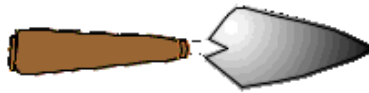


Wee Dig Archaeology!

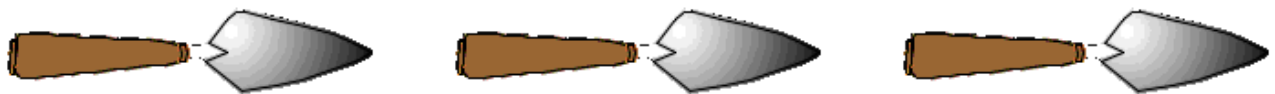


Hello to our young visitors at home! Are you interested in learning about ARCHAEOLOGY? It's okay if you don't know what that word means yet. You will learn it soon.

Are you in kindergarten or first grade?

Are you interested in Fort Vancouver and things that happened a long time ago?

Then this fun activity book is for you!



Parents and Caregivers: This lesson was originally an in-person classroom program that we have reimagined for your use at home. It is designed to be read aloud. Guidance for you is included throughout in italic text.

This lesson is designed for students ages 5-7 to do with an adult. It should take about an hour with a break in the middle. We suggest that you read through the entire packet before beginning, and then gather the supplies that are mentioned. If you are planning to print this lesson, please note that it includes color pictures.

Thank you to the staff and students at George C. Marshall Elementary School in Vancouver, WA, for letting us test this program in your classrooms!

HOW DO WE LEARN ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO?

Have the student offer some answers. Common answers include reading books, seeing TV shows or movies, and hearing stories from teachers or older family members and friends.

Archaeology is another way we can learn about the past.

WHAT IS ARCHAEOLOGY?

What is the biggest word you know? Say it loudly! Be proud of the big words you know.

Was it enchilada? Snuffleupagus? Aardvark?
Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious?

Scientists love big words – ARCHAEOLOGY is one of them! Look at what the two parts of the word mean:

ARCHAE

OLOGY

old

study

Archaeologists **study old** things.

Archaeologists study old things that people leave behind.

They do not study dinos... though we think they are cool!
The study of dinosaurs is called PALEONTOLOGY.

WHAT DO ARCHAEOLOGISTS STUDY?

Do you want to know the secret of archaeology?

Archaeologists study GARBAGE!

When people no longer want something, what happens to it?

Have the student offer some answers. Common answers include putting it into a garbage bag or can. Sometimes prompting is needed to remember that a garbage truck comes to take it away.

Did you guess that it goes into the trash, and is then picked up by a garbage truck? That's right! All our garbage goes to one spot and is then recycled or buried in a landfill.

But a long time ago, people didn't have garbage trucks, and things they threw away stayed near their homes. Sometimes their garbage was buried, or thrown in ponds or rivers, and sometimes it was just left on the ground.

What types of things do you throw away?

Have the student offer some answers. Common answers include food waste, packaging, tissues, broken toys, etc.

That's right! We throw away boring, everyday sorts of things, don't we? But sometimes, these types of things become special when they are very old, because they can tell us what life was like in the past.

Look in your garbage or compost right now. Can you tell what you ate for your last meal or snack? If we study food waste from a long time ago, we can guess what people used to eat, where they got their food, and maybe how healthy they were.



Old things that people made or used are called **ARTIFACTS**. Archaeologists often have to dig underground to find artifacts... more on that later. Generally, things have to be at least 50 years old to be an artifact. But not people! Please don't call older grownups an artifact... it won't go well.

Things that people accidentally lost are also left on the ground and may become artifacts.

Archaeologists don't really find treasure, not like in the movies!

Think of your favorite thing... the thing you own that matters the most to you.

Have the student choose one belonging. Common answers include a favorite toy or stuffed animal, a cell phone or tablet, a TV, a collectible, etc.

How likely are you to lose this special thing?

Everyone tries to keep track of their valuable things and not lose them, right? That's why most of the things archaeologists find are things that were thrown away or lost. People in the past kept good track of their special things, too, and they are not often found by archaeologists.

ARTIFACT QUIZ

Gather some everyday items that were made, used, or modified by humans. Suggestions include a toy, a cup or bowl, a piece of jewelry, a card or letter, a tool, etc. These are ARTIFACTS.

Also gather some natural items such as rocks, leaves, or flowers. These are NOT ARTIFACTS.

If you can, choose some items that are challenging and might need some discussion. Are these artifacts or not? For example, a bone or a stick could be included. Was the bone part of someone's meal or was it from an animal that died naturally? Was the stick cut or carved by humans and used as a toy or tool, or did it break off from a tree in a windstorm?

You may also want to print out photographs of items if actual ones are not available where you are.

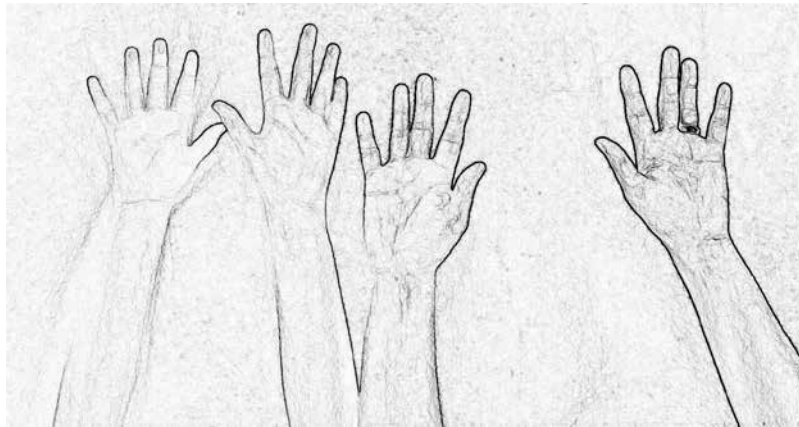
Quiz the student on each object by having them guess whether or not it is an artifact: thumbs up for ARTIFACTS, thumbs down for non-artifacts, and a sideways thumb if they are not sure.

[SUGGESTED BREAK TIME]

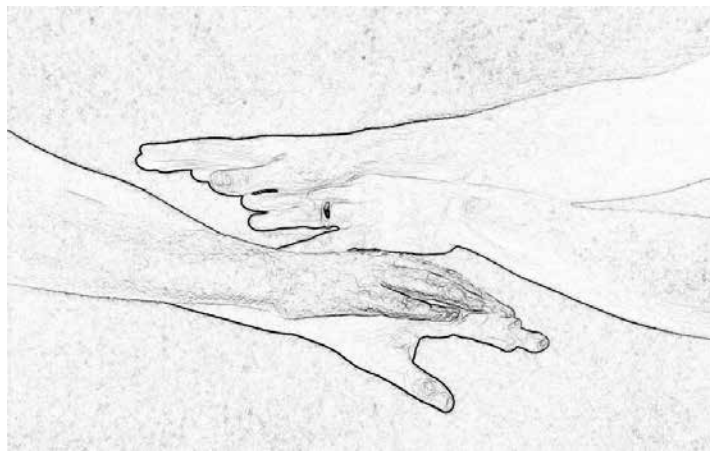
WHY DO ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE TO DIG TO FIND THINGS?

Picture a forest.

Find a buddy (this could be the adult that is helping you with this activity). Everyone put your arms and fingers up like they are trees growing towards the sun.



What happens when the trees get old and die? Have your arms fall down like they are laying on the ground.

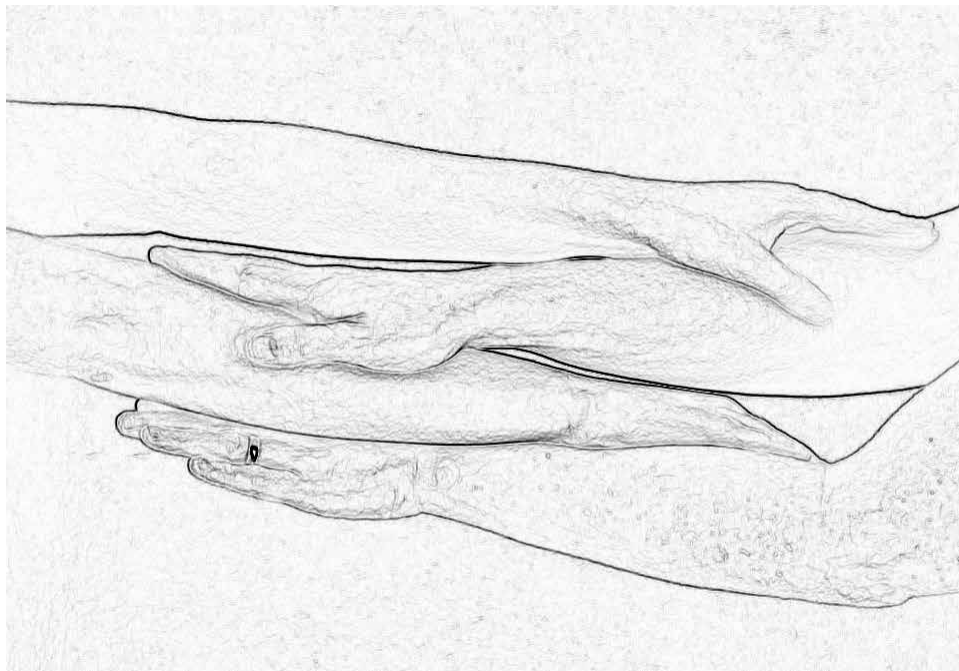


Once a living thing dies, it starts to DECOMPOSE. Hooray, another big word!

Decompose means to take apart. Air, water, and tiny, tiny animals like worms, insects, and fungi work to break it down. After many years, the tree becomes soil, and provides food for new living things.

Make layers of dead trees with your arms. One tree decomposes and becomes soil, then another grows on top and eventually dies and decomposes too. Another grows, dies, and decomposes. And then another.

Look at your arms. They should be stacked like the layers on a cake.



Where is the first tree? It should be the bottom layer. This tree is the oldest, since it lived a long time ago. Where is the last tree? It should be the top layer. This tree is the newest, since it just died and decomposed.

These are layers of soil. People who lived at the same time left their artifacts on that layer. Here are some soil layers from Fort Vancouver, with labels put on by archaeologists:



The deeper you dig into the ground, the older things get. When you dig into the ground, it is like going back in time. No wonder archaeologists like their jobs so much!

Are you ready for another big word? The next big word is STRATIGRAPHY. Let's look at what the two parts of the word mean:

STRAT

IGRAPHY

layer

writing

Things that happened a long time ago are
written in layers in the ground.

This doesn't mean actually written with a pen or pencil,
it just means there are clues there for us to discover...
artifacts!

HOW DO ARCHAEOLOGISTS WORK?

Would you like to work as an archaeologist?

Archaeologists are scientists, and their work is careful and slow. Each time they dig into a new place, it's their only chance to do it right. The layers can't be put back together again! And there are many clues to watch for... artifacts hidden in the soil.

We're going to learn about the tools archaeologists use.

Here's a list to look at before we get started:

TROWEL



BRUSHES



MEASURING TAPE



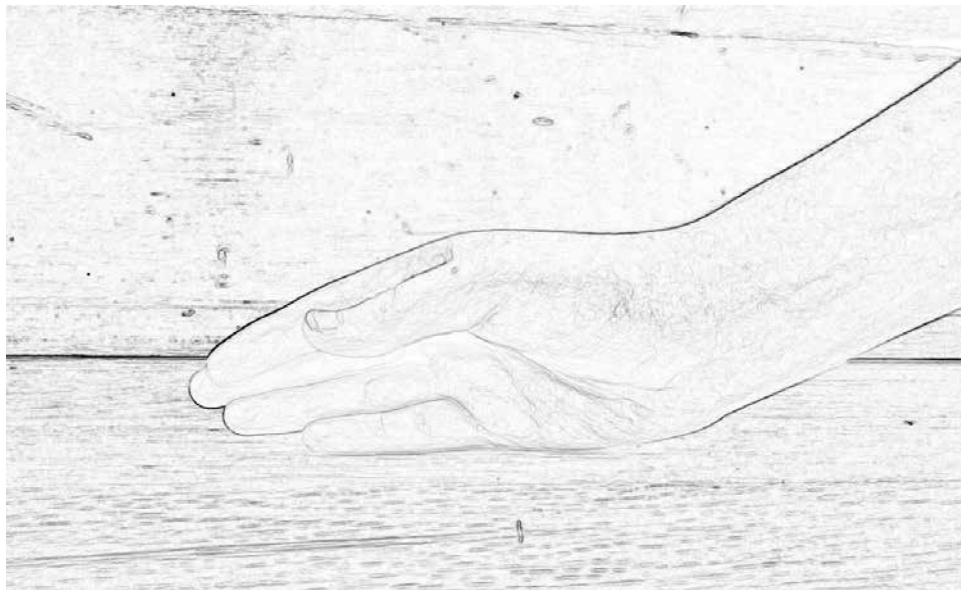
TABLET or PENCILS and PENS and CAMERA



Now we will learn how archaeologists use these tools!

Print out your own picture of an artifact, or use one from the next page. Have the student lay down on the floor, then cover them with the artifact. Now they are that artifact! Pretend there is dirt on top of the artifact. You can even create fake dirt with packing peanuts, cotton or polyester stuffing, pieces of torn paper, or something similar that is light and movable.

Archaeologists often start with a trowel. Make your hand into a trowel shape. Use the edge of your hand, along your pinky finger, to gently scrape dirt from around the artifact.



You are trying to gently remove one thin layer of soil at a time. Never use the point! You would never want to stab the artifact because it might break.

SAMPLE ARTIFACTS



Sometimes, as they get closer to uncovering an artifact, archaeologists use a brush to move soil away even more gently. Now make your hand into a brush, and try it near the artifact. Try not to tickle your "artifact"!



Once you can see the artifact, and it is mostly free of dirt, stop digging. Now you will **DOCUMENT** the artifact. That means you will write down information about it.

Have the student sit up now and look at the picture of the artifact. Using the Artifact Sheet on the next page, help the student fill in information about the artifact. It's okay if they don't know all the answers! You may also want to use a camera as if you were photographing the artifact "in the field."

Now trade places! You be the artifact, and have the student "excavate" using their hands as archaeological tools.

When you are finished, talk a little more about the artifact. If it was really old, what might it tell you about the person who made or used it? For example, if you chose a toy, what might that suggest about the age or gender of its owner? Why might it have been lost and left for archaeologists to find many years later?

Beware of assuming too much. It is tempting to think we know a lot about the person who owned an artifact, or what the artifact was used for, but sometimes we are wrong! Help your student look at artifacts with a critical eye. When testing this program in a classroom, one of the borrowed "artifacts" we used was a Spider Man action figure... when we asked students to guess things about its owner, very few guessed accurately that it belonged to a young girl.

ARTIFACT SHEET

My name is:

Today's date is:

I think my artifact is a:

My artifact was found in:

Take a close look at your artifact...

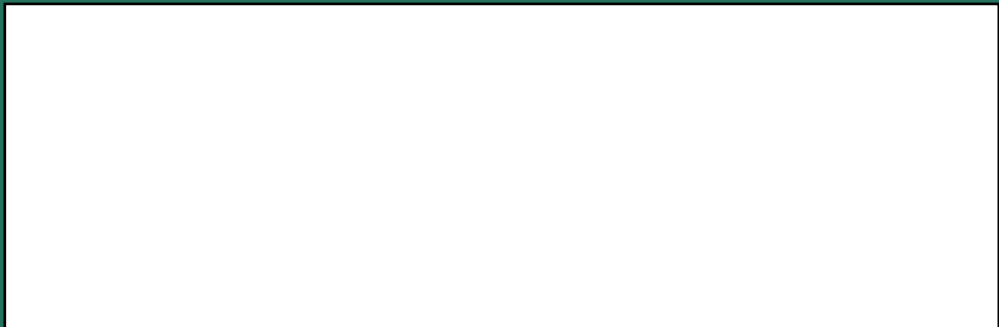
My artifact is made of:

My artifact is about inches long.

My artifact was used for:

This artifact is interesting because:

Draw your artifact:



WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DO ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND AT FORT VANCOUVER?

At Fort Vancouver, we take care of over 2 million artifacts! Archaeologists have worked at this national park for over 70 years.

The families that lived at Fort Vancouver left behind many types of things that we still use today, such as dishes, bottles, buttons, tools, toys, and more.



There are also things that may seem strange to you, since they are no longer used or are not used very often. Look at the pictures below. Can you guess what these artifacts are?

Talk about these artifacts with your student. Look for clues as to what their use might have been. Are there things in the modern world that have replaced them? Identifications may be found at the end of this packet.



AM I AN ARCHAEOLOGIST NOW?

Not quite! You did a wonderful job learning about archaeology, but it takes many years of school to become an archaeologist.

You ARE a Junior Archaeologist, though, and we hope you will print the certificate on the next page and display it proudly!

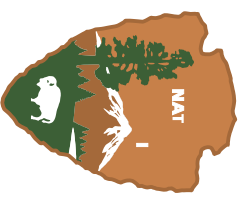
We would love to see pictures of your student enjoying this learning experience! Share photos with us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram by direct messaging us or tagging the photo with #FortVancouver.

This certifies that

**has completed
Wee Dig Archaeology
and is a**

Junior Archaeologist

at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site



ARTIFACT IDENTIFICATION



Top Left: Spigot, a "faucet" for inserting into barrels to extract liquid

Top Right: Chamber Pot, an indoor bathroom (that had to be emptied by someone)

Lower Left: Candle Snuffer, small scissors to trim a wick and extinguish the flame

Lower Right: Pocket Watch (without a face)