

# Cultural History along the Natchez Trace Parkway



Classroom Lesson:

American Indian Mound CSI (code 4AI)

## › Grade Level:

4<sup>th</sup> grade

## › Subject Areas:

Social Studies, Civics,  
Geography

## › Setting:

Classroom

## › Duration:

1 class period

## › Skills:

Inference, deduction,  
research

## › Vocabulary:

Illegal,  
law, daub, artifact,  
mound, Woodland  
Period, Mississippian  
Period

## Summary:

Students will participate in a mock investigation of a theft from an American Indian mound. They will learn about the mounds as they investigate.



**Materials Needed:** For teacher: Booklet: Indian Mounds of Mississippi or other reference information about American Indian mounds on the Natchez Trace Parkway. Map indicating the location of lesson mounds. Various pictures of artifacts found in the mounds.

For each individual student or team: Mound grid, Historian's Notes, Thief's Notes, pen or pencil. Copy of the portion of a map of the Natchez Trace Parkway that includes the mounds in the lesson. Excellent resources are found at <http://www.nps.gov/history/seac/deltapro.htm>

## Instructional Information

Fourth Grade Tennessee Learning Expectations Social Studies:

4.1.01 Understand the diversity of human cultures.

a. Describe cultures of Native American tribes.

4.1.02 Discuss cultures and human patterns of places and regions of the world. b. Compare how people from different cultures think about and handle their physical environments and social conditions.

**Learning Objectives:** The students will be able to: 1) name 5 American Indian mounds in Mississippi 2) describe characteristics of mounds in

two different time periods 3) explain the difference between mounds in two time periods 4) locate specific mounds on a map. 5) use deductive reasoning skills. The lesson can be used as either a cursory introduction or a review of prior student learning.

**Teacher Set:** Show the students pictures of mound artifacts from different time periods. Explain that it is illegal to take artifacts from National Park areas because they are protected by law. Explain to the students they will be pretending they are criminal investigators. Explain that as students they will be reviewing two different American Indian mound types located in Mississippi along the Natchez Trace Parkway.

**Teacher Overview:** The students will compare and contrast American Indian mounds from two time periods. They will use deductive reasoning to determine which objects belong to which mounds in either of the two time periods.

**Student Instruction:** Have students locate the five mounds addressed in this lesson on a Natchez Trace Map and circle those locations. Hand out copies of the Mound Grid, the Note Cards and the Historian's Notes. Hand out to each team a copy or read the attached Background Story.

**Student Task:** Look carefully at the Historian's notes. Compare the Historian's notes with the notes from the thief. Using the Mound Grid, fill in the information using the historian's notes. Figure out which artifact belongs to which site and write the correct Note Card number in the space next to the correct mound name.

**Teacher Closure:** Go over the correct answers and explain how the correct answers fit that particular mound. e. g., the card symbol shows a flat top mound so the mound must be from the Mississippian period. Have the students discuss whether or not they think the Historian is guilty (no correct answer). Ask what additional information they would need to determine whether or not the historian is guilty. Ask students to discuss whether or not it is appropriate that historic artifacts are protected by law.

**Student Assessment:** Participation in the activity and follow-up discussion.

**Suggestions for re-teaching:** Have the students draw pictures of and label the parts of the two main types of mounds on the Natchez Trace. Have students do report on a specific American Indian mound.

**Teacher Clue Helps:**

**Cue Card description hints:**

Card 1: very large flat mound (Emerald)

Card 2: Domed top mound. The number 6, bones exposed to heat, dead bodies (Bynum)

Card 3: Dome top mound, bones exposed to heat, dead bodies (by process of elimination, Pharr Mounds)

Card 4: Flat top mound, creek, bear, burned daub instead of artifact (Bear Creek)

Card 5: Domed mound with 2 inside, bones exposed to heat, dead bodies, two different types of artifacts (Boyd)

Historian Note doodles are completely insignificant and for effect only. If students ask, tell them that is the phone number to the local Pizza store.

## Background story:

Joe Tourista found a box at Old Town Overlook on the Natchez Trace Parkway. When he opened the box, he found several items. He recognized some of the items as ancient American Indian artifacts so he immediately called you, a Park Ranger on the Natchez Trace Parkway.

When you looked into the box this is what you saw.

- Five plastic zip bags.
  - Each bag contains a 3x5 card with what appears to be codes.
  - Each bag also contains what appear to be ancient American Indian artifacts.

You carefully take the box to the Park Historian who informs you that she is on the way to the hospital to be with her sister who is about to have a baby. She tells you that the Regional Director of the National Park Service from Atlanta, Georgia is making a surprise visit and is down the hallway. The Director will not be happy to find an unprotected box of stolen artifacts on a Park Ranger's desk. The historian asks you to please quickly and carefully investigate where each item belongs and to make a list with your findings. She hands you her notes on Mississippi mound builders and then runs out the door.

You must work quickly! You must work carefully! You must discover where the items were taken from!

Study the symbols on the cards.

- Ask the students: “What do you think the symbols represent?” (*acknowledge any reasonable answers*)
- Ask the students: “Why do you think someone made these note cards?” (*correct answer: who ever took the artifacts must have made notes in symbols to keep track of the location where they were found*).
- Ask the students: “Why do you think the thief may have written symbols rather than words?” (*correct answer: The thief probably did this because if he or she were discovered holding the goods, no one would quickly realize the meaning of the notes and that the artifacts were from locations where people are not allowed to collect artifacts. If a Park Ranger saw an artifact with a mound name, they would immediately recognize that there was a theft.*)

You realized that the cards will be important to help reveal the homes of the stolen artifacts. Since there are five bags and five mounds on the Natchez Trace, you decide each bag probably holds an artifact from each of the five mound locations.

To get started, you number all the cards. Next you make a set of your own 3 x 5 cards. Each card has the bag number, a description of the artifact in that bag, and a sketch of the artifact. (See the clue card sheet)

## Student Instructions:

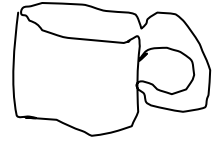
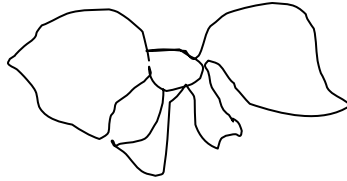
1. Read the historian's notes.
  - A. Underline the kinds of artifacts found in the mound
  - B. Circle the information about human remains
  - C. Double underline the time period (Mississippian, etc)
2. Enter the information you found in the Historian's notes into your Mound Grid Worksheet.
3. Compare these to the code pictures found in the bags and the cards "you" made representing the artifacts found in the bag.

Mound Grid Worksheet

Name	Bag/Card Number	Woodland or Mississippian	Human Remains Yes or No?	What kind of artifacts found here?
Bear Creek Mound				
Pharr Mounds				
Bynum Mounds				
Boyd Mounds				
Emerald Mounds				

Name	Bag/Card Number	Woodland or Mississippian	Human Remains Yes or No?	What kind of artifacts found here?
Bear Creek Mound	4	Mississippian	no	Burned Daub
Pharr Mounds	3	Woodland	yes	Copper spools Decorated vases Galena Greenstone pipe Mica
Bynum Mounds	2	Woodland	Yes Cremated & unburned 4+	Copper spools Decorated vases Galena Greenstone axe head
Boyd Mounds	5	Woodland & Mississippian	Yes, many	Different pottery types
Emerald Mounds	1	Mississippian	no	

**Mound Grid ANSWER SHEET**



Woodland Time Period: 100 BC - AD 400 - hunter gatherers semi or permanent settlements. Mounds 3 to 18 feet high diameter 50 to 100 feet. Dome shaped, used for burial. Often contain ceremonial artifacts from other parts of the country. Can contain greenstone pipes, axe heads, stone points, copper ornaments

Mississippian Time Period: AD 100 - AD 1700 Rectangular, flat topped. Had temples or homes on top. 8 to 60 feet tall. up to 770 feet at base. Centers of social and political activity. Usually do not have many artifacts. Most burned daub (mud plaster).

 Bear Creek Mound about 45 miles north of Tupelo. Mississippian.



Pharr Mounds about 23 miles north of Tupelo. Woodland. Ceremonial artifacts from other parts of the country. Eight mounds.

Bynum Mounds about 28 miles southwest of Tupelo. Woodland. Ceremonial artifacts from other parts of the country. Six mounds.

Boyd Mounds about 155 miles southwest of Tupelo and 6 miles north of Jackson. Mississippian & Woodland. Six mounds. Mound 2 is really three mounds in one. Different types of pottery.

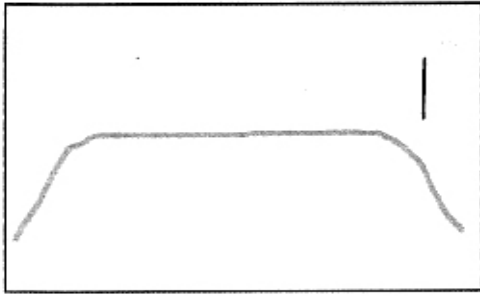
555-6805

Emerald Mound about 10 miles north east of Natchez, Mississippi about 250 miles southwest of Tupelo. Mississippian. One of largest mounds in North America. Two mounds on top of large mound.



Clue Cards found in bag

Cards "you" made up from artifacts in the bag



This artifact was found in this bag

