



Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library Activities Trip Venue #1

- Sketching an Artifact
- Wisconsin Archaeological
Timeline Scavenger Hunt

Sketching an artifact

Objectives

Students will learn to make observations and inferences about authentic artifacts from Wisconsin. They will compare tools, past and present, to develop ideas about how people may have used tools to subsist (make a living) in Wisconsin for thousands of years.

Method

Students will sketch an artifact from the Shirley M. Wright library display and answer questions about the object of their choosing.

Materials

Associated worksheet, writing utensils, clipboard, attached artifact guide found in the library exhibit.

Grades: K-4

Subject Areas: Social Studies

Duration: one class period

Group Size: 2-3 students

Setting: Shirley M. Wright Library

Standards met: Social Studies: B.4.1, D.4.5, Literacy: W.4.2b, W.4.2d

Associated materials: Sketching an artifact worksheet, artifact exhibit guide

Background

Background and timeline of past peoples who have inhabited Wisconsin
<http://mvac.uwlax.edu/PreEuropeanPeople/>

A guide to various types of projectile points:

<http://mvac.uwlax.edu/past-cultures/point-guide/>

Key Terms

artifact: any object that was made, modified, or used by people.

ceramics: pottery, fired clay.
Ceramics were used for dishes, as cooking pots, for storing things, etc.

potsherd: a broken fragment of a whole ceramic pot.

temper: a material that is intentionally added to clay to make it easier to sculpt. Adding temper to clay prevents a pot from exploding during the firing process because it allows the clay to expand. Common tempers found in Wisconsin prehistoric pottery include crushed rock, sand, shell, and “grog” (broken pieces of pots crushed up and used as temper for other pots.)

Procedure

To start the activity, orient the students to the display case. Give them a brief explanation of what is in the case:

- an illustrated timeline of past peoples who lived in Wisconsin is found on the top shelf.
- an introduction to excavation and the archaeological process is on the bottom left.
- and an explanation of the Mississippian sites in Trempealeau can be found on the bottom right.

Explain that an artifact is something that was made or used by a person. Working in groups of 2-3, students will spend a few minutes looking at the artifacts in the case. Point out several

and ask the students to hypothesize about how the artifacts may have been used.

Now split the class in half. One group will complete the first activity listed below and the other will work on the second. This will allow more space in front of the display. Once each group has finished their activity, swap the groups so each student will get a chance to do both.

1. Activity 1: Ask the groups to choose an artifact (excluding the bottom left section). Have each student sketch an object from the display onto their worksheets and complete the accompanying questions with their partners based on their observations.
2. Activity 2: Using the second included worksheet, have students try to match images of modern tools with ancient ones.

Give them about 20 minutes to complete this activity.

Reconvene as a class and chose a few groups to present what they learned about their artifact. Let them explain their hypotheses about the purposes for which the artifact may have been used. Use the included artifact description to help explain any questions. You can also find this mounted above the exhibit.

Sketching an Artifact

Draw the artifact.

Name _____



Background about the artifact *(use the information from the display)*:

Which culture period is it from? *(circle one)* PaleoIndian Archaic
Woodland Oneota Mississippian Contact Contemporary

How old is the artifact? _____

Describe the artifact:

Color _____

Shape _____

What is its texture? Does it look rough or smooth? Is it bumpy?

Is it whole or a broken piece? _____

Use:

What do you think it was used for? _____

Who might have used it? _____

Have you ever seen an object like this before? _____

Is it like anything we use today? _____

Modern vs. Ancient Technologies.

Match the modern and ancient tools that might have been used for the same tasks.



Artifact Descriptions

1. Spokeshave (for straightening arrow shafts), spokeshave/graver tool (for incising bone)
2. Hide scraper¹
3. Clovis spear point (13,000 years old)
4. Dovetail spear point (9,000 years old)
5. Biface made of Cochrane chert²
6. Fully grooved axe head^{1 & 4}
7. Nutting stone for cracking nuts
8. Charred hickory nuts
9. Stone drill
10. Raddatz side-notched point (5,000 years old)
11. Durst point (3,000 years old)
12. Copper point and raw copper
13. Middle Woodland pottery sherds (rocker stamped [top left], dentate stamped [top right], cord-wrapped stick with nodes or bosses [bottom])
14. Matting needle for making cattail and reed mats
15. Sheet copper and rolled copper bead
16. Waubesa spear point (2,500 years old)
17. Snyder spear point (1,800 years old)
18. Madison triangular arrowhead (1,300 years old)¹
19. Stone drill
20. Hide scraper made of Knife River Flint from North Dakota¹
21. Silicified sandstone biface and stone flakes
22. Hixton silicified sandstone Madison Triangular arrowheads¹
23. Hide scraper made of Hixton silicified sandstone¹
24. Sandstone bar abrader for straightening arrow shafts
25. Stone celt (ungrooved axe head)
26. Oneota tool-trailed pottery (700 years old)
27. Catlinite (pipestone) pipe fragment with bird tail design²
28. Catlinite projectile point
29. Charred corn kernels
30. Copper bird pendant²
31. Stone drill bit
32. Historic catlinite pipe with cross-hatched design
33. Jesuit ring (replica) recovered from Perrot State Park excavations (1700s)
34. Kaolin pipe
35. Metal fur trade knife
36. Historic trade beads (reproductions, 1700s-1800s)
37. French gun flints
38. Fur trade era “voyageur cup” made of wood with turtle design
39. Catfish Days button
40. Perrot State Park wood plaque
41. Great River State Park Trail patch
42. Charred corn cob
43. Stone hoe made of Mill Creek chert and hoe re-sharpening flake
44. Squash seeds and Mississippi River clam shell
45. Mississippian pottery sherds (black burnished or polished sherd [top left] and red-slipped or painted sherds [bottom left and right] imported to Trempealeau from Cahokia)
46. Mississippian knife made of High Ridge chert from Missouri
47. Stone (lithic) core and large flake tool made of Crescent Hills Burlington chert from Missouri and imported to Trempealeau
48. Shell bead and stone micro-drills for making shell beads
49. Flakes of Ste. Genevieve (“root beer chert”) and Mill Creek chert from the American Bottom imported to Trempealeau
50. A variety of finely crafted Mississippian projectile points [tri-notched variety on the left]
51. Mississippian stone celt (axe) found near Trempealeau Hotel³

¹On loan from John Ebersold

²On loan from Todd Lakey

³On loan from Kim Ganz

⁴Found by Emery McDonah

Wisconsin Archaeological Timeline Scavenger Hunt

Objectives

Students will learn about the process of use and disposal of objects, which is a major component of what archaeologists study. Students will reconstruct a ceramic pottery vessel using sherds (small, broken pieces of pottery) to demonstrate:

1. how some pots can be reconstructed once they've been discovered by archaeologists; and
2. that even small pieces of objects are significant and can tell us a lot about the past.

Students will identify changes in the lifestyles, diet, technology, and tools that people used over time. They will relate objects from their lives to those of their peers and then make comparisons with artifacts used by ancient people. They will discuss how cultural differences are often related to different lifestyles.

Grades: K-4

Subject Areas: Science, Social Studies

Duration: three 45-minute class periods

Group Size: Part 2: 2-3 students

Settings: (1) classroom, (2) Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library

Standards met: *Science:* D.4.2, E.4.7, H.4.1; C.4.2, E.4.8, *Social Studies:* A.4.4, B.4.1, B.4.4, E.4.2, E.4.7, E.4.13, *Literacy:* RI.4.7, W.4.1a-d

Associated materials: Wisconsin Archaeological Timeline worksheet, Ancient Pottery example sheet, clipboards

Materials

Part 1: paper, small ceramic flowerpots for each student (you can get a pack of 3 for \$1 at the Dollar Store), markers or paint, an old pillowcase, a hammer, scotch tape.

Part 2-3: Associated worksheet, access to a chalk or whiteboard for extension discussion, clipboards or other hard surfaces to write on. (optional)

Background

Archaeologists study the human past by discovering objects left behind by people. These “artifacts” (anything made or used by a person) can tell us a lot about the kinds of activities that people engaged in, and can even tell us about the time of year a site was occupied. For more background about the process of archaeology, visit this link <http://mvac.uwlax.edu/ProcessArch/> on the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center's (MVAC's) website.

Key Terms:

artifact: an artifact is something that was made, modified, or used by people.

feature: a human-made mark on the landscape that indicates where things like a garbage dump, storage pit, house stain, or fireplace once existed.

archaeologist: a scientist who studies the human past by examining the things (e.g., artifacts, features) that people left behind or threw away.

culture: a set of learned beliefs, values, and behaviors— a way of life— shared by members of a society.

ceramics: pottery, fired clay.
Ceramics were used for dishes, as

hypothesis: an educated guess that is testable by experimentation.

temper: a material that is intentionally added to clay to make it easier to sculpt. Adding temper to clay prevents a pot from exploding during the firing process because it allows the clay to expand. Common tempers found in Wisconsin prehistoric pottery include crushed rock, sand, shell, and “grog” (broken pieces of pots crushed up and used as temper for other pots.)

Procedure

This is a three-part activity consisting of a

1. preliminary activity to be completed in the classroom.
2. secondary part that will take place at the Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library exhibit space.
3. final extension to be performed after you are back in the classroom.

PART 1

For the initial part of the activity, students will individually decorate flowerpots using markers or paint, smash them, and then try to put them back together. This part of the activity is intended to help the students realize that potsherds are pieces of a larger pottery vessel, and will provide some context for the students to better understand the artifacts in the library display case and for what purpose(s) they may have been used.

Introduce the activity by showing pictures of ancient pottery. Ask the students why (for what purposes) people might have used the pots. Show pictures of modern pots and pans, dishware and tupperware and explain that ancient people used pots in the same way we use these modern containers today.

To start the activity, give each student a small (2”) flowerpot and a piece of paper.

1. Ask them who will use their pot: a family, a public figure such as a mayor or a celebrity?
2. Ask how they will decorate their pot: with symbols that have meaning to them or to others, or with geometric designs?

Tell them to sketch their chosen design on paper. After they have sketched their design, let your students decorate their own flowerpot in anyway they would like with markers or paint.

When the pots are completed and dry, have each student bring you their pot. Place the pot in a pillowcase and gently tap with a hammer to break into 5-10 pieces. Give the broken pieces back to the student. Tell the students to imagine that 1,000 years have passed and that they are archaeologists digging the site where these potsherds are found. Ask them if they think they could put the pot back together from its pieces. Give them some scotch tape and let them give it a try. Instruct them to tape both sides of the pot, on the inside and outside, so that it stays together.

After 10 minutes or however much time you feel is appropriate for your group, have the students pause for discussion. Ask their thoughts about the activity. Was it hard or easy? Would it be easier or more difficult to put the pot together if some of the pieces were missing? How about if pieces of their pot and their neighbor’s pot were mixed together? Would that make it more difficult to figure out which pieces go with which pot? What clues might help you to know the shape of the pot if you only had one piece? Explain that archaeologists rarely find complete pots and often only find a few pieces of it.

PART 2

Begin with a preliminary discussion to introduce the meaning of the term “artifacts” and their significance for archaeological research. This could even be done on the way to the library. Ask students to name objects or tools they use every day. Give an explanation of **artifacts** as objects that are left behind by people- things that humans made, modified or used- the main clues that archaeologists unearth to learn about how ancient people lived.

Once at the Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library, orient the students to the display case and explain that the tools and pieces of pottery in the timeline section of the exhibit (top shelf) were used by people that lived in Trempealeau and other areas of Wisconsin thousands of years ago. Distribute the worksheets and clipboards and instruct the students to split into groups of 2 or 3. Give them about 15 minutes to work with their partner(s) to choose 2 culture period sections (PaleoIndian, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, Oneota or Historic Contact) of the timeline and write or draw artifacts from the case or images from the illustration for two of the categories on the worksheet. With their partner(s), have the students answer the questions in the “Discuss” section of the worksheet.

After about 15 minutes, or however long you feel is appropriate for your class, go over the questions in the “Discuss” section. Were there differences between the artifacts in the two periods that each student chose? What hypotheses did the students formulate for why artifacts might have changed over time?

Give the students 5-7 more minutes to complete the “Think about it” section with their partner(s). Then discuss the questions as a class. Explain that cultural

differences such as ethnicity, neighborhood, family, likes and dislikes can shape a person’s identity and impact choices people make (for example what foods to eat, what tools you use, etc.). This group discussion could take place on the way back to the classroom.

PART 3:

When you have returned to the classroom, perhaps even the next day, make a timeline on the whiteboard or chalkboard with a column heading for each section of the timeline in the exhibit (PaleoIndian, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, Oneota, Contact and Today) and rows labeled with the “Activities” on the worksheet. Have the students take out their sheets and write their answers from their own papers on the board for the culture periods they chose from the timeline. Contribute ideas as a class to the “Today” section based on the answers that the student provided in the “Think About It” worksheet section.

Discuss the changes over time as a class: material type, style, food sources, technologies etc. Think about why these changes might have occurred (i.e: availability of new materials, change in climate, inventions of new technologies, changes in lifestyle, the shift from life on the move [nomadic hunter-gatherers] to life in villages and later cities [settled cultivators or agriculturists]). Give an example of changes that have happened in recent years, like DVDs replacing VHS tapes, or smartphones replacing flip phones or landlines.

Wisconsin Archaeological Timeline Scavenger Hunt:

Name: _____

Stand in front of the display case in the library. Look at the illustration and objects in the timeline (on the top shelf). Choose two time periods from the timeline. Write in the culture name (ie: PaleoIndian, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, Oneota, Contact) and date, and record the diet, tools and materials that were used by people from those periods in the table below.

<p>Write each culture name to the right</p> <p>→</p>		
<p>What did they eat?</p>		
<p>What tools did they use (for example to hunt)?</p>		
<p>What materials did they use to make tools?</p>		
<p>Are there any new inventions or technologies in this period?</p>		

Discuss:

Compare the differences in artifacts that you recorded. Did the objects change through time? In what ways?

Why do you think the objects people used might have changed through time?

Think about it:

In some ways ancient people were just like you! They cooked, ate, stored food, and wore clothing. Share some of the objects or tools you use in your life to do the following tasks:

What do you eat ?		What new technologies do you use in your daily life?	
What tools do you use?		From what materials are these tools made?	

*Discuss with a partner the objects you chose for these activities. Compare the objects you chose to your partner's. Are they all the same?*_____

*People from different places, cultures, and backgrounds often use different tools to do the same types of activities. What are some reasons the things you use might be different from other students?*_____

Ancient Pottery Example Sheet: ancient cooking pots, dishes, tupperware



Rim of small jar with punctates (punched holes)



French Fork-Incised body sherd, made in Louisiana or Mississippi and carried to Trempealeau where it was found.



Red seed jar that is shell-tempered (the clay is mixed with broken shells)



Rim of a cooking vessel. The outside has a dark color because it was placed in a fire for cooking.



A piece of a red-slipped bowl. Red slip is a distinctive sign of Mississippian culture.



Red-slipped fineware. Fineware was well-made pottery and probably used for special occasions in the way we use "fine china" for Thanksgiving or Christmas.