" in, as well as a mapping paper. Then, the teacher will model labeling the baggies per unit, how to use the map, as well as the correct way to unearth the unit, and what to do when you find an artifact. After this, the teacher will hand-out materials and let them go at it! Making sure to walk around the room to monitor. After all have excavated, teacher will help synthesize findings by collecting artifacts and maps. The teacher will also put the entire mapping of the site up onto the board so it can be analyzed. You can as detailed as you would like with the collection of the artifacts and what artifacts you would like them to find as well as the site itself.

Closure: Discussion of the excavation and how it relates to the peoples who lived at that site.

Evaluation: Teacher monitoring or project, mapping, and discussion

Links/Extension: Have students record information by cataloging all they have found to be stored for future generations to retrieve.

References: Digging and Discovery, Wisconsin Archaeology. 2nd Edition