

Lesson 1: Archeology, What Is It?

This lesson is divided into four sections: instructional goals, advance preparation, activity, and glossary.

Instructional Goals

Lesson Plan Overview

The student will learn that archeology defines cultures by examining how they meet the four basic needs of shelter, subsistence (food), clothing, and passing along their culture to new generations. The Wichita Indian culture is introduced and compared with the students' culture.

Standards this lesson correlates to

Geography (2005 Standards for History and Government; Economics and Geography)

Grade 6 Benchmark 5, Indicator 3
Grade 7 Benchmark 2, Indicators 2 and 5

History (2005 Standards for History and Government; Economics and Geography)

Grade 7 Benchmark 1, Indicator 1
 Benchmark 8, Indicator 1

Reading (2003 Standards for Reading and Writing)

Grades 6, 7 & 8 Benchmark 4, Indicators 3, 4 and 5

Science (2005 Standards for Science Education)

Grades 5-7 Standard 1, Benchmark 1, Indicators 1 and 3
 Standard 1, Benchmark 2, Indicator 1

Objectives

- The student will define archeology.
- The student will compare the Wichita Indian and the students' cultures.

Skills Taught

Observation; evaluation of written and nonwritten sources; comparison, contrast, and analysis; chronological sequence; use of a graphic organizer; decision making; drawing conclusions; use of a timeline; chronological order.

Student Prior Knowledge

The student should have an understanding that cultures have the same needs but often use different objects to fulfill these needs. For example, all cultures need shelter, but the type of shelter may look different.



Advance Preparation

Prepare Yourself

- Read the “Background Information for the Teacher” provided below.
- Pull items from the trunk that are needed (see “Use These Materials From This Trunk.” below). Familiarize yourself with the objects.
- Assemble other materials you will need (see “Other Materials You Will Need to Assemble”).
- When reviewing Worksheet 3: Cultural Comparisons with your students, plan to use a chalkboard or dry marker board OR make an overhead of the worksheet. If this worksheet is not challenging enough for your students consider “whiting” out the supporting artifacts in the Wichita column and letting your students determine how the trunk pieces support these categories.
- Photocopy worksheets and answer sheet as indicated here.
Worksheet 1 - one copy for your use.
Worksheets 2 and 3 - one copy for each student and for your use.
Answer sheet for Worksheet 3 - one copy for your use.

Use These Materials From This Trunk

Worksheets 1-3

- 1: Myths & Misconceptions
- 2: “New Baby in the Grass House”
- 3: Cultural Comparisons

Overhead 1: Kansas Cultural Sequence

Graphics 1-3

- 1: Native American Woman Using a Bison Scapula Hoe
- 2: Wichita Grass House Posthole Pattern
- 3: Wichita Grass House Village (drawing)

Objects and related object cards

- Grassing needle
- Bison scapula hoe blade
- Stone arrow point
- Stone scraper
- Charred wood
- Tooth pendant

Other Materials You Will Need to Assemble

Overhead projector

Chalk board or dry marker board

Background Information for the Teacher

What is archeology? Two major goals of archeology are reconstructing what particular ancient cultures were like and determining how one kind of ancient culture changed or was transformed into a different kind. Archeologists deal with evidence that for the most part was not deliberately left for posterity. They are concerned with the remains — the objects and their spatial relationships, or associations, with each other — that were left by ancient peoples at places where they carried out various activities in the past.



What types of evidence do archeologists use? Archeologists use two kinds of evidence, objects and associations, to reconstruct what happened in the past.

Objects provide information about the natural objects utilized by a people, the implements they used to transform these items into goods that satisfied their needs, and the knowledge and skills they possessed that enabled them to do so. Objects also reveal the artistic achievements of a culture's members. Archeologists use objects and other physical remains (such as traces of structures or fire pits found in the layers of soil) to study past cultures.

Associations are the spatial arrangements and relationships of objects with respect to each other and to features of the environment in which they occur, especially those indicating that the objects were in use at the same time or during the same period. They provide additional information about the production and artistic achievements of a society that might not be immediately apparent from an examination of the objects themselves. They also provide information about the various kinds of social and economic relationships that existed in specific ancient cultures.

From this evidence — objects and associations — archeologists piece together a picture, or description, of the culture that produced the objects. Two important points to remember are that archeologists study humans (NOT dinosaurs) and that they do this by examining artifacts left by these people.

How can artifacts tell archeologists something about different cultures? The type of objects made by people of a culture reflect the culture itself. For example, a farmer needs a way to prepare a field for planting. Depending upon when the farmer lived, he/she might have a motorized John Deere tractor, a horse-drawn plow, or a hoe made from the shoulder blade of a bison. Each of these objects reveals something about the culture it came from, ranging from the need to farm the land to the technology available for producing and using tools. Every culture must address certain survival needs. All human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, and the ability to pass along their culture to future generations.

Can artifacts answer all questions about basic human needs? No. Because not all the basic human needs leave objects, and because not all objects survive well over time, archeologists often have a hard time drawing conclusions about some aspects of human behavior. For example, artifacts that represent concepts like education are hard to find, especially for cultures where passing on culture is done through oral tradition/storytelling. Formal schools, like those of today, provide many more artifacts. Other sources, such as ethnohistory, provide insight into some of these issues.

Do archeologists study dinosaurs? No, archeologists study only human cultures.

Activity

Opening Activity

1. Activate **prior knowledge** of students by asking the students these questions and recording their answers on the board:

What do you know about archeology?

What do you want to know about archeology?



- Use key points and Worksheet 1: Myths & Misconceptions to discuss what the class wants to know about archeology.

Direct the students' interest to what type of objects archeologists use to learn about past cultures.

- Archeology** is the study of human cultures based on the material remains left behind.
- Cultures** all meet **four basic human needs**: shelter, subsistence (food), clothing, and passing the culture along to new generations.

Archeologists try to develop a picture of how people lived, worked, and played by examining the objects left behind, like stone and bone tools, buttons, bottles, toys, etc.

- Using the Overhead 1: Kansas Cultural Sequence, show the historical sequence of Kansas. **This is the sequence of periods in Kansas from today to the Paleoindian period, 10,000 B.C. People lived in Kansas from the Paleoindian period to the present. Archeologists learn about past cultures by studying the objects that people left behind. (B.C. means before the birth of Christ.) (A.D. means after the birth of Christ.)**

Introduce the class to the activity. They will be using objects to learn about, and compare, two cultures.

This activity will compare the cultures of the Wichita Indians and the students' society. The Wichita lived in Kansas around A.D. 1200 to 1750. Roughly this period starts 350 years before Coronado's travels through Kansas and ends before Kansas was heavily settled by European Americans.

- Hand out Worksheet 2: "New Baby in the Grass House" to each student. Tell students that this story is about a new baby born into the Wichita culture. (**NOTE:** Originally this story was made up to teach about newborn babies in the Wichita culture. It is used here to help explain the concept of oral tradition.) Have students read the story.
- Ask the class how the culture in the story is similar to and different from the culture the students live in today. Using a Venn diagram, write the responses on the board.

Responses will vary but may include some of these points:

Wichita	Shared	Our Culture
- baby's father stays away for 4 days	- babies cry	- baby's father present at birth
- parents do not name new babies	- new births are celebrated	- name chosen before birth
- importance of the moon	- religious blessing of new baby	

- Explain to the class that reading information and hearing stories are two very important methods we use to learn about other cultures. But some cultures have no written language and are no longer around to tell us their stories. The Wichita before European contact is one such culture.

Ask the students where they would begin researching a report about the Wichita Indians.

Many answers will relate to books, the library, the internet, and television.



Ask the students how the people writing the books or making the movies learn about cultures with no written language.

When people live in a place, they leave evidence of their existence behind, such as trash, dropped toys or tools, soil discoloration from structural features (for example, a circular stain left by a post that supported a grass house or burned remnants of a hearth). Archeologists study these artifacts and features to learn about the people who lived there.

Learning Activity

1. Give each student a copy of Worksheet 3: Cultural Comparisons.

On the board make four columns - Shelter, Subsistence (food), Clothing, Passing Along Culture, OR use an overhead of Worksheet 3: Cultural Comparisons. Explain that these words are the same as those in the left-hand column of the worksheet.

2. Explain to the class that, while cultures may vary, they all have some basic needs in common. It doesn't matter if a people lived 5,000 years ago or 5 years ago, they still need to eat, be sheltered and clothed, and be able to pass their culture on to their descendants. These basic needs are reflected in the left-hand column on the worksheet.
3. Show the class the objects from the trunk (grassing needle, scapula hoe blade, stone arrow point, scraper, charred wood, tooth pendant) and Graphics 1-3 from the trunk. The class will be looking at these items in relationship to the four basic human needs just discussed. Explain that:
 - **These are reproductions of the types of artifacts archeologists find at Wichita Indian sites. Archeologists often find fragments rather than complete objects.**
 - **These pieces are all representative of at least one of the four basic human needs that all cultures share (shelter, subsistence [food], clothing, and passing on culture).**
4. Have the students match the object cards to the objects and share the information on the cards with the class. Make sure the class understands the function of each piece.
5. Return to the list on the board and Worksheet 3: Cultural Comparisons.

One by one discuss each category — Shelter, Subsistence (food), Clothing, Passing Along Culture. For each category:

- **Make sure the class understands the basic need being discussed.**
- **Have the class decide which of the Wichita Indian objects represent each basic need. (Use Worksheet 3: Cultural Comparisons as a guide.) Note that some objects will fit into more than one category.**



- **Have the students write down examples from their culture that represent these same four basic needs. They should write these on their worksheets and share them with the class. Write them on the board. (Use the answer sheet for Worksheet 3 as a guide.)**

Closing Activity

1. Have students share and compare and contrast the past culture of the Wichita Indian to theirs. What do the cultures have in common? How are they different?

They both fulfill the basic needs. The Wichita gathered, hunted, and grew what they required to meet their needs. People from the students' culture tend to purchase what they need from others. They earn income, which they use to purchase food, clothing, and shelter. The students' culture is also more material-oriented than that of the Wichita, that is, the students' culture has more material possessions per person than the Wichita culture of the past did.

One point to keep in mind is that the class is comparing the types of items that would have survived MANY years in the soil (Wichita Indian culture) with all the items from their own culture. (Nothing from the students' culture has been lost to decay over a 500-year period.) For example, the Wichita wore leather clothing, but leather does not survive in the ground like stone arrow points or bone tools do. Therefore, clothing is rarely found in ancient archeological sites.

Have the students imagine what it would be like to live in the Wichita culture. How might their lives be different?

2. Ask the students to share their thoughts about what archeologists can learn from artifacts. Do they feel that it is possible to learn something about a culture from sources besides books?
3. Ask the students what they have learned about archeology. (This refers back to the discussion at the beginning of this lesson when the students were asked what they know about archeology and what they would like to learn about archeology.)

Glossary for Lesson 1

Archeology (also spelled archaeology): The study of human beings in the past, using techniques and methods centered on the examination and interpretation of artifacts and features left behind by past cultures. In the United States archeology is a subfield of anthropology.

Artifact: Any object that shows evidence of use or alteration by humans.

Culture: A learned set of habits and traditions, passed from generation to generation. Culture provides a set of rules to live by that assure basic needs (such as food) will be met and that



children will be protected and taught the way life is lived. Customs, social and political organizations, language, clothing, child rearing, work, and play are all part of culture.

Ethnographer: A person involved in the systematic recording of human cultures.

Ethnohistory: Study of humans through research in historical documents.

Grassing Needle: A piece of bone that has been worked to a blunted edge on one end and has cordage tied to the other end. This tool was used by the Wichita Indians to construct grass houses.

Salvors: People who salvage shipwrecks.

Scapula Hoe: A gardening implement made from the shoulder blade of bison, attached with sinew (tendon or other connective tissue) to a wooden handle.

Scraper: Chipped stone tool used to clean or smooth materials such as hides.

Subsistence: Set of customs that deals with the technology of supplying food and water to members of a cultural group. The technology depends on both the food and water resources available in the environment and the choices the culture makes about what it can or ought to consume. (For example, in France horse is a popular meat, while in the United States it is not generally considered appropriate for humans to eat.) All food-getting strategies, including scavenging, gathering, hunting, and agriculture, are part of subsistence.

Wichita Indians: An American Indian confederacy of Caddoan-speaking people, probably related to the Pawnee. The Wichita have been identified historically with the Quivirans that the Coronado expedition encountered in south-central Kansas in 1541. The group moved south into what is now Oklahoma early in the eighteenth century where they are located today.

