

Acknowledgments

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The Cultural Resources Division and Education and Outreach Division of the Kansas State Historical Society developed the curriculum and activities for *Puzzles From the Past: Problem Solving Through Archeology*. For more information about *Puzzles From the Past: Problem Solving Through Archeology*, or other educational programs available from the Kansas State Historical Society contact: Kansas State Historical Society, 6425 SW Sixth Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099; 785-272-8681; Fax 785-272-8682; education@kshs.org or www.kshs.org.

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Introduction

This traveling resource trunk is designed to introduce basic archeological concepts and information into the middle school classroom. All lessons have been linked to the Kansas State Board of Education Standards, and the applicable standards are referenced at the start of each lesson.

A few of the main points illustrated by the activities presented here are:

- Ž Archeology is the study of past cultures mainly through the study of artifacts and other physical remains such as traces of structures or fire pits found in the layers of soil. Archeologists use the information they learn to piece together a picture, or description, of the culture that produced the objects.
- Ž Archeology is a science and uses the scientific method to answer questions about people of the past.
- Ž Archeology uses skills and information from other fields including history, geography, geology, biology, English, and math. All of these fields are used to make inferences to test or to gain information about past cultures.
- Ž Archeologists do not dig up dinosaurs.
- Ž Why do archeologists dig? Archeologists excavate a site when it is in danger of being destroyed by natural processes or man-made developments or if the site has a high potential to provide new information about a region or time period. Archeologists follow a series of procedures — including mapping the site, dividing the site into uniform units, and excavating these units in levels — to ensure the greatest amount of information is recovered. Information about soil conditions and the exact locations of artifacts and other nonportable cultural features are recorded. When a unit is dug, the physical characteristic is destroyed, so the detailed observations that are recorded become the only record of the site.
- Ž What happens next? Archeologists take all the information — notes, records, photographs, and the artifacts — to the laboratory. After they clean and label the artifacts (to keep track of exactly where each object came from), the artifacts are classified in various ways. In analyzing and interpreting their finds, archeologists look for and compare patterns. When possible, they employ various methods of dating and sometimes draw on ethnographic research, another branch of anthropology as is archeology.
- Ž Why shouldn't you dig? If you are not trained in archeology, you should not dig a site because you will destroy the context, that is, the physical relationships between objects, features, and the environment. If you find artifacts that you think are important, don't pick them up or dig for more. Contact the Kansas State Historical Society, 785-272-8681.
- Ž Archeologists are preserving the past for future generations. They depend on all the citizens of Kansas to share the responsibility of guarding the archeological heritage of the state.



Curriculum

This curriculum is directed at middle school students, grades six through eight, and is divided into six lessons. Each lesson contains:

- c instructional goals
- c advance preparation directions
- c an activity
- c a glossary

The lessons are designed to stand alone. For example, it is not necessary to complete lesson 3 before doing lesson 4.

Special Note on Objects in the Trunk

Please inventory the trunk upon its arrival and before its return. An inventory sheet has been provided for your use. Return the trunk in the same condition that it was received.

Objects and materials are to be used as the instructor sees fit; however, please keep in mind that many students will be using the trunk this year and in the years to come. **Use is encouraged; overuse, damage, and mutilation are not.**

Return of the Trunk

To assure that the trunk you are using will reach the next destination in time, we ask that it be returned by the scheduled return date. Allow at least two days shipping time. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the Education and Outreach Division of the Kansas State Historical Society, 6425 SW Sixth Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099; 785-272-8681; TTY 785-272-8683; Fax 785-272-8682; or education@kshs.org.

Other Programs Available

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