



Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
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The following lessons were created by Vicki Darwin, 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.

- Title: Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois
- Submitted by: Vicki Darwin
- Grade Level: 8th
- Subjects: Social Studies
- Objectives:
1. Learn about the prehistoric period of Illinois.
 2. Understand what archaeology has uncovered about prehistoric peoples in Illinois and the role of archaeology in interpreting the past.
 3. Explain how archaeologists divide the prehistoric period in Illinois and why.
 4. Draw conclusions about life during the prehistoric period based on the information that has been uncovered to date.
- IL Standards: Social Studies 16.A.3, 16.C.3 (W), 17.C.3, 17.D.3, 18.A.3, 18.B.3
- Duration: Two class periods (85 min. each)
- Materials/Supplies: Computer Lab, poster board, colored pencils, notebook paper, pencils, scissors, glue
- Vocabulary: Archaeology, archaeologist, artifact, artifact analysis
- Background: Define archaeology and discuss the role of archaeologists in studying the objects that past cultures have left behind. The objects left behind are referred to as artifacts. The archaeologist uses the artifact as a key that can help them interpret what life was like in the past.
- Setting the Stage: Discuss with students that Illinois has had people living here since long before the first Europeans arrived on this continent. Explain that the people that were here before did not have a written language but we still know that they were here because of the artifacts that were left behind and that their artifacts have allowed us to find out information about them.

Procedure: Day One

1. Divide the students into 5 groups. Give each group several reporting sheets. Each group will be assigned one of the five periods of pre-history in Illinois: Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, Late Prehistoric. Each group will be responsible for conducting computer research of their assigned period, completing a poster and reporting what they have found out to the entire class.
2. Students will spend five minutes discussing how they will conduct their research on the computer using the reporting sheet as a guide for what information they will need to gather. After dividing the task into manageable parts the students will go to the computer lab to begin their research. Each student will need to take a pencil and paper with them to the lab.
3. In the lab the students will gather their information from the IL State Museum website which is listed on the top of the reporting sheet. They will make notes on their recording sheets and gather any photos of artifacts for use in the poster.
4. About five minutes before class is over, student groups will report back to their team what they have uncovered and discuss any work that might need to be completed at home.

Day Two

1. Student groups will compile their findings onto a single reporting sheet and work on their group poster.
2. Each group member will present his findings to the class as part of his group's presentation. Other groups should be taking notes on the presentations.
3. Groups will then place their posters in the correct order by time period on the wall.

Closure: Students will participate in a teacher led discussion for clarification of information presented by the groups.

Evaluation:

1. Students are assessed informally on their ability to work as a team in conducting the research.
2. Students are assessed informally on their portion of the group presentation.
3. During the following class period students will be formally assessed on all five periods by completing an individual timeline that includes information given during each of the presentations.

Links/Extension: This lesson could be linked to Science (climate, scientific process, radiocarbon dating, etc.) and Art (pottery, textile production, etc.).

Group Reporting Sheet for Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois

Group members: _____

Period assigned: _____

Web address: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/index.html

Information to gather:

1. Identity _____

2. Environment _____
 - a. climate _____

 - b. plants _____

 - c. animals _____

3. Economy _____
 - a. clothing _____

 - b. food _____

 - c. settlement _____

 - d. trade _____

4. Technology _____
 - a. tools and utensils _____

 - b. containers _____

 - c. weapons _____

 - d. shelter _____

 - e. transportation _____

5. Society _____

6. Beliefs _____

7. Archaeological sites _____

Group Reporting Sheet for Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois

Group members: Answer Key

Period assigned: Paleoindian (12,000 to 10,000 years before present)

Web address: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/index.html

Information to gather:

1. Identity maybe originated in Siberia and possibly other Asian groups
2. Environment broad flat plains, rolling hills and gently flowing streams
 - a. climate 5 degrees cooler in July, Spring and Summer 1 month shorter, more snowfall in winter
 - b. plants Spruce, black ash and meadows and later oak, elm, ash and hickory
 - c. animals mastodon, mammoth, flat-headed peccary, giant beaver, long-horned bison, giant stag moose, caribou, musk-ox, white-tailed deer, squirrel and woodchuck
3. Economy Hunter gatherers
 - a. clothing probably animal hides and furs
 - b. food mastodon, white-tailed deer, smaller animals, fish, fruits, seeds and nuts but no plant cultivation
 - c. settlement less than 400 sites discovered to date, small temporary camps that may have been reused on a seasonal basis
 - d. trade frequent travel does not indicate trade networks
4. Technology stone, bone, wood and natural materials for tools
 - a. tools and utensils spear points, knives, scrapers, hammer tools, bone batons
 - b. containers probably made of natural fibers or hides but no evidence remains
 - c. weapons stone spears
 - d. shelter probably skin tents over wood framework, no evidence remains
 - e. transportation foot travel, no animals
5. Society small camps consisting of multi-generational family groups
6. Beliefs like other hunter-gathers they probably lived in a spirit filled world and had a variety of rituals
7. Archaeological sites Lincoln Hills and Kimmswick

Group Reporting Sheet for Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois

Group members: Answer Key

Period assigned: Archaic (10,000 to 3000 years before present) 3 sub periods: early (10,000 to 8000), middle (8,000 to 5,000) and late (5,000 to 3000)

Web address: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/index.html

Information to gather:

1. Identity Assumed to be descendants of Paleoindians; approx. 5 feet tall and lived to age 25 or 30, lots of arthritis and fractures, few cavities
2. Environment variable conditions
 - a. climate initially cooler and wetter, then warmer and drier finally about 5000 years ago changed to what we have today
 - b. plants was initially extensively forest, changed to large prairie areas in central part with forested areas near waterways
 - c. animals ice age animals extinct, deer, raccoon, opossum, fish, reptiles, amphibians, mussels and dogs
3. Economy hunter gatherers, about 4000 years ago began plant cultivation
 - a. clothing animal skins, plant fibers, woven sandals, bone ornaments and pins, mussel beads and pendants
 - b. food deer, squirrel, rabbit, waterfowl, frogs, turtles, mussels, roots and tubers, berries, other plant sources, walnuts, pecans, hickory, sumpweed; some plant cultivation indicated by change in seed size
 - c. settlement 8,310 sites discovered, many villages early period sizes 25 people, late up to 200 people
 - d. trade little trade in early and middle periods but about 4000 years ago in late period people acquired items from distant sources
4. Technology atlatl (spear thrower) was principal development
 - a. tools and utensils grooved axes, grinding stones, nutting stones, abraders, hammer stones, stone points, knives
 - b. containers did not survive, assume made of wood, fiber or hides
 - c. weapons atlatl, banner stones, dart points and knives
 - d. shelter used natural shelters and built shelters using wood uprights with bark or reed mats or hides for coverings
 - e. transportation on foot, perhaps used canoes (none found to date)
5. Society small family groups, all members worked including children
6. Beliefs special artifacts found in graves, mounds, red ocher, many trade artifacts in burials
7. Archaeological sites Koster and Modoc Rockshelter

Group Reporting Sheet for Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois

Group members: Answer Key

Period assigned: Woodland (3,000 to 1250 years before present) 3 sub periods: early (3000 to 2200), middle (2200 to 1800) and late (1800 to 1250)

Web address: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/index.html

Information to gather:

1. Identity men avg. 5 ft 6 in and women 5 ft 3 in. Life expectancy was 36 to 40 years; increased infant & child & elder mortality from disease
2. Environment slightly lower temps and slightly higher rainfall
 - a. climate shorter growing season due to lower temps and greater rainfall
 - b. plants more forests, oak, hickory, elm, maple, cottonwood, sycamore and basswood. Cultivated goosefoot, sunflower, sumpweed, maygrass, little barley; corn in late period
 - c. animals elk, deer, raccoon, rabbit, beaver, otter, turtles, snakes, frogs, toads, birds, fish and mussels
3. Economy Hunter gatherers with cultivation of food
 - a. clothing woven plant fibers used for clothing, lots of bone, pearl, stone and other ornaments used
 - b. food squash, gourd, goosefoot, marshelder, little barley, maygrass, tobacco, corn, deer, rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, turkey, fish, mussels, turtles, waterfowl, hazelnut, hickory nut, grapes, sumac, blackberry, elderberry, plum, wild black cherry, persimmon
 - c. settlement 7,748 sites discovered, many permanent villages with larger houses
 - d. trade extensive trade networks which appear to have ended about 1800 years ago during the Late Woodland period
4. Technology most important was bow and arrow and pottery
 - a. tools and utensils use of copper for some tools, hoes for gardening, smaller stone arrow tips, and many of the other tools previously used
 - b. containers rock or sand grit tempered pottery
 - c. weapons bow and arrow about 1400 years ago
 - d. shelter mat covered circular or oval wigwams, in late period square or rectangular which was covered in thatch
 - e. transportation walked, dugout canoes
5. Society in early period small groups 1 or 2 families, middle several families in villages, late period much larger villages and many more villages
6. Beliefs see changes in burial practices which become more elaborate, pipe smoking gains ritual significance, animal effigies are seen in more objects
7. Archaeological sites Albany Mounds, Ogden-Fettie Mounds and village

Group Reporting Sheet for Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois

Group members: Answer Key

Period assigned: Mississippian (1100 to 550 years ago)

Web address: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/index.html

Information to gather:

1. Identity Had more cavities, disease and childhood deaths than woodland ancestors avg. age was 37 for men and 32 for women
2. Environment warmer and drier with longer growing season
 - a. climate warmer and drier with longer growing season until about 550 years ago when it became cooler, wetter with a shorter growing season
 - b. plants prairie plants such as big and little bluestem, Indian grass, prairie dropseed, switchgrass, lead plant, compass, plant and prairie dock with forests along rivers and streams
 - c. animals deer, elk, turkey, raccoon, muskrat, squirrel, beaver, ducks, geese and other waterfowl, reptiles, amphibians, fish and mussels
3. Economy hunter-gatherers with corn agriculture, a wide trade network
 - a. clothing hides and fiber clothing, lots of ornamentation – figurines show hairstyles, clothing styles and ornamentation styles
 - b. food mixture of wild and cultivated foods; deer, rabbit, muskrat, beaver, raccoon, turkey, waterfowl, amphibians, reptiles, fish, plums, grapes, blackberries, raspberries, walnut, pecan, butternut, hickory, acorn, goosefoot, sunflower, squash and beans
 - c. settlement 2,379 sites in IL, had larger settlements
 - d. trade large network in IL and Midwest and to the gulf and great lakes
4. Technology wooden stockades, platform mounds, crushed shell in pottery, triangular arrow points
 - a. tools and utensils stone hoes, scrapers, knives, drills, micro drills, grinding stones and recreational objects such as chunky stones
 - b. containers shell tempered pottery and diff. types of pottery such as funnels, plates, water bottles, pans, bowls, bean pots, effigy pots with animal or human figures
 - c. weapons bow and arrows with Cahokia notched points
 - d. shelter recessed floor homes with pointed roofs made of thatch, platforms for sleeping, public buildings
 - e. transportation on foot or in canoes
5. Society 1 to 3 family homesteads, small hamlets of 40 to 50 people and larger communities with flat topped mounds, public use buildings
6. Beliefs 3 parts: upper world (sun) gives life, middle world (earth) and lower world (fertility), also believed in afterlife
7. Archaeological sites Cahokia, Larson site, Dickson Mounds, Millstone Bluff

Group Reporting Sheet for Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois

Group members: Answer Key

Period assigned: Late Pre-historic (700 to 300 years ago)

Web address: http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/index.html

Information to gather:

1. Identity Two groups: Oneota and Caborn-Welborn (possible Mississippian descendents); Oneota were approx. 5 ft 5 in for males and 5 ft 3 in for females, had poorer health, lots of tooth decay and infectious disease, women often died between age 15 and 25, lots of violence shown on remains
2. Environment Little Ice Age period
 - a. climate cooler, wetter, longer winters, shorter growing seasons
 - b. plants temperature favored forest growth
 - c. animals mostly what we still have today except they also had elk and bison
3. Economy agriculture economy of corn, beans & squash, still hunter-gatherers
 - a. clothing hides and plant fibers with some ornamentation
 - b. food deer, turkey, drumfish, bowfin, catfish, gar, knotweed, goosefoot, little barley, corn, beans, squash, hickory nuts, acorns, black walnuts, hazelnuts, butternuts, plum, grapes, black cherries, black berries
 - c. settlement lived on flood plains and bluffs
 - d. trade trade continued
4. Technology No real changes in technology
 - a. tools and utensils same as before but also fish lures and floats
 - b. containers pottery until European glass and metal came as trade goods
 - c. weapons bow and arrows, guns as trade goods after Europeans arrived
 - d. shelter small semi-subterranean homes with steep roofs made of thatch, small villages up to 200 people
 - e. transportation foot and canoe
5. Society small villages, hunter gatherers with field cultivation, some public areas, cemeteries
6. Beliefs difficult to reconstruct, nature based
7. Archaeological sites Morton site, Norris Farms site 36

Exploration of Prehistoric Peoples of Illinois Timeline Rubric

Total points possible: 20

0 points each	1 point each	2 points each	3 points each	4 points each	5 points each
No timeline	Listed 1 of 5 periods	Listed 2 of 5 periods	Listed 3 of 5 periods	Listed 4 of 5 periods	All 5 periods listed
Not in order or no timeline	1 of 5 in correct order	2 of 5 in correct order	3 of 5 in correct order	4 of 5 in correct order	All periods in correct order
Not all categories represented or no timeline	Lists 1 item from each category	Lists 2 items from 3 categories and 1 item from 4 categories	Lists 3 items from 3 categories and 1 or more items from 4 categories	Lists 4 items from 3 categories and 1 or more items from 4 categories	Lists 5 items from 3 categories and 1 or more from 4 categories
Not neatly done and more than 10 items misspelled or no timeline	Not neatly done and 4 to 10 items misspelled	Not neatly done and 1 to 3 items misspelled or neatly done but more than 10 spelling errors	Neatly done, 4 to 10 items misspelled	Neatly done, 1 to 3 spelling errors	Neatly done, correct spelling