

HISTORY IN A SANDBOX

OVERVIEW

Students will be introduced to basic archaeological thinking while participating in various hands-on activities and games. Students will learn more about what happened at the park long ago.

VOCABULARY

Anthropology - the study of man

Archaeology - the study of material remains left behind by humans; the study of the life of ancient peoples

Artifact - any object people have made or modified; objects made by past societies

Chronology - an arrangement of events based on the order of occurrence in time

Context - the situation in which a site, artifact, or feature is found

Culture - the way of life of any group of people

Excavation - to dig out; to unearth

Feature - group of artifacts found together or any indication at the site of some special activity

Function - the way something was used; its purpose

Geology - a science dealing with the development of the earth's crust: its rocks and fossils

Grid - a network of uniformly spaced lines that divide a site into equal parts

Historic - the time period after Europeans arrived in the New World

Ice age - a series of cold periods marked by extensive glaciation alternating with periods of relative warmth; time prior to 10,000 BC

Lithic - artifacts made of stone

Nomadic - small groups or bands of people who constantly wandered and had no permanent home

Paleontology - the study of fossils

Prehistory - the time period before Europeans came to the New World

Preservation - keeping from injury or destruction; protection

Projectile point - a point used on the tip of a spear, dart, or arrow

Screening - the process of sifting unearthed soil through 1/4" or 1/8" wire screen in order to catch small remains

Sherd - a piece of broken pottery

Site - a place where humans lived or visited and left evidence of their activities; any place that has remains of past human activity

Stratigraphy - a sequence of strata; the study of rock layers, especially of their distribution, deposition, and age

Stratum - (plural: strata) a distinct layer in the earth

Test pit - pit that is excavated at an archaeological site to determine the importance of buried remains

HISTORY

Archaeology is the scientific study of physical remains of past human lives; an archaeologist is a person who studies these remains. By this process we are able now to learn about what happened in our state long before there were written accounts. Archaeology tells us about cultures of times past. It tells what kinds of foods were eaten, what utensils people used, and how they lived. Two hundred years from now, the everyday items that we use will tell archaeologists what was happening in the world today.

Archaeologic time as we know it is divided into 5 periods. Each of these time periods has specific characteristics that set it apart from other periods. They are the Paleo-Indian Period, Archaic Period, Woodland Period, Mississippian Period and Historic Period.

The **Paleo-Indian Period** began prior to 10,000 BC and lasted until 8,000 BC. People began to appear on the North American continent by way of a land bridge that connected Asian Siberia to what is now Alaska. By 10,000 BC people had spread over all of North America and had begun to go to Central and South America. No archaeological sites have been found in South Carolina that existed solely during this period. Archaeologists relate South Carolina to other states that do have Paleo-Indian sites. Tools that were used during this time period have been found throughout the state so archaeologists believe that there was occupation of South Carolina during this time.

The **Archaic Period** began in 8,000 BC and lasted until about 1,000 BC. Although the exact beginning wasn't the same everywhere, the key to this new period was at the time when the most recent Ice Age ended. The post-glacial environment of North America was changed. Throughout this period the tools and technologies changed at different rates. The people were nomadic in nature and still relied on animals for food. The tools that they used improved. Instead of hand-held stone tools, they began to attach them to shafts. Later, during this period, ground stone axes and soapstone bowls appeared for the first time. Concentrations of tools began to appear on hilltops indicating that these were preferred locations for dwellings. Near the end of this period a diversity of tools, axes & bone implements, bowls & cooking stones appeared. Shellfish were eaten. Shell deposits were found in circles, indicating some sort of ceremonial gathering. Pottery was first seen during the late Archaic Period. It was thick and not finely made. The clay used in the pottery contained plant fibers as strengthening materials. The early pottery was usually undecorated bowls.

The **Woodland Period** in South Carolina lasted from 1000 BC until 600 AD. This time period saw considerable increase in the quantity and diversity of material goods. There was a greater trend toward localization of artifact styles. By 500 AD small triangular arrowheads were seen, indicating that bows and arrows were being used. Pottery was strengthened with sand, grit, shell and crushed pottery fragments instead of plant fibers; some of the pottery was decorated. Pipes made of clay or carved from soft stone were

evident. People lived in semi-permanent villages during most of the year and burial mounds are found for the first time during this period.

The **Mississippian Period** of 600 - 1500 saw the cultural peak of the American Indians. Agriculture was practiced thus allowing larger permanent villages. These were generally located on flood plains or near rivers. Pottery was specialized for cooking, serving and storage and was decorated elegantly.

The **Historic** period from 1500 until today saw the introduction of Europeans to the North American continent. Spanish and French tools could now be found in sites. Plantations and agriculture were common with these Europeans. The Indian populations began to decrease. Industrialization appeared during this time and continues today.

POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

I. CROSSWORD PUZZLE

II. FILMS

The following films are available from South Carolina Department of Education AV Department relating to archaeology.

- Archaeological Dating: Retracing Time - 18 minutes
- Archaeologist at Work - 14 minutes
- How Man Discovers His Past - 20 minutes

III. TIME CAPSULE

Discuss what an artifact is and what it can tell about a location and about the inhabitants.

1. Have the students divide into 4 or 5 groups. Tell them to list 15-20 items that they would put in a time capsule to be opened in 100 years. These items need to describe life in the community today.
2. Gather groups together and list all the items that each group came up with on the blackboard. Go through this list and finalize a list of 20 items to be placed in the capsule.
3. Discuss what this will tell people 100 years from now about our culture. What items should be included that may have not been listed by the group.
4. Suppose your class opened a time capsule from 100 years ago. Discuss with the class what items may have been in that time capsule and why.

IV. SITE IN A BAG

Discuss with students how archaeologists study sites. (mapping, excavating, recording, photographing, etc) Explain the importance of keeping artifacts in context with the site.

1. Have each student bring 5 items that represent the student, in an unmarked paper bag. Make sure that there are no identifying pictures, names or addresses.
2. Pass bags out in class, making sure that no student gets his or her own bag. Have the students record what is in the bag and based on the contents come up with as much information as possible about the owner of the bag.
3. After all students have completed the study, have them present their conclusions to the class.
4. Discuss why some bags (sites) were easier to interpret than others were? What can the articles (artifacts) tell us about the person?

How does this activity relate to archaeology?

V. ESSAY

Write essay describing different archaeological exhibits at the park.

ANSWERS TO WORKSHEET

Crossword puzzle

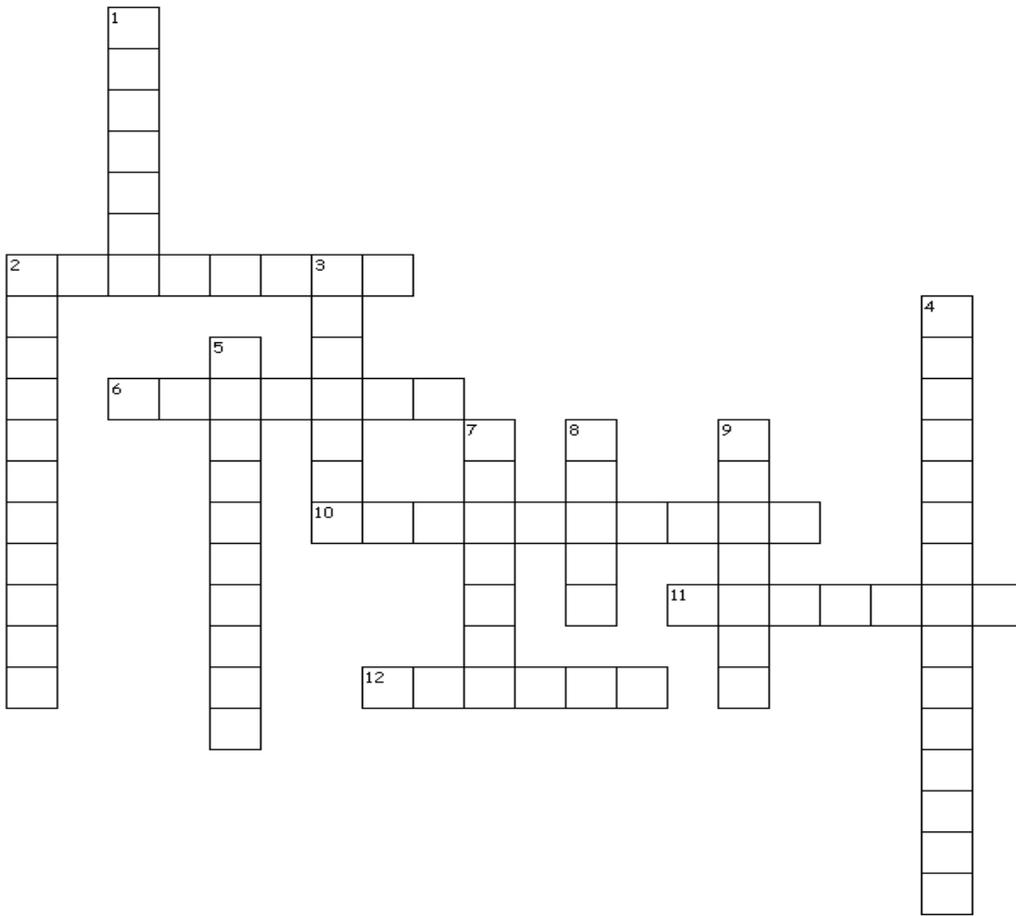
Across

2. artifact
6. stratum
10. excavation
11. nomadic
12. ice age

Down

1. test pit
2. archaeology
3. culture
4. projectile point
5. prehistory
7. feature
8. sherd
9. geology

History in a Sandbox Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 2. something made by past people
- 6. layer of Earth
- 10. to dig out
- 11. to wander around
- 12. time before 10,000 BC (2 words)

Down

- 1. area dug out at archaeological site (2 words)
- 2. study of life of ancient people
- 3. way of life
- 4. something on the tip a spear or arrow (2 words)
- 5. time before Christopher Columbus
- 7. group of artifacts together
- 8. broken pottery
- 9. study of rocks