

# Lesson Title: Artifacts are Everywhere

By Jack Dickinson

## Overview:

This lesson will teach students what an artifact is and how we can learn about human life and culture through the examination of artifacts. We will first take a sneak peek at an Alaskan artifact to spark interest. Then we will read an article on time capsules and discuss how everyday items can become artifacts that could give future generations information about our lives. Finally, we will examine ancient artifacts and discuss how, when those artifacts were first created and used, they too were everyday objects.

### Standards Met:

- Social Studies Processes, Knowledge, and Skills GL.4 The learner will develop research skills by selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing information from varied sources in order to effectively communicate using reasoning and sufficient evidence, both orally and in writing.
- AK State Standards 6C.3 The learner will identify and use the methods and tools valued by historians, geographers, anthropologists, and archaeologists. They will also compare the views of historians and be able to trace the themes of history.
  - Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources to compare views, trace themes, and detect bias.
  - Define the themes of society, technology, economics, politics, and culture, and relate them to the study of history.

## Essential Question:

What is an artifact?

## Objectives:

1. Students will be able to define the terms artifact, primary source and secondary source.
2. Students will practice the ability to analyze an object, make a claim about its function, and use evidence to back up that claim.
3. Students will develop empathy as they learn to see ancient artifacts not as mysterious relics of the past, but as everyday items used by people just like them.

## Assessment:

1. Spark/Sneak Peek Class Discussion of Artifacts: The lesson begins with a pre-assessment of the students ability to analyze artifacts. They must make a claim as to what they believe the artifact is, and then back up that claim with visual evidence.
2. Observations: Throughout the lesson, the teacher should observe student responses

as they complete their artifact analysis worksheets. These responses can help the teacher gauge who is understanding the material and who is struggling.

3. **Small Group Discussion with Share Out:** During the lesson, students will break out into small groups and think of everyday items that may be difficult for future historians to make sense of. This activity will help the teacher see who understands the concept well enough to empathize with both future historians and ancient peoples.
4. **Summative Assessment:** The artifact analysis worksheets provide the teacher with a summative assessment of the students' ability to analyze and interpret artifacts. Questions 1 and 2 on the worksheet show the students' ability to analyze, while questions 3 and 4 show the students ability to interpret.

**Spark:**

We will begin the lesson with a sneak peek at an Alaskan artifact, such as the Japanese glass buoys that wash up over the southwest coast of Alaska.

**Culturally Responsive/Best Practices:**

The artifact examination at the end of the lesson will be set up as learning stations. The teacher can call on each student during discussion times. The artifacts can be taken from any number of cultures, and students can come with their own cultural artifacts.

**Adaptations:**

Excerpting the key points or having the passage read aloud using text-to-speech technology may be a helpful adaptation for some students.

**Activities:**

Time (Minutes)	What will the teacher be doing during this lesson?	What will the students be doing during this lesson? How will the students be ACTIVELY engaged with the material?
0-5	Lead a sneak peek class discussion of artifacts as described in the Spark section of this document. Ask students what they think the artifact is, and make them defend their claim. "What do you see in this artifact that makes you	Students will be asking questions about the artifact, making guesses, and defending their guesses of what they think the artifact is. Sentence Frames: "I think this artifact is a _____ because I see _____." "I see this artifact has/is _____, which reminds me of _____."

	say that?"		
5-9	<p>Introduce the time capsule reading. Explain that a time capsule is something to be locked or hidden away for years, and meant to be open much later. Explain that time capsules are meant to give a glimpse of what life was like in the time they were sealed. Finally, explain that history is often full of holes and best guesses, and how helpful it would be if historians had access to intentionally curated time capsules sealed away by ancient people. An additional discussion could be started about unintentional "time capsules" such as King Tut's Tomb in Egypt.</p>	<p>Several students will hand out the readings. The rest of the students will listen to the introduction of the reading. Many students, even as low as sixth grade, have some background knowledge about the mummies and tombs in Egypt, specifically, King Tut. King Tut was Pharaoh in Egypt from 9-19 years old, which is perfect as almost all students will fall into that age range and can identify with "The Boy King."</p>	
9-24	<p>Walking around, assisting students as needed (defining challenging words, clarifying concepts, etc.)</p>	<p>Quietly reading the text.</p>	
24-30	<p>Introduction of the term artifact and the idea that everyday items are artifacts to future generations of archaeologists and historians. Pompeii can be brought up as an example of everyday items, if they are left buried long enough, becoming interesting artifacts.</p>	<p>Participation in class discussion. Students will ask clarifying questions, share background knowledge of Pompeii, and draw connections between Pompeii and the time capsule reading.</p>	
30-6	<p>Teacher will break students</p>	<p>Students will work together to brainstorm various</p>	

	<p>into small groups and instruct students to think of various everyday items that could be difficult for future historians to understand. Teacher will then listen in to each group to monitor progress and gauge student understanding.</p>	<p>everyday items whose purpose may be difficult for future historians to figure out.</p>	
36-40	<p>Introduce artifact examination activity. Break students into groups and give each group an artifact. Tell them they have eight minutes to complete each artifact analysis worksheet. When the eight minutes are up, you can have them move to a new artifact station, or you can move the artifact yourself and have the students remain in their groups, whichever is easier.</p>	<p>Listen to instructions. Break into small groups. Students then work together to analyze the artifact. They will each fill out their own analysis worksheet, but they will most likely all have similar responses. They are going to discuss with each other each question on the artifact analysis sheet, most importantly questions three and four, which is the analysis part of the worksheet.</p>	
40-48	<p>Assist students as needed. Provide guiding questions when students are stuck. Gauge student learning by observing their responses written on the artifact analysis worksheet.</p>	<p>Group examinations of artifact 1. Students will work together to answer the artifact analysis worksheet. They will analyze artifacts, commenting on texture, shape, material, and many other observable qualities. They will then discuss how the observable evidence suggests a specific purpose.</p>	
48-56	<p>Assist students as needed. Provide guiding questions when students are stuck. Gauge student learning by observing their responses written on the artifact analysis worksheet.</p>	<p>Group examination of artifact 2. Students will work together to answer the artifact analysis worksheet. They will analyze artifacts, commenting on texture, shape, material, and many other observable qualities. They will then discuss how the observable evidence suggests a specific purpose.</p>	
56-65	<p>Assist students as needed. Provide guiding questions</p>	<p>Group Examination of artifact 3. Students will work together to answer the artifact analysis worksheet.</p>	

	when students are stuck. Gauge student learning by observing their responses written on the artifact analysis worksheet.	They will analyze artifacts, commenting on texture, shape, material, and many other observable qualities. They will then discuss how the observable evidence suggests a specific purpose.	
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**Materials Needed:**

- Four to eight artifacts. Some could be ancient, some could be everyday “artifacts.”
- *Time Capsules*, by Mary Katzke
- Artifact Analysis [Worksheet](#)