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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: Archaeological Inquiry

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Grade Level: 6-8

Subjects: Science

Objectives The students will be able to:

1. describe what they see as they observe an “artifact”
2. ask appropriate questions to learn what they need to know
3. consult other sources of information besides the teacher
4. draw conclusions based on the information gathered to:
 - a. identify what the artifact might have been used for
 - b. determine how old it might be

WI Standards: Science C.8.3, C.8.4

Duration: One class period (46 minutes)

Materials/Supplies: An ancient looking “artifact” of some kind, worksheet, pencil, curiosity

Vocabulary: Artifact, conclusions, problem solving

Background: In this age of information, having to ask the right questions to discover or understand something seems to be a challenge for some students. This activity is designed to stimulate the discovery process through a problem solving approach.

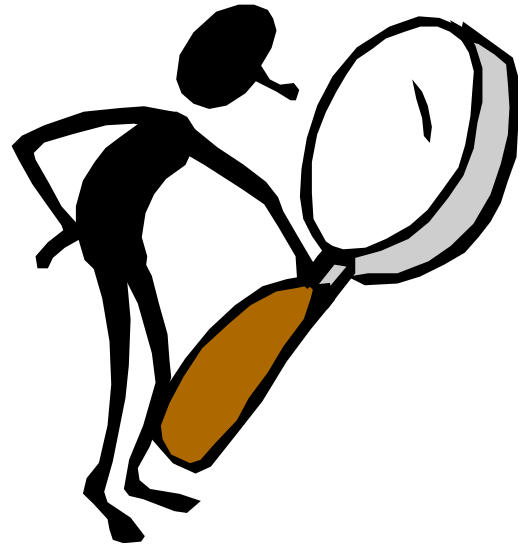
Setting the Stage:

1. Teacher should first select a particular artifact to be observed. The more nondescript, the better, so students will not be able to guess what it is. (A piece of something that looks “old” from the junk pile might work great!)
2. Bring it into the classroom in a box or sack (this seems to heighten their curiosity) and begin introducing the lesson.

Procedure:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You could use any “Indiana Jones” or Sherlock Holmes” come-ons you can think of OR talk about if they have ever found anything that they didn’t know what it was or where it came from. 2. Uncover the artifact (Don’t be surprised by how many “What is it?” questions pop out immediately. Simply reply, “I don’t know”, or I can’t tell you, but you can find out.) 3. Divide the students into groups of 4-6 using playing cards and invite each group to take a turn observing it up closely. 4. Go through the worksheet item by item, encouraging them to ask more questions as they need information. 5. Conclude by discussing what “it” might be and how they drew their conclusions. Accept any reasonable answer and remind them that when archaeologists (tourists, students, or anyone) find something they don’t recognize, they have to put clues together in much the same way.
Closure:	<p>It is easy for students to jump to conclusions without adequate information. Often they are unwilling to observe something long enough to “figure it out,” especially if any effort is involved. They want to know right now if their answer is right or incorrect without taking the time to process information. Students who get involved in this process will discover new ways to deal with certain amount of frustration when some questions remain unanswered. Compare this to the process of finding artifacts at a site and finding out what they are and what they were used for.</p>
Evaluation:	<p>I will know the students have reached the objectives based on answers to worksheet questions and discussion</p>
Links/Extension:	<p>This lesson could fit with any other archaeological lessons on the Scientific Method. This lesson could be taught in Social Studies in an Egyptian unit.</p>

WHAT IS IT?

Use these questions to guide you through the process of finding out what the artifact is.



1. What does it look like?
 - a. Describe the color.

 - b. Describe the shape.

 - c. Describe its size.

 - d. Describe its material (rock, bone, wood, metal, fabric, etc.)
2. Where was it found?
 - a. type of environment or climate

 - b. surrounding rock or soil

 - c. how shallow or deep[
3. What could it have been used for?
4. How old could it be?
 - a. Describe the condition (effects of erosion, rust, decay, how fragile)

 - b. material (consider how fast it might age in a given environment)

 - c. Your best estimation (Circle one)

1-10 yrs.	10-20 yrs.	21 – 50 yrs.
51 – 75 yrs.	76 – 100 yrs.	101 – 200 yrs.
201 – 500 yrs.	502 – 1000 yrs.	Over 100 yrs.
Over 2000 yrs	Over 300 yrs.	
5. What do you think the artifact is?