

Week 3: Introduction to Archaeology

Activity: Garbology

Lecture: ABP

Blog: Sophia

Discussion: Introduction to Archaeology

1. Review
 - Cultural anthropology- study of modern humans
2. Archaeology
 - Archaeology: the branch of anthropology that studies humans who lived in the past through their material remains.
 - how we learn about the past
 - prehistory/history
 - Artifact: any item that was made by a human
3. What do archaeologists actually study?
 - Daily lives of people in the past
 - i. Architecture, subsistence, economy, tools, etc.
 - Midden- term for archaeological trash deposit
4. What can trash tell us about the way that people lived?

Independent practice:

Students will divide into clans. Each clan will sort through an “assemblage” of artifacts and complete the attached worksheet.

Students will establish criteria for sorting their assemblage (e.g., by activity area, by material, by area of manufacture, etc.) and will make observations about the household that produced their assemblage of trash.

Garbology activity supplies:

One assemblage of household trash per group.

Assemblage should include a variety of clean, non-dangerous items from household trash from different areas. It would be instructive to collect trash from different contexts so that students can compare the differences in the assemblages. For example, one bag could consist of basic household trash (food wrappers, recycling materials, paper, etc.), while another could consist of trash from a specific activity area (e.g., sewing room, workshop, toy room).

To conduct the activity, have the students separate the trash into meaningful groups. Most groups start sorting the trash by material (e.g., cardboard, plastic, etc.), but soon learn that there are multiple ways to look at the items. For example, can the materials be sorted by where the items are used? Or where they are purchased or made? What about grouping the materials by cost, or where they were manufactured? Lead discussion to identify salient features of the individuals and households that created the trash.

Review:

How do archaeologists learn about culture?

Archaeologists study ancient peoples by studying material remains, including the artifacts that are left behind. By studying artifacts, we can reconstruct different aspects of culture and learn about the lives of humans in the past.

Possible topics:

Which aspects of ancient lives would be difficult to understand?

Could archaeologists get it wrong?

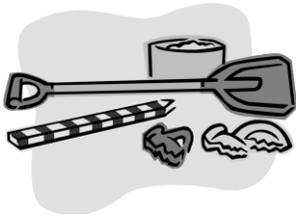
Could your assemblage have been sorted differently? Would that have changed your interpretation?

What tools would an archaeologist use to excavate a site?

What skills would be important for an archaeologist?

Name _____

Archaeology and Garbology: What can we learn from trash?



Archaeology: the branch of anthropology that reconstructs the lives of people who lived in the past by studying material remains.

Assemblage: a group of artifacts found in association with each other

Subsistence: the way that individuals obtain the necessities of life (food, water, basic needs)

What items are contained in your assemblage?	
From which type of area did your artifacts come?	
How many people do you believe contributed to your assemblage?	
Is there anything in your assemblage to indicate the status of the individuals?	
Gender?	
Age?	
Occupation?	
What can you tell about subsistence?	
How does this activity relate to archaeology and the study of humans who lived in the past?	

On the back of the page list your conclusions that you were able to draw based on the evidence.