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The following lessons were created by **Julie Striewski**, 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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### **How do archaeologists know about the past?**

**Grade Level:** 2nd Grade

**Subjects:** History, Writing, Reading

**Objectives:**

Students will put their life events into chronological order. Students will assess the importance of archaeologists putting past events/artifacts into chronological order.

Students will learn about stratigraphy and about relative dating and why this is important to our study of the past.

Students will learn about Native Americans in the Rochester community. Students will compare downtown Rochester in the past and present. Students will relatively date different artifacts.

**Standards:**

GLCE: English Language Arts, 2nd Grade, Reading  
Narrative Text

- R.NT.02.03 identify and describe characters' actions and motivations, setting (time and place), problem/solution, and sequence of events.

Comprehension

- R.CM.02.01 make text-to-self and text-to-text connections and comparisons by activating prior knowledge, connecting personal knowledge, experience, and understanding of others to ideas in text through oral and written responses.
- R.CM.02.02 retell in sequence the major idea(s) and relevant details of grade-level narrative and informational text.

GLCE: English Language Arts, 2nd Grade, Writing  
Writing Genre

- W.GN.02.01 write a narrative piece such as realistic fiction, fantasy, or personal narrative depicting major story events, using illustrations to match mood, and containing setting, problem/solution, and sequenced events.

GLCE: Social Studies, 2nd Grade, History

H2 Living and Working Together

Use historical thinking to understand the past.

- 2 – H2.0.1 Demonstrate chronological thinking by distinguishing among years and decades using a timeline of local community events.
- 2 – H2.0.3 Use an example to describe the role of the individual in creating history.
- 2 – H2.0.4 Describe changes in the local community over time (e.g., types of businesses, architecture and landscape, jobs, transportation, population).
- 2 – H2.0.6 Construct a historical narrative about the history of the local community from a variety of sources (e.g., data gathered from local residents, artifacts, photographs).

**Duration:** 3 Days

**Materials/Supplies:**

Foam board

“The Life of \_\_\_” handout p.25

Native American pictures

Downtown Rochester Pictures

“The House on Maple Street”

Colored Pencils

Butcher paper

Stratigraphic Section handout p.26

Past/Present object pictures

Artifacts (arrowheads, tape cassette, camera, etc)

“A River Ran Wild”

**Vocabulary:**

artifact

Native Americans

archaeologist

strata

history

preservation

past

timeline

stratigraphy

chronological order

site

sequence

relative dating

**Background:** Students have already learned about types of communities, the geography/location of their community, how citizens live together, how citizens affect a community, and how citizens work together in a community. They just studied changes in our community, and will now learn how we learn this information.

**Setting the Stage:** This lesson sequence is a continuation of Social Studies Unit 5: How Do Communities Change? In Unit 5, students have already explored the definition of history. They have also learned about changes that have taken place in our community over time. Now students will learn about how we know this information. We will study how we know about our community’s past, why artifacts are gathered, and what we can learn through the study of artifacts and relative dating. Students will explore Rochester’s past through books, hands-on learning artifacts and pictures.

**Procedure:**

*Lesson 1:* Tell a personal narrative to the class out of sequence. Ask students how they felt about the story. Explain that the proper sequence of events must be known when trying to understand the past. Define chronological order and explain one way to show this is with a timeline. Explain that archaeologists always try to establish the age of the sites, artifacts, or events they are studying so that they can place them in chronological order. When they dig a site, they record the location of what they find, so that chronological order can be known. Objects at the bottom are the oldest; nearest to the surface is the youngest. Have students list 5 events from their lives and place each on a strip of colored paper. Next to the event, students draw an object that might symbolize that event. Exchange with partner, who tries to put them in chronological order. Partners exchange guesses. This shows how it is hard to reconstruct a story (or the past) if the order of events is not known. Pass out “The Life of \_\_\_\_” activity sheet. Students glue their own strips in chronological order, with the most recent event at the top.

Possibly: Pass out “Stratigraphic Section” handout and explain this relates to the timeline. Ask students what else they might expect to find in the layers of strata. Discuss the importance of leaving sites undisturbed (as it relates to studying the past).

*Lesson 2:* (Prior to lesson- Use foam board to have display of different strata levels. Draw different artifacts in each strata. Cover display with butcher paper.)  
Read “A River Ran Wild” or “A House on Maple Street” to the students and discuss how the land and people changed over time. Discuss what artifacts might be found along the river. Explain that today we will learn more about stratigraphy and how artifacts are found. In whole group, ask students what they think is sticking up from the first strata layer (partially uncovered). Rip away the first level of butcher paper to reveal the first strata. Continue this method until all strata layers and artifacts are revealed. Discuss with students how each strata represents a time in our history with the youngest near the surface. Ask students what information we can infer about each strata level.

*Lesson 3:* Show students pictures of Native Americans in Rochester. Show former Downtown Rochester pictures. How have the people/places of Rochester changed? Give students (in groups of 4) artifacts/pictures and discuss what we can infer about the past or the culture these artifacts came from. Geography changes in Rochester (Water St). What do we see? What does this tell us?

Picture of Rochester Schoolhouse in 1916:

<http://www.rochesterhills.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1081>

Picture of current Rochester School 2012:

<http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/pages/327/musson>

Artifacts: cassette tape, CD, iPod, arrowheads, past/present camera, floppy disk, flash,  
(Give groups of 4) Pictures: Past/Present Teapots, Past/Present transportation horse drawn, model T, current car, etc.

**Closure:** After these lessons, students will continue Unit 5, and learn how communities solved

problems in the past. They will also learn about the past through studying journals. This will lead into the next social studies unit, “How Can a Citizen Affect a Community?”

**Evaluation:** Evaluation will be informal observations. I will assess students’ understanding through the class conversations. I will review timelines for sequencing and chosen “artifacts”. I will also meet with groups to assess predictions/inferences/conclusions.

**Links/Extension:**

<http://www.rochesterhills.org/index.aspx?nid=532>

<http://oaklandk12-public.rubiconatlas.org/c/maps/search.php>

<http://rochester.patch.com/listings/rochester-hills-museum-at-van-hoosen-farm-2>

<http://www.michigan.gov/mshda/0,1607,7-141-54320---,00.html>

<http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com/>

**References:**

Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher’s Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades  
Oakland Schools Social Studies Curriculum

**Attachments:** See p.25-26 “Intrigue of the Past”