Patterns in Human Behavior and Ethics of Artifacts

Grade Level: 10-12

Subjects: World History

Objectives:
Students will understand how history is made up of patterns of behavior that do not really change throughout human history. In addition, students will learn to be reflective and respectful of historical records wherever they are encountered in order to formulate interpretations and preserve them for future interpretation.

Standards: Wisconsin Model Academic Standards B 12.1, B 12.2, B 12.4

Duration: 2 days

Materials/Supplies:
Computer with projector, PowerPoint presentation, BBC Horizon Iceman (1993)

Vocabulary: Forensics, Historical context, artifacts,

Background:
History is made up of consistent patterns of human behavior that can be applied to similar situations, be they prehistoric or current. It is by finding these patterns that historical interpretation is developed. Students need to understand how the integrity of historical situations gives us a context that is utilized to glean
information from sites. These patterns combine with artifacts to establish accuracy through historical context. It is only through “complete” sites that we are able to formulate logical and thoughtful interpretations of history which begin to approach truth.

Setting the Stage: Zombie Apocalypse discussion

Procedure:
1. Students will be “hooked” into evaluating human behavior through a scenario of the “Zombie Apocalypse.” They are confronted with being a parent who is accosted by zombies.

2. They must decide behaviors that offer best outcomes. First and foremost, defend the baby, even at risk of personal injury or loss of property/purse; Second, Flee to safe area; Third, Get armed; Fourth, hide; Fifth, survive/die.

3. Discuss how you will be identified without ID or personal technology. What if they lost even basics; clothes, keys, lip balm? What if you were just a rotted corpse?


5. Introduce the Iceman. What can be done?

6. Show film Iceman (1993) (23 min)

7. Discuss problems of ID and potential benefits.

8. Discuss extraction procedures

9. Discuss Context

10. What is to be learned from him? What if artifacts were missing/taken?

11. What about your body? What about local archeological sites?

Closure:
Have the class discuss the way historians/archeologists/anthropologists study
artifacts to develop interpretations. How did Otzi die? How do you know?

Evaluation:
Students write an evaluation of the death of the Iceman and back their speculation up with evidence derived from the artifacts presented. Have them speculate further as to how Otzi could be used in the future to tell us more.

References:
BBC Horizon: Iceman (1993)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yku1fKGyroI&feature=related

Iceman - Hunt for a Killer - Ancient Civilizations
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HebEGm9QQRQ

The Iceman: Murder
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbj1de4355g&feature=related
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=1849889667776048429

Iceman Died From Head Trauma, Not Arrow http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/29/AR2007082900688.html

Preservation of 5300 year old red blood cells in the Iceman
http://rsif.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/early/2012/04/26/rsif.2012.0174

Last Hours of the Iceman

Radiologic proof for the Iceman’s cause of death (ca. 5’300 BP)