



## Alcatraz Uncovered

### The Archeology of a Famous Island

#### How can archeology deepen my understanding of a place?

This Essential Question frames Alcatraz Uncovered and is meant to allow students to engage in archeological inquiry on Alcatraz Island. The Essential Question:

1. Reflects what they study without directing them to one correct answer.
2. Provokes “how” or “why” questions rather than only “what” questions.
3. Applies to places beyond Alcatraz Island.
4. Invites discussion from everyone based on both experience and understanding.

#### Program Goals

- Enrich students’ understanding of place through archeological investigation.
- Support student learning in analyzing and interpreting historic sources.
- Promote an understanding of the historic and symbolic significance of Alcatraz Island.
- Encourage students to value national parks as places for learning and recreation.

#### Social Studies Content/Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills for 6<sup>TH</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> Grades

*Alcatraz Uncovered* uses archeological methods to uncover different layers of history and the role of historic preservation at a National Historic Landmark. Utilizing the various disciplines that study the past, students will learn how to collect and identify evidence, reconstruct the past from this evidence, and determine how judgments about the past are largely based on points of view. The activities are designed to challenge students to use critical thinking and observational skills to draw conclusions about the meaning and significance of the natural and built environment. In the classroom or in the park, each lesson is based on helping students meet Social Studies Education Standards.

#### Program Description

The program has three elements: 3 pre-visit classroom lessons provided by the teacher; a classroom visit by NPS; a field investigation on Alcatraz Island facilitated by NPS; and a post-visit culminating essay in which students illustrate what they learned during the program.



## Teacher Facilitated Pre-Visit Lessons Lesson 1

**Topic:** Archeology and Alcatraz Island

**Inquiry Question:** How can archeology deepen my understanding of a place?

### Objective:

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to

- Define archeology
- Identify methods of archeologists, including observation and inference
- Explain terms relevant to archeology and the study of Alcatraz history

**Time:** 1 hour

**Resources:** *Archeology and Alcatraz*, Vocabulary List, DVD

### Activities

Step 1:

- Introduce the lesson by posing the Essential Question on the board.
- How can archeology deepen my understanding of a place?
- Ask students to read *Archeology and Alcatraz* in small groups, and respond to the Essential Question.
- Facilitate a brief class discussion based on their responses.

Step 2:

- Show the 8-minute DVD of Alcatraz Island.
- Distribute the Vocabulary List.
- Discuss and clarify any definitions.

Step 3:

- Students generate questions they have about archeology or Alcatraz Island.



## Archeology and Alcatraz

Why is Alcatraz the perfect place to practice archeology?

First – what is archeology? Archeology is the study of human societies through material (physical) remains like artifacts and structures as well as personal oral stories. When you picture an archeologist, you might imagine someone working in an isolated place faraway, using a toothbrush to whisk dirt from ancient bones or pottery. Though this may be true for some types of archeological digs, Alcatraz, right here in San Francisco Bay, also is an archeological site with layers of history to uncover and investigate.

Archeologists use many different clues such as location, climate, tools, land formations, and written and visual evidence to describe the ways of life of a people. Together, the environments and objects help us understand the values, customs, and organizations that make up the culture. Archeologists must carefully observe, ask questions, and pose possible explanations to make sense of new discoveries.

One of the important jobs of an archeologist is to provide the context of what we see. An object means more to us if we understand when and why it was used. For example, if we found a single metal bar we might think it was a tool. But if we see many bars placed together we can recognize that they were used to create a confined area such as a jail cell. With only one bar and no context, an archeologist loses the whole picture.

All archeologists use artifacts and their own knowledge to describe cultures. They may study cultures from the distance past whose language was never recorded, or examine societies that left many written documents revealing day-to-day life. They put together the puzzle pieces through research, surveys, and excavations.

On Alcatraz, you will conduct a survey of different parts of the island. You will connect what you see to what you have learned in class to create the context for the layers of history on Alcatraz. As archeologists, you will be responsible for documenting the layers as accurately and completely as possible using your skills of observation and inference.



## Arqueología y Alcatraz

¿Por qué es Alcatraz el sitio perfecto para practicar la arqueología?

Primero, ¿Qué es la arqueología? La arqueología es el estudio de las sociedades humanas a través de la materia (física) como los artefactos y las estructuras y también las narraciones orales personales. Cuando se imagina un/a arqueólogo/a, tal vez se imagina a alguien trabajando en un lugar aislado y muy lejano, utilizando un cepillo de diente para remover la tierra de unos huesos antiguos o de vasijas rotas. Aunque este puede ser cierto para algunos tipos de sitios de excavación arqueológica, Alcatraz, aquí mismo en la Bahía de San Francisco, también es un sitio arqueológico con capas de la historia para descubrir e investigar.

Los/las arqueólogos/as utilizan una variedad de diferentes pistas tal y como la ubicación, el clima, las herramientas, las formaciones terrestres, y la evidencia escrito y visual para describir las maneras de vivir de una gente. Juntos, los medios de ambiente y los objetos nos ayudan a entender los valores, costumbres y las organizaciones que constituyen la cultura. Los/las arqueólogos/as tienen que observar cuidadosamente, hacer preguntas y ofrecer explicaciones posibles para que se comprendan el significado de los nuevos descubrimientos.

Uno de los trabajos importantes de un/a arqueólogo/a es proveer el contexto de lo que se ve. Un objeto tiene más significado o valor para nosotros cuando vemos cuando y para que se lo utilizaban. Por ejemplo, si encontramos una sola barra de metal podemos pensar que fuera una herramienta de metal. Pero si vemos muchas barras que juntas forman una construcción, podemos reconocer que estaban utilizados para crear una área encerrada, tal y como una celda de una cárcel. Con una sola barra y sin un contexto, un/a arqueólogo/a se perdería el cuadro general.

Todos los/las arqueólogos/as utilizan los artefactos y su propio conocimiento para describir las culturas. Ellos pueden estudiar las culturas del pasado distante, cuyos lenguaje nunca se escribieron, o se pueden examinar las sociedades que dejaron muchos documentos escritos revelando la vida cotidiana. Se juntan las piezas del rompecabezas a través de las investigaciones, las encuestas y las excavaciones.

En Alcatraz, vas a llevar a cabo una encuesta de unas partes diferentes de la isla. Vas a conectar lo que ves a lo que has aprendido en la clase escolar para crear un contexto para las capas de la historia en Alcatraz. Como un/a arqueólogo/a vas a ser responsable para documentar las capas de historia tan precisa y completa como te sea posible utilizando tus destrezas de la observación y la inferencia.

## Vocabulary List

### Key Words

**Archeology (also spelled archaeology):** The scientific study of the life and culture of peoples through artifact and ecofacts.

**Artifact:** An object made by human work that provides clues about past ways of life.

**Cell:** A small isolated room for confining a prisoner.

**Context:** The relationship of an object to its surroundings, and to other artifacts or ecofacts around it.

**Convict:** A person who has been found guilty of a crime and is serving time in a prison.

**Dig:** Excavation of an archeological site; physically unveiling objects, structures, etc.

**Ecofact:** Things found on an archeological dig that give information about past environments, such as seeds, soil and animal bones.

**Feature:** Something a person made but that cannot be moved, such as building structures, fences and walls.

**Inference:** A conclusion derived from observations.

**Native American:** A member of the indigenous (original) peoples of the Western Hemisphere; especially a native of North America.

**Observation:** Recognizing or noting a fact or occurrence.

**Penitentiary:** A federal government prison for people who have been convicted of serious crimes.

**Red Power:** The movement of indigenous people to further racial equality and gain political power.

## **Vocabulary List**

### Secondary Words

**Archeological Resource:** Any resource that provides additional information for finding clues about the way people lived in the past.

**Barracks:** The building in which the enlisted soldiers lived.

**Battery:** A thick exterior brick wall built as a platform for guns.

**Bureau of Prisons:** The federal group that administers and controls the prisons.

**Cannon:** An old type of large metal gun firing large metal balls.

**Citadel:** A building constructed like a fortress usually overlooking an area.

**Disciplinary Barracks:** A place where soldiers charged with misconduct serve time.

**Gun Gallery:** A small narrow corridor where guards can watch over prisoners and store weapons.

**Gun Slit:** A long, narrow opening in a wall; used for warfare during the Civil War Era (1860s).

**Isolation:** Living separately from other people.

**Occupation:** The seizure and control of a particular place or area.

**Tribe:** A social group including numerous families, clans, or generations.

**Warden:** The chief administrator of a prison.

## Lista de Vocabulario

### Palabras Importantes

**Arqueología:** El estudio científico de la vida y la cultura de los pueblos a través de artefactos y datos ecológicos (“eco-dato”).

**Artefacto:** Un objeto producido por el trabajo humano el cual provee pistas sobre modos de vida en el pasado.

**Celda:** Una pequeño cuarto aislado para confinar a un prisionero.

**Contexto:** La relación de un objeto con sus alrededores, con otros artefactos o condiciones ecológicas que lo rodean.

**Excavación:** El hoyo hecho en un lugar arqueológico que revela físicamente objetos, estructuras, etc.

**Dato ecológico (eco-dato):** Cosas halladas en una excavación arqueológica que revelan información sobre ambientes pasados, tales como semillas, terreno, huesos de animales.

**Rasgo:** Algo creado por un apersona pero que no puede ser removido, como estructuras o edificios, verjas y paredes.

**Inferencia:** Una conclusión derivada de observaciones.

**Nativo Americano:** Un miembro de los pueblos indígenas (originales) del Hemisferio Occidental; especialmente una Indio de Norteamérica.

**Observación:** Reconocer o notar un hecho o evento.

**Penitenciaría:** Una prisión del gobierno federal para personas que han sido convictos de crímenes graves.

**Poder Rojo:** Movimiento de los pueblos indígenas para lograr igualdad racial y adquirir poder político.

## Lista de Vocabulario

### Palabras Secundarias

**Recurso Arqueológico:** Cualquier recurso que provea información adicional que permita hallar pistas de cómo la gente vivía en el pasado.

**Barracas:** El edificio donde vivían los soldados activos.

**Batería:** Una muralla exterior ancha construida para servir de plataforma a armamentos.

**Negociado de Prisiones:** La agencia federal que controla la administración de la prisiones.

**Cañón:** Un tipo antiguo de arma grande de metal, que disparaba grandes bolas de metal.

**Convicto:** Una persona declarada culpable de un crimen y que está sirviendo tiempo en una prisión.

**Ciudadela:** Un edificio construido como un fuerte, dominando un área particular.

**Disciplinaria (barraca):** Un lugar donde los soldados acusados de mal comportamiento sirven tiempo.

**Galería de armas:** Un pasillo pequeño y estrecho donde los guardias pueden observar los prisioneros y almacenar armas.

**Ranura de armas:** Una hendidura larga y estrecha en una pared, usada para disparar en la época de la Guerra Civil Estadounidense (en los años 1860).

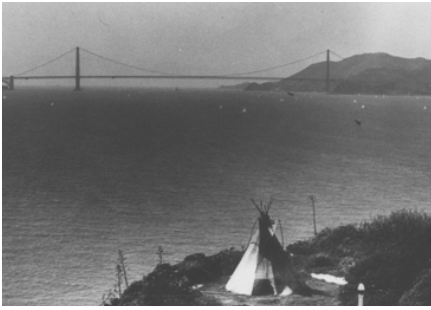
**Aislamiento:** Vivir separado de otra gente.

**Ocupación:** La toma y control de un lugar o área particular.

**Tribu:** Un grupo social que incluye varias familias, clanes o generaciones.

**Alcaide:** El jefe ó administrador de una prisión.





## Lesson 2

**Topic:** Photographs as archeological tools

**Inquiry Question:** How do images tell a story about Alcatraz Island?

**Objective:**

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to

- Define and apply archeological skills of observation and inference
- Recognize photographs as archeological tools
- Generate investigative questions for their visit to Alcatraz Island

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Resources:** Historic images of Alcatraz

### Activities

Step 1:

- Pose the inquiry question to the class: How do images tell a story about Alcatraz?
- Students form small groups of four or five. Each group receives an historic photograph of Alcatraz Island.
- Students examine their photograph and record their observations and inferences. Remind students that they will need to **point out evidence** to support their inferences. They also record questions they may have about the photograph or the context of the photograph.

Step 2:

- Facilitate a class discussion based on the photographs. Ask each group
  1. What does this photograph portray?
  2. What evidence do you have to support your conclusions?
  3. What questions do you have as a result of studying the image?
  4. Share with students the descriptions of the photographs.

Step 3:

- Conclude the class discussion by asking students to suggest a basic storyline of Alcatraz history based on their interpretations of the photographs.
- Post their conclusions and questions on the wall for the duration of the Alcatraz study unit.

## Photo Descriptions:

1. Photo from 1969 of teepee on Alcatraz Island during the American Indian Occupation.
2. Aerial shot of Alcatraz Island circa 1924 during the years Alcatraz was used as a military prison.
3. Photo of Richard Oakes (far left of photo) – a main spokesperson of the American Indian Occupation – standing on dock of Alcatraz Island, along with others involved in the occupation.
4. Thanksgiving Day, 1969, American Indian celebration in prison recreation yard.
5. Children of guards behind Building 64, clinging to the fence that separates their living area from the road to the cellhouse. Taken during the federal prison years of Alcatraz.
6. Inmate culinary staff in dining hall of cellhouse on June 24, 1957. Some are serving meals and others are standing in line to eat their breakfast.
7. Guards opening cells to let prisoners out to see medical technician, who stands in lower left in white overcoat. Photo taken in the cellhouse during Federal prison years.
8. Military families gathered in garden on Alcatraz Island circa 1870. Cannon balls decorate the borders of the landscape.
9. Hopi prisoners posed in front of Alcatraz lighthouse with guard watching over. Photo taken circa 1895. They were imprisoned for revolting against government policies that required Hopi children to attend boarding schools away from home.

## Descripciones de las fotos:

1. Foto de 1969 de un tipi en la isla de Alcatraz durante la Ocupación por los Indios Americanos.
2. Foto aérea de la isla de Alcatraz hacia 1924, durante los años en los que Alcatraz se usaba como prisión militar.
3. Foto de Richard Oakes (a la izquierda del todo) – uno de los principales portavoces de la Ocupación por los Indios Americanos – parado en el muelle de la isla de Alcatraz, junto con otros de los involucrados en la ocupación.
4. Día de Acción de Gracias, 1969, celebración de los indios americanos en el patio de recreo de la prisión.
5. Hijos de los carceleros detrás del edificio 64, agarrados a la valla que separa sus viviendas de la carretera que lleva a las celdas. Tomada durante los años de prisión federal de Alcatraz.
6. Personal culinario formado por presos en el salón comedor de las celdas, 24 de junio de 1957. Algunos están sirviendo comidas y otros están parados en fila para tomar el desayuno.
7. Carceleros abriendo las celdas para dejar salir a los prisioneros para ver a un técnico médico, que está parado abajo a la izquierda con una bata blanca. Foto tomada en las celdas durante los años de prisión federal.
8. Familias de los militares reunidas en un jardín en la isla de Alcatraz hacia 1870. Bolas de cañón decoran los bordes del paisaje.
9. Prisioneros hopi posados delante del faro de Alcatraz con un carcelero vigilando. Foto tomada hacia 1895. Los encarcelaron por rebelarse contra la política del gobierno que exigía que los niños hopi asistieran a la escuela en internados lejos de sus casas.



## Lesson 3

**Topic:** Layers of Alcatraz history

**Inquiry Question:** What do the key layers of Alcatraz history reveal?

**Objective:**

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to

- Identify the military, federal penitentiary, and Occupation as three key layers of Alcatraz history
- Propose possible explanations for questions posed in Lesson 2
- Generate investigative questions for their visit to Alcatraz Island

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Resources:** *Layers of Alcatraz*

Step 1:

- Pose the inquiry question to the class: *What do the key layers of Alcatraz history reveal?* Then explain that the students have the opportunity to learn more and ask questions for the investigation on Alcatraz Island.
- Students form small groups of four or five. Each group receives background information about a layer of Alcatraz history.
- Students choose three interesting observations about their layer and write two questions that they think would help them to know their layer better.

Step 2:

- Each group shares with the class their three interesting observations and questions.
- Record their questions for use later in the program.



### **Alcatraz: Fortress**

In 1775, Juan Manuel de Ayala sailed from Spain to San Francisco Bay. He mapped the bay and named its islands. On later Spanish maps, Alcatraz Island was shown as La Isla de Los Alcatrazes (the Island of the Pelicans). The island's large bird population most likely inspired this name.

In 1848, gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada. As people flooded into Northern California from around the world, the city we now know as San Francisco was transformed almost overnight from a small town of 300 to a major trading center of around 20,000. The government began to think that fortresses were needed to guard this new wealth. They decided to build three forts to create a "triangle of defense." Alcatraz's location in the middle of San Francisco Bay, directly in line with the Golden Gate, made it an ideal place for one of the three forts.

Its location also made it a good place for a lighthouse, and the army began building one on the island in the early 1850s. When it was completed in 1854, it was the first operating lighthouse on the Pacific Coast. By the end of the Civil War (1865), Alcatraz also had a citadel (a large, strong defensive building) on its crest and more than 111 cannons mounted on the brick walls around its margin.

Over time, the army changed the island's features. Under the direction of army engineers, workers – most of them prisoners – transformed the island's shape from its original rounded form to a sharp slope that made it difficult for an enemy to land on or attack. The south end of the island was cut away to make a flat area for the Parade Ground, a place for soldiers to drill. The army brought soil and plants to the island to prevent erosion around the newly constructed buildings and walls and before long, beautiful exotic plants and trees began to grow on the once-barren island.

After the Civil War, rapidly changing military technology made Alcatraz almost useless for military defense. Instead, it was given a new role as a disciplinary barracks for soldiers who had committed crimes. Alcatraz had housed military prisoners almost from the beginning of its existence. In 1859, eleven soldiers were held prisoner in the basement of one of the buildings. Between the 1880s and 1933, the prisoners were generally soldiers convicted of theft, desertion, or sympathizing with the enemy in the Civil War (Southerners). There were also indigenous people held as prisoners from the Indian Wars on the Western frontiers, and prisoners of war from the Spanish-American War of 1898, and later World War I conscientious objectors.

By 1915, the island officially became a Disciplinary Barracks. However, by the early 1930s, during the Great Depression, the cost of managing this barracks became too great, and control of Alcatraz was transferred from the military to the Department of Justice and its Federal Bureau of Prisons.



## Alcatraz: Federal Penitentiary

During the early twentieth century, several things combined to create a context for a rise in crime. The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of alcohol within the United States and banned the import or export of these beverages as well. The Volstead Act of 1919 provided the means to investigate and punish those who violated this amendment. This, coupled with the Great Depression of the 1930s, resulted in a serious crime wave. Law enforcement agencies combated underground criminals who made, imported, and sold liquor; individuals or gangs that robbed banks; and, growing numbers of criminal gangs that committed a variety of crimes.

The government decided that a “super prison” was needed for the “worst of the worst” criminals, and that Alcatraz, an island in San Francisco Bay, was an ideal place for such a prison. Though isolated from the rest of society, it could be seen from almost everywhere in the surrounding landscape. The government felt that it would be an effective and visible symbol of its seriousness about cracking down on crime.

In 1934, Alcatraz officially became a maximum-security federal penitentiary, famous for having high profile, dangerous criminals such as Al “Scarface” Capone; Doc Barker; Alvin “Creepy” Karpis; George “Machine Gun” Kelley; and Robert Stroud, the “Bird Man of Alcatraz.” The prison had a reputation as being a tough place to do time. The only rights the prisoners had were clothing, food, shelter, and medical care. Everything else was considered a privilege.

Prisoners were not the only ones who lived on the island. Guards and their families also lived just a few minutes’ walk from the inmates’ cells. The children attended school in San Francisco, and held social dances at the officers’ clubhouse on the island.

Alcatraz’s location in a large body of water made it a very difficult place from which to escape. However, thirty-four men tried to escape on fourteen different occasions. The most well known escape occurred in 1962 when three men slipped out in the middle of the night after placing life-like dummy heads in their beds to fool the guards. After climbing down from the top of the cell house and then reaching the island’s edge, they are thought to have used plastic floatation devices to carry themselves away from the island. Their bodies were never found and the Bureau of Prisons presumes that they drowned.

Though Alcatraz was an important symbol, it was not heavily used. In the twenty-nine years that it operated as a federal penitentiary, only 1,575 men served time on the island. Eventually, the cost of operating the prison became too high; everything used on the island, including fresh water, had to be brought by barge, and the buildings were crumbling and in need of expensive repairs. In 1963, the Department of Justice ordered the last prisoners transferred and the prison closed.



## **Alcatraz: Native American Occupation**

After the federal penitentiary closed, Alcatraz was managed as excess government property. Many proposals for the future of Alcatraz were considered. Some of the suggestions included transforming the island into a theme park, a world peace center, or a gambling casino. However, for several years the island remained unused.

Native Americans occupied the island at two points. The first occupation was in 1964 and lasted only 4 hours. In 1969, a group of indigenous peoples led by activist Richard Oakes claimed that Alcatraz should be returned to the Native Americans. The island that had served as a prison for over a decade now became a symbol of freedom. This occupation lasted 19 months.

The Native Americans offered to buy the island from the federal government for \$24 in beads and colored cloth. This offer symbolized the United States' purchase of Manhattan Island from East Coast indigenous peoples in 1626. Alcatraz's barren, rocky soil and lack of resources were similar to reservation lands given to the Native Americans by the government in the 1800s.

During the occupation, a call went out for Indians of All Tribes to come to the island. People lived in the apartment buildings once occupied by the guards and their families, and the cells once used by criminals. Phrases such as "Freedom," "Red Power," and "Indian Land" were painted on many of the buildings.

The Bay Area was very aware of struggles for civil rights in the 1960s and 1970s. This provided additional public support for the Native American occupation. However, as time passed, public support began to decrease. In 1970, fires destroyed some of these historic buildings on the island. In addition, the difficulty of making a living and transporting food and water to the island caused many occupiers to leave.

In 1971, federal agents removed the few remaining occupiers and the occupation was officially over. However, the fight for civil rights remained an important issue. After the occupation, the federal government destroyed the old apartment buildings that had housed the occupiers; rubble piles from these structures can still be seen today. When Golden Gate National Recreation Area was established in 1972, Alcatraz became part of this new National Park System area.



### Alcatraz: La Fortaleza

En 1775, Juan Manuel de Ayala partió de España hacia la Bahía de San Francisco. El trazó un mapa de la bahía y le puso nombre a sus islas. En mapas Españoles posteriores la Isla de Alcatraz aparecía como la Isla de los Alcatraces (pelícanos). La numerosa población de pájaros de la isla probablemente inspiró este nombre.

En 1848, se descubrió oro en la Sierra Nevada. A medida que la gente llegaba en grandes números de todas partes del mundo hasta el norte de California, la ciudad que hoy conocemos como San Francisco se transformó de un día para otro, de un pequeño pueblo de 300 habitantes a un principal centro de mercadeo de más de 20,000. El gobierno empezó a considerar qué tipo de fuertes se necesitaban para proteger esta nueva riqueza. Decidieron construir tres fuertes para crear un “triángulo de defensa.” La localización de Alcatraz, en medio de la Bahía de San Francisco, directamente en línea con la entrada a la bahía (Golden Gate), hizo de la isla la localización ideal para uno de los tres fuertes.

Su localización también la hizo un buen lugar para un faro, y el ejército comenzó a construir uno en la isla a principios de la década de 1850. Cuando terminó de construirse en 1854, fue el primer faro en operación en la costa del Pacífico. Para fines de la Guerra Civil (1865), Alcatraz tenía también una ciudadela (un gran edificio para la defensa) en su parte más alta y más de 111 cañones montados sobre la muralla de ladrillos que la rodeaba.

Según pasó el tiempo el ejército alteró el aspecto de la isla. Bajo la dirección de ingenieros del ejército, los trabajadores – mayormente prisioneros – transformaron la forma de la isla de su forma redonda original a una colina inclinada que le hacía difícil al enemigo atracar o atacar. El extremo sur de la isla fue cavado para construir un area para marchas o desfiles, un lugar donde los soldados hicieran sus entrenamientos. El ejército trajo terreno y plantas a la isla para prevenir la erosión alrededor de los edificios y paredes recién construidos, y antes de que pasar mucho tiempo bellas y exóticas plantas y árboles comenzaron a crecer en lo que antes fue una isla desolada.

Después de la Guerra Civil, la tecnología militar cambió rápidamente y Alcatraz no tuvo ya casi ningún uso como defensa militar; entonces se le asignó una nueva función como barraca disciplinaria para soldados que cometían crímenes. Alcatraz ha alojado prisioneros militares casi desde comienzos de su existencia. En 1859, once soldados fueron recluidos como prisioneros en el sótano de uno de los edificios. Entre los 1880 y el 1993 los prisioneros generalmente eran soldados convictos por robo, desertión o por simpatizar con el enemigo (los sureños) durante la Guerra Civil. También hubo indios prisioneros de las Guerras contra los Indios en la frontera del Oeste, prisioneros de guerra de la Guerra Hispanoamericana de 1898, y más tarde objetores por conciencia de la Primera Guerra Mundial.

Para 1915 la isla se convirtió oficialmente en Barraca Disciplinaria. Sin embargo, para principio de los 1930, durante la Gran Depresión, el costo de mantener estas barracas era muy grande y el control de Alcatraz fue transferido de los militares al Departamento de Justicia y su Negociado Federal de Prisiones.





## Alcatraz: La Penitenciaría Federal

Durante la primera parte del Siglo 20 se combinaron varios factores para crear un ambiente donde el crimen creció. La Enmienda 18 a la Constitución de los Estados Unidos prohibió la manufactura, venta o transportación de alcohol en los Estados Unidos y además prohibió la importación y exportación de estas bebidas. El Acta Volstead de 1919 proveyó los mecanismos para investigar y castigar los que violaran dicha enmienda. Esto, combinado con la Gran Depresión de los 1930 ocasionó una seria ola criminal. La manufactura, venta de licor, asaltos a bancos y un número creciente de pandillas de criminales; estas fueron sólo algunas de las clases de actividades que combatían las agencias del orden.

El gobierno decidió que se necesitaba una “súper prisión” para los criminales “de la peor calaña,” y que Alcatraz, una isla en la Bahía de San Francisco, era el lugar ideal para tal prisión. Aunque estaba aislada del resto de la sociedad, era visible de casi cualquier lugar del panorama que la rodeaba. El gobierno pensó que sería un símbolo visible y efectivo de sus serios propósitos de acabar con el crimen.

En 1934, Alcatraz se convirtió oficialmente en una Prisión Federal de Seguridad Máxima, famosa por tener peligrosos criminales de gran notoriedad, como Al “Cara Cortada” Capone, Doc Baker, Alvin “Creepy” Karpis; George “Ametralladora” Kelly, y Robert Stroud, El “Hombre Pájaro de Alcatraz.” La prisión tenía una reputación de ser un lugar duro para hacer tiempo. Los únicos derechos los prisioneros tenían eran ropa, alimento, vivienda y cuidado médico. Todo lo demás era considerado un privilegio.

Los prisioneros no eran los únicos que vivían en la isla, Los guardias y sus familias también vivían a unos pocos minutos de camino de las celdas de los presos. Los niños asistían a la escuela en San Francisco y tenían actividades sociales en la casa club de los oficiales en la isla.

La localización de Alcatraz, en una gran cuerpo de agua, la hacía un lugar muy difícil de donde escapar. Sin embargo, 34 hombres trataron de escapar en 14 ocasiones diferentes. El escape más conocido ocurrió en 1962 cuando tres hombres se escurrieron en medio de la noche después de haber colocado cabezas simuladas en sus camas para engañar a los guardias. Después de descender desde el techo de la prisión y alcanzar la orilla de la isla, se piensa que usaron artefactos de flotación para alejarse de la isla. Sus cuerpos nunca fueron hallados y el Negociado de Prisiones presume que se ahogaron.

Aunque Alcatraz era un símbolo importante, no se usaba mucho. En los veinte años que operó como Prisión Federal solamente 1,575 sirvieron tiempo en la isla. Eventualmente, los costos de operación resultaron muy elevados; todo lo que se usaba en la isla, incluyendo agua potable, debía ser transportado en barcas y los edificios se deterioraban y requerían costosas reparaciones. En 1963, el Departamento de Justicia ordenó el traslado de los últimos prisioneros y la prisión cerró.



## **Alcatraz: La Ocupación de los Nativos Americanos**

Después que cerró la Penitenciaría Federal, Alcatraz fue administrado como propiedad excedente del gobierno. Muchas propuestas para el futuro de Alcatraz fueron consideradas. Algunas de las sugerencias incluyeron transformar la isla en parque de diversiones, en centro mundial para la paz o una casino. No obstante, la isla no se usó por varios años.

Los Nativos Americanos ocuparon la isla en dos ocasiones. La primera ocupación fue en 1964 y sólo duró 4 horas. En 1969, un grupo de indígenas dirigidos por el activista Richard Oakes demandaba que Alcatraz fuese devuelta a los Nativos Americanos. La isla que había servido como prisión por más de una década se convertía ahora en un símbolo de libertad. Esta ocupación duró 19 meses.

Los Nativos Americanos ofrecieron comprar la isla del gobierno federal por \$24 en cuentas y tejidos de colores. Esta oferta simbolizaba la compra a los Indios de la isla de Manhattan en la costa este en 1626. Alcatraz, con su suelo rocoso y falta de recursos era parecido a las tierras de las reservaciones dadas a los Nativos Americanos por el gobierno en los años 1880.

Durante la ocupación, se hizo un llamado a los Indios de Todas las Tribus para que vinieran a la isla. La gente se alojó en las celdas donde una vez hubo criminales y en los edificios de apartamentos que una vez ocuparon los guardias y sus familias. Frases tales como "Libertad," "Poder Rojo" y "Territorio Indio" fueron pintadas en muchos de los edificios.

La gente del Área de la Bahía tenía muy presente las luchas por los derechos civiles de los años 1960 y 1970. Esto proveyó apoyo ciudadano adicional a la ocupación de los Nativos Americanos. Sin embargo, según pasó el tiempo el apoyo del público decayó. En 1970, incendios destruyeron algunos de los edificios históricos de la isla. Además, lo difícil que era ganarse la vida y transportar alimentos y agua a la isla hizo que muchos ocupantes se marcharan.

En 1971, los agentes federales removieron a los pocos ocupantes que aún permanecían y la ocupación terminó oficialmente. Sin embargo, la lucha por los derechos civiles continuó siendo un asunto de importancia. Después de la ocupación el gobierno destruyó los viejos edificios de apartamentos que albergaron a los ocupantes; hoy día todavía pueden verse pilas de desecho de esas estructuras. Cuando se estableció el Área Nacional Recreativa de Golden Gate en 1972, Alcatraz se convirtió en parte de esta nueva área del Sistema Nacional de Parques.



## National Park Service Visit – Questioning Artifacts

**Topic:** Artifacts as archeological tools

**Inquiry Question:** How do artifacts tell a story about Alcatraz?

### **Objective:**

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to

- Identify and interpret artifacts associated with Alcatraz Island
- Explain how context helps interpret the meaning of an artifact
- Generate investigative questions for their visit to Alcatraz Island

**Time:** 1 hour

**Resources:** Artifact box

Step 1:

- NPS facilitators ask students to share their knowledge and questions about Alcatraz Island.
- Students form groups of four or five. Each group receives artifacts.
- Students examine the artifacts and record their their responses.

Step 2:

- NPS facilitates class discussion about the artifacts based on student responses and questions.
- NPS facilitators pose additional questions:
  1. What have you learned about Alcatraz Island after seeing the DVD, reading the background information, and examining the artifacts?
  2. How might seeing the artifacts on the island help us to understand their purpose?
  3. How will visiting the island help us find explanations and answers to our questions?

Step 3:

- NPS facilitators give brief overview of visit and necessary preparations.



## Field Session on Alcatraz Island

**Topic:** Experiencing Alcatraz Island through an archeological lens

**Inquiry Question:** How can archeology deepen my understanding of a place?

**Objective:**

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to

- Identify, place, and interpret artifacts associated with Alcatraz Island within their context
- Utilize archeological skills of observation and inference from first-hand experience
- Pose explanations and answers to inquiry questions based on evidence

**Time:** 3 hours

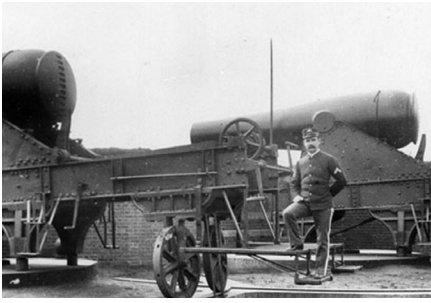
**Resources:** Historic site, student journals

Step 1:

- NPS staff greets students at Alcatraz Dock.
- Students receive introduction and safety message.
- Students form small groups of four or five.
- Students and staff conduct their investigation of Alcatraz Island at designated stations.

Step 2:

- Class and staff rejoin for a concluding group discussion about the learning experience using an inquiry approach.



## Field Program Logistics

Please take careful note of the following:

- Ideally classes should arrive at Pier 31–33 (Alcatraz Cruises) by 8:45 a.m. to board the first ferry at 9:00 a.m. Teachers will need to make specific arrangements with NPS staff for boat transportation and timing.
- The teacher and at least two other adult chaperones must accompany classes. It is desirable to have as many adult chaperones as possible to help facilitate the field visit.
- Students will conduct their work in groups of approximately four. These groups should be organized prior to the field session on Alcatraz.
- Clothing appropriate to the nature of the activities and weather conditions at the park is required. Advise students to dress in layers to accommodate the variable temperatures characteristic of the island. Advise them to wear shoes suitable for walking on uneven pavement.
- Arrangements can be made to accommodate most students with special needs. Please discuss specific circumstances with National Park Service staff prior to your visit.



## **Dear Chaperones,**

Thank you for assisting with Alcatraz Uncovered. Your participation is an enormous help to the park, the teacher, and most importantly, the students.

Students are coming to Alcatraz to gain a better understanding of archeology: the study of different peoples over past centuries. On the island, they will learn about Alcatraz as a military fortification and prison (1854-1933), federal penitentiary (1934-1963), site of the Native American Occupation (1969-1971), refuge for wildlife, and National Park System site. Students will use archeology as a tool to detect evidence of the different people who have lived on the island.

You will help one group of students explore the island. They have already been oriented to the different layers of history. They have a field journal and a map with the specific stations. At each station, they will be asked to observe the area around them using the field journal. They will respond to certain questions. Please make certain your group does the assignments throughout the program.

We look forward to seeing you on Alcatraz.

**Sincerely,**

**Benny Batom, Education Coordinator  
Alcatraz Island**



## **Estimados Acompañantes,**

Gracias por ayudarnos con Alcatraz Uncovered (Alcatraz Descubierto). Su participación es una ayuda enorme para el Parque, los maestros y lo más importante, para los estudiantes.

Los estudiantes vienen a Alcatraz a adquirir un mejor entendimiento de la arqueología: el estudio de diferentes pueblos de siglos pasados. En la isla aprenderán acerca de Alcatraz como fortificación militar y como prisión (1854-1933), prisión federal (1934-1963), lugar de la Ocupación de los Nativos (Indios) Americanos (1969-1971), refugio de vida silvestre y localidad del Servicio Nacional de Parques. Los estudiantes usarán la arqueología como una herramienta para hallar evidencia relacionada con las diferentes gentes que han vivido en la isla.

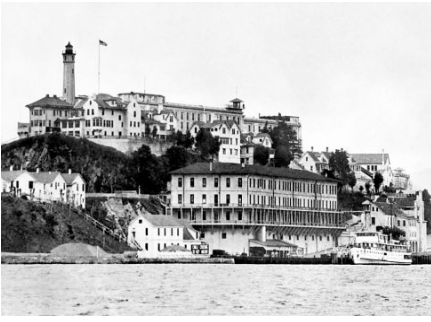
Usted ayudará a un grupo de estudiantes a explorar la isla. Ellos ya han sido orientados sobre las diferentes capas de historia. Tienen unas definiciones, un diario para anotar observaciones y un mapa de las estaciones particulares. En cada estación se les pedirá que observen al área que los rodea usando las definiciones.

Los estudiantes contestarán ciertas preguntas. Asegúrese de que su grupo realice todas las tareas a través del programa.

Esperamos verlos en Alcatraz.

**Atentamente,**

**Benny Batom, Education Coordinator  
Alcatraz Island**



## Teacher Facilitated Post-Site Lesson

**Topic:** Alcatraz Island, archeology

**Inquiry Question:** How can archeology deepen my understanding of a place?

**Objective:**

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to

- Demonstrate their understanding of the role of historic sites and artifacts in archeological studies
- Recall relevant information to write narratives to develop real or imagine experiences using descriptive details

**Time:** Based on individual classroom needs

**Resources:** Handouts, student journals, photographs, DVD, island experience

The follow-up activities are designed to build upon the students' inquiry experience at Alcatraz Island. Please complete at least one of the following:

- Students write a first-person account (letter, diary, newspaper story) of what life might have been like for one of the inhabitants during a particular layer of Alcatraz history using the evidence they have gathered from the historic photographs, handouts, artifacts, and field experience.

OR

- Using their study of Alcatraz Island's layers of history, students write an informative essay addressing the Essential Question – How can archeology deepen my understanding of a place? Students should explain the value of gathering evidence – historic photographs, artifacts, first-hand field experience – in the investigative process, as well as the ways in which observation and inference provide a framework.





## Further Extension

Students select and define their own archeological investigation based on their experience at Alcatraz Island. With guidance from the teacher, students determine their own Essential Question and a path for inquiry. Students might be guided by identifying “missing stories” and what artifacts might be found and used to tell these stories.

### Websites for Further Research

National Park Service site “Questioning Artifacts”:

<http://www.nps.gov/goga/forteachers/electronic-excursions.htm>

General Alcatraz history: [www.nps.gov/alca/historyculture](http://www.nps.gov/alca/historyculture)

Alcatraz Museum Collections: <http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/alca/overview.html>

Former Alcatraz residents including the guards and their families: [www.alcatrazalumni.org](http://www.alcatrazalumni.org)

Government website that includes Freedom of Information Act and documents relating to Alcatraz escapes and related topics. Type Alcatraz in the search bar to find government documents related to Alcatraz: <http://foia.fbi.gov/>

Bureau of Prisons, a government organization that began in 1930 during the opening of the federal prison Alcatraz. Search for historic documents relating to the federal prison era by searching Alcatraz: [www.bop.gov](http://www.bop.gov)

Also check out Bureau of Prisons history of Alcatraz: <http://www.bop.gov/about/history/alcatraz.jsp>

Prison University Project is an organization that provides educational programs to people incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison: [www.prisonuniversityproject.org](http://www.prisonuniversityproject.org)

Alcatraz Military history page by former park ranger and military historian: [www.fortressalcatraz.com](http://www.fortressalcatraz.com)

KQED public media website that provides educational resources and lesson plans pertaining to the history of Alcatraz. Search Alcatraz: [www.kqed.org](http://www.kqed.org)