

Grade 2-3 Lesson: Clues to the Past (Part 1)

Knowledge: Awareness of History, Vocabulary, Good Citizenship, Self-Awareness
Skills: Listening, Comparison, Inductive Reasoning

1. For homework, ask students to talk to an older person about their past. Ask them to discover at least one thing that is different today from when the older person was a child.

2. In class, make a list of what the children discovered from their interviews. Discuss how a home, classroom, shopping area might have looked different in past times.

3. List some ways to learn about the past.

Talk to older people.

Look at old photographs.

Explore things that people used in the past.

Visit a museum.

Books and newspapers.

4. Introduce words *archeologist*, *artifact*, and *excavate*.

Archeologist: a person who learns about past times by looking at the things people made and used.

Artifact: anything made, changed, or used by people.

Archeologists study artifacts to learn about the past.

Archeologists sometimes excavate to find the things people left behind long ago. Excavate means to dig very carefully, so that you know exactly where everything came from. Archeologists go to college to learn how to excavate the right way. When they find artifacts, they study them and then place them in a museum or return them to an Indian tribe that is related to the ancient people who made the artifacts long ago. Archeologists are looking for information, not just objects.

5. Ask each child to choose an artifact from their own time. This could be something from their desk, an article of clothing, something from their pocket, etc. Talk about what these items can tell you about how people live today.

Examples: book--people use written words to communicate

Hair band--people care about how they look

Coin--people use money to get the things they need or want

Candy bar--people can buy food that is ready to eat

6. Do "Puzzle Pieces" matching sheet.

Discuss how people's lives were different in the past.

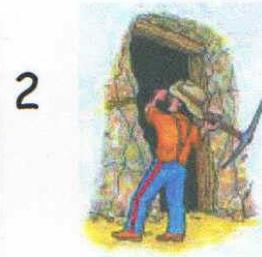
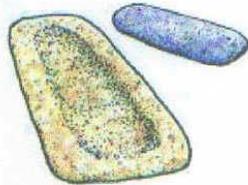
Examples: People used horses for transportation, instead of cars.

People grew and prepared their own food, instead of buying ready-to-eat food.

People made their own tools and dishes.

Puzzle Pieces

Many of the artifacts that archaeologists find are not complete. Like detectives, they put together these clues to try and paint a complete picture of life in the past. Do you want try it? Look at the clues in the first column. Draw a line connecting each artifact with its more complete picture in the second column. Then draw a line from the complete artifact to the related picture in the third column.



Grade 2-3 Lesson 1: Clues to the Past, Part 2

7. Read *Native American Rock Art: Messages from the Past*, by Yvette LaPierre (Thomasson-Grant, Charlottesville, 1994).

Have available several books with pictures of rock art.

8. Have children work in pairs or teams to look at the rock art books and select one rock painting or petroglyph. Have them draw a sketch of the rock art. Then have them write down one thing it might tell us about the people who made it long ago.

9. Create a rock painting by having children make handprints on a large sheet of crumpled brown paper by dipping their hands in washable poster paint. You can use different colors of paint. After the handprints are completely dry, ask the children to think of something that is special to them that they can draw inside their individual handprint. Give them some time to think about this. Talk about how a drawing can symbolize an idea. Examples: a heart for love, a paintbrush for creating something, a flower for nature, a butterfly for happiness, a stick figure for a special person. Have each child sketch out his or her drawing on the chalkboard, white-board, or on paper; then have them add their drawings to their handprints.

Talk about how each handprint is different and how each one tells something about the person who made it.

Talk about how real rock paintings and petroglyphs (rock carvings) were special to the people who made them. We need to protect them so that we can learn about the people who lived long ago. When you visit a place with rock paintings and petroglyphs be careful not to touch the rock, write anything on the rock, or pick anything up. These are important clues to the past. If we destroy them, then we have lost one way of knowing about the people who lived before us.

Suggestions for other activities:

Make a “living history” section in one corner of the classroom. Stock it with old-fashioned dresses, pinafores, shirts, and jackets. (Sharing hats is not a good idea!). Include some slates and chalk, old fashioned school books, and some old-fashioned toys. Have children make sure no modern things are in the area (markers, ball point pens, electronics, etc.)

Do an old fashioned cooking project. Make gingerbread, butter, soup, etc. without using any packaged mixes. For butter, you need to purchase nonhomogenized whole milk.

Read the children a chapter book set in the past. Have them make up a play with simple costumes about one event that happens in the book.

Set up a “Mystery Artifact” table or bin with items from the past, such as an old-fashioned egg-beater, a milking stool, a reproduction arrowhead, a typewriter, etc. Include both easy and challenging objects. (Remember, the possession of artifacts from public lands, including historic/Euro-American items, is illegal and sets a bad example.)

Visit a retirement community and pair each child with an older person. End with an old-fashioned tea or ice-cream social at which each child shares with the others something they learned from their older friend.

Resources:

If You Lived in Colonial Times, by Ann McGovern, Scholastic Books, New York, 1969.

What's the Difference? Then and Now, by Heather Amery, Usborne Publishing, London, 1986.

I Can Be an Archaeologist, by Robert B. Pickering, Children's Press, Chicago, 1987.

Archaeologists Dig for Clues, by Kate Duke, Harper Collins, 1997. This is an excellent explanation of archaeology for young children.

A Slice Through a City, by Peter Kent, Millbrook Press, 1996.