



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: Archaeology is ...

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Grade Level: All ages

Subjects: Science, Language Arts

Objectives: Students will:

1. Use an exercise and discussion to demonstrate the importance of context for learning about ancient people
2. Develop an understanding of the importance of preservation of cultural resources

WI Standards: Science B.8.6, G.8.3, G.8.5, H.8.3

Duration: 1 day

Materials/Supplies: Notebook paper, pencil

Vocabulary: Context - the relationship artifacts have to each other and the situation in which they are found

Background: Artifacts help tell the story about the life of people. By studying artifact, archaeologist can begin to piece together the lives of people who lived long ago. If artifacts are removed improperly, it destroys the context of the site and changes the story. An important part of archaeology is teaching others the importance of preserving cultural resources and preserving the story of ancient people.

Setting the Stage: At the start of the hour, students will be asked to write the answer to a question in 5 or 6 sentences.

Procedure: 1. Students will be asked a question. The question could be about anything. For example: What is science?, What is archaeology?, What did

you do this weekend?, or What is your favorite class? Students will need to answer the question in 5 or 6 sentences.

2. Next, students will exchange papers with a student in class. The students with the paper will be responsible for choosing 10 words on the paper to erase. The students will exchange papers again. It will be the responsibility of the student with the paper now to decide if the paper, with the words now erased, still answers the question which was asked.

3. Students will exchange papers again. This time the student will erase 3 sentences. Finally, the students will hand the paper back to the student who originally answered the question. The author of the answer will look at the paper and decide if they still believe what they wrote answers the original question.

**Closure:** Students will share their feelings about having their work destroyed and how their assignment was affected. Students will discuss the importance of preserving cultural resources, in context, to give us a complete picture of the past.

**Evaluation:** Students will be graded on their participation in the discussion about cultural resource preservation.

**Links/Extension:** This lesson could be linked to a lesson about context.

**References:** MVAC website at: <http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/>