

Lesson 7: Archeological Preservation

Missing Pieces

By Susan Wolter

Lesson Overview: Students participate in an activity which illustrates the impact of removing artifacts which are randomly found by individuals. Students are provided with information about archeological preservation and collaborate with their team to create a pamphlet that will persuade others to preserve the past.

Objectives: Students will:

- realize the repercussions of removing artifacts from a site
- infer additional reasons why archeologists rarely have all of the pieces needed to reassemble an object

TEKS

- Social Studies 4.22 B
- Writing 4.15 B

Materials:

- Transparency: Learning from Artifacts at Fort St. Louis
- Four large plastic bags
- Three previously prepared Team “Site Bags” and one “Pothunter’s Bag”
- Elmer’s Glue®
- Student Handout: Quit Digging.

Preparation: Place into a large plastic bag one of the clay plant pots decorated in Lesson 4. Using a hammer, break the pot into five to six large pieces (note: practicing on an undecorated pot is advisable). Repeat the procedure by first placing each of the other two clay plant pots into large plastic bags. Remove one or two pieces from each bag and set them into a “Pothunter’s Bag” to simulate the removal of artifacts from archeological sites. Create one “Site Bag” for each team which contains a few of the pottery pieces from each of the clay plant pots.

Activity:

Step 1: Display Transparency: What archeologists learned from Artifacts at Fort St. Louis. Have students take turns reading items from the archeologists column. Read the items under the “Pothunter” column, then lead a discussion of alternatives to removing artifacts such as drawing or tracing them. Provide each student with the Handout: Quit Digging.

Step 2: Have students gather into their teams and give them one bag containing the pieces of previously prepared pottery. Have students sort the pots into groups and give pieces to the appropriate team (French – green; Spanish – blue & white, Karankawa – terra cotta & black). Each team attempts to reassemble their pot by taking turns gluing the pieces together. As students realize that

Clues on Common Ground:
The Fort St. Louis Archeological Project

pieces are missing, one team member records the teams inferred reasons why archeologists rarely have all of the pieces of a ceramic vessel or tool. Optional: produce the "Pothunter's Bag".

Step 3: While students are taking turns reassembling the pot, others collaborate to generate a graphic organizer which will be used in the creation of an informative pamphlet. The pamphlet's purpose is to convince others to help preserve archeological sites. Teams will distribute the pamphlets during culminating presentations.

Closure: Following the team's culminating presentation, they create and distribute pamphlets.

Student Product: Teams create pamphlets which are distributed after their culminating presentation.

Learning from Artifacts at Fort St. Louis

What archeologists learned from artifacts located at The Fort St. Louis Site	What pothunters learned from objects they found at The Fort St. Louis Site
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. People were at the site 3,500 to 3,800 years ago.2. The site was occupied by coastal Indians who used bows and arrows.3. Some people on the site used European gunflints.4. Some people who lived at the site left musket balls, which were used in pistols and muskets by both the French and Spanish.5. Some of the people who lived at the site made pottery typical of the Karankawa Native American group.6. Some of the people who lived at the site brought ceramic vessels made in Puebla, New Spain.7. Some of the people who lived at the site brought ceramic vessels made in France.8. Some of the buildings were built by nailing pieces of wood together.9. Some buildings were built with adobe bricks which had been brought to the site.10. People who lived at the site brought jewelry that had been made in Europe or in New Spain.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Some of the people who lived at the site hunted with bows and arrows.2. Some of the people who lived at the site made pottery.3. Some of the people who lived at the site left pieces of broken ceramics and jewelry.



QUIT DIGGING!

Archeology is a science. All archeological excavations should be done under the direction of a professional archeologist.

Do not dig in any site.

Because archeology *is* a science, archeologists rarely make black-and-white statements. So, now that we have your attention, we'll explain some of the gray areas:

- Digging layers of soil in square holes is not archeology.
- Identifying artifacts removed from square holes is not archeological analysis.
- Digging on school property or other public lands in Texas is against the law.
- Teaching students to dig without the supervision of a professional archeologist encourages site vandalism.
- Every archeological site is unique; a site, once destroyed, can never be replaced.
- Your support for archeological preservation is desperately needed.

Please contact the State Archeologist, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276 (512/463-6090). We can help you with information on how to teach about archeology and the Indians of Texas without digging. We *do* want you to

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For more information: Archeology Division, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin 78711-2276