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

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## Check the Clues

**Grade Level:** Grade 2

**Subjects:** Science

**Objectives:** To understand how archaeologists use context clues to learn about the past. Students will be able to use basic archaeological terms correctly, make inferences and observations and use context clues.

**Standards:** From the Illinois Learning Standards

*11.A.1c* Collect data for investigations using measuring instruments and technologies.

*11.A.1d* Record and store data using available technologies.

*11.A.1f* Compare observations of individual and group results.

*13.A.1a* Use basic safety practices.

*13.A.1c* Explain how knowledge can be gained by careful observation.

*13.B.1a* Explain the uses of common scientific instruments.

**Duration:** This lesson will cover 2 - 3 days - one hour each day

**Materials/Supplies:** Plastic gloves, bags, map of school ground, markers/color pencils, worksheets, newspaper, graph paper, rulers

**Vocabulary:** artifact, classification, context, evidence, hypothesis, inference, observation

**Background:** To learn about our past we need to analyze clues that can be found in our daily life and ask questions to learn from these clues.

**Setting the Stage:** Each group of students will be given a map of a selected area of the school ground: front, side, playground, soccer field, back or near the creek, to be their collection area. Students will be asked to collect items that were used and/or made by humans to bring into the class for observation.

**Procedure:** Start by asking questions before going outside: What do you think you will find outside? How do you think these things could have gotten there? Do you think we will find similar items all around the school? What will these items tell us?

**Discuss safety:** Wear gloves at all times, do not pick up living or dead animals. Explain how to record where each item is found by placing a number/color dot/short description on the map. If using the number or color dot, explain that the number or color dot should be placed on the map and the item found. Remind students it is not a race to see which group picks up the most items, but rather taking the time to look at what can be found and where it is found. Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students. Go outside to the collection site and demonstrate how to record the item found in the site. Allow students time to work their site.

**Closure:** Back in the classroom the students will spread their collection out on newspaper and look at what was found and discuss where it was found. Explain and demonstrate how that some items can be clustered. Make a graph of the items found. Use rulers to measure items if possible. Ask: What did the items you found at your site tell you about the people that have been here? Do you notice any patterns of where items were found? Were the items from students at school? Adults? People passing by? How were the items used? Use the worksheet from page 38 of "Intrigue of the Past" for recording items found. Compare results from the different groups to see what patterns might appear. Introduce the terms fact and opinion and discuss what each term means. Give examples: The wrapper found is for food. (Fact) The food in the wrapper was good. (Opinion)

**Evaluation:** Have each group write two facts and two opinions for items found at their site on a worksheet.

**Links/Extension:** Use the worksheet: "Boy in the Water" from "Intrigue of the Past" on pages 16 and 17 to check understanding of fact/opinion.

**References:** Intrigue of the Past - Observation and Inference-pages 14-17 and It's in the Garbage pages 34-38.