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The following lessons were created by **Kathy Nesteby**, 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.

### **Draw the Midden**

**Grade Level-** 6 (can be adapted for 3-12)

**Subjects-** Social Studies

**Objectives-** Students will be able to analyze the economic structures of early humans and ancient Egypt, Kush, China, India, Greece, and Rome.

**Standards-** *6<sup>th</sup> grade California Social Studies standards*

World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations

Analyze the economic structures of: early humans, ancient Egypt, Kush, China, India, Greece, and Rome.

**Duration-** 30 mins. for each civilization, done as a closing activity

#### **Materials/Supplies -**

History/social studies textbook

Midden worksheet

#### **Vocabulary-**

midden

artifact

stratigraphy

specific vocabulary for each unit of study

#### **Background-**

In the sixth grade, students in California study ancient history and cultures, including Sumer, Egypt, Kush, India, China, Greece, and Rome. This activity is meant to be a closing activity after a unit of study about one of these ancient cultures. At the beginning of the year, students will have had a garbage lesson

and will understand the importance of midden to historians and archaeologists. This activity can be used repeatedly, at the conclusion of study of an ancient culture.

### **Setting the Stage:**

Students will already have learned about archaeology and the importance of midden. They will also have learned all about an ancient culture in the current unit of study. This activity is a closing activity for a unit.

### **Procedure-**

I. Introduction- Review the meaning and importance of midden. Tell students that they are going to imagine what might have excavated in the midden during that culture's time in history.

II. Pass out "What's in the midden?" handout.

III. Teacher Modeling- Think out loud about one item that might have been in the midden. For example, discuss what people in that culture ate, and draw in one type of food remains. Then, discuss whether this item would have survived until today or if it would have decomposed. Draw an X through anything that would have decomposed.

IV. Guided practice- Ask students to draw in one item and do a think-pair-share about it.

V. Independent practice- Ask students to draw in several more items and cross off anything that may have decomposed.

VI. Class discussion- Discuss which artifacts would have survived until today and which would not, and the implications for historians and archaeologists.

**Closure-** Students write a short answer at the bottom of their papers that gives the story of the people behind the artifacts.

**Evaluation-** Collect student worksheets and review.

**Links/Extension-** Students are encouraged to find and bring in newspaper and/or magazine articles about new archaeological finds and about the cultures that they are studying.

### **Reference-**

*Intrigue of the Past*, U.S. Dept. of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pd. \_\_\_\_

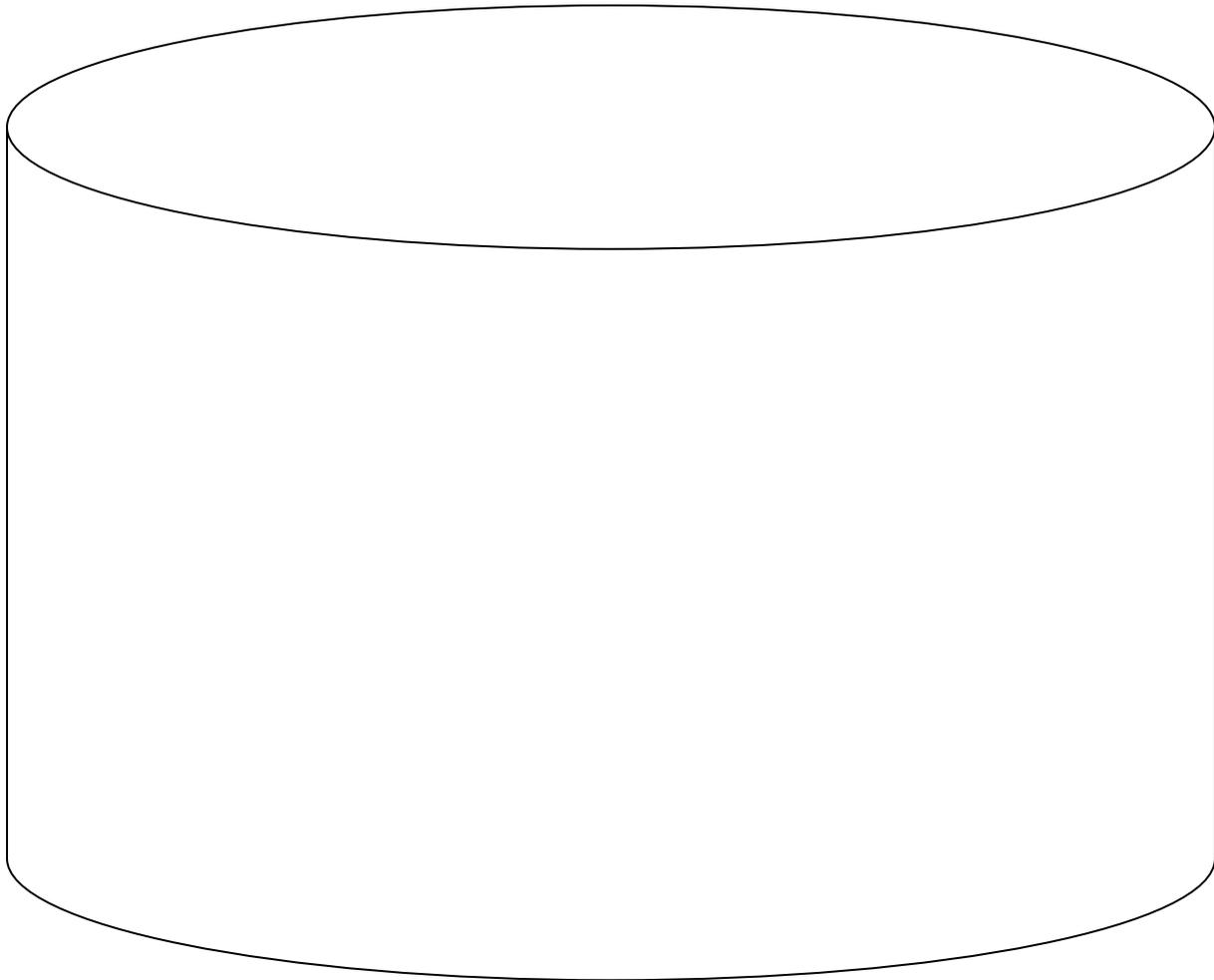
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### What's in the Midden?

**Culture/Group:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time pd.:** \_\_\_\_\_

In the trash can\* below, sketch and label all of the items that you think might have been in a community's midden. Then, clearly label (by drawing an X over the item or in another way) the items that would likely have been lost before modern-day archaeologists excavated the midden.

\*The trash can is symbolic, since ancient peoples probably did not use cylindrical trash bins.



Using the items in your midden, briefly describe the story of the people behind the artifacts:

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