

Lesson Plan: Camp Douglas Archeology – Can You Dig It?

Grade Levels: Third to Fifth Graders

Objectives: Students will describe what an archeologist does and what an artifact is by participating in a simulated archeological dig. Students will explain what artifacts tell us about the people who made and used them.

Duration: 1 to 2 class periods (depending on class period length)

Equipment/Materials:

- Plastic bin large enough to hold enough sand in which to “bury” artifacts.
- Playground sand
- 10 to 12 artifacts. Examples: Tools, utensils, model cars, small toys
- If possible, choose an artifact that would not be familiar to students.

Handouts:

- “Chicago and the American Civil War”
- “Guide for Young Archeologists”
- “Follow-up Questions” for “Guide for Young Archeologists and “Chicago and the American Civil War”
- The Tools of an Archeologist
- Archeology Word Search

Procedure:

1. Prior to the start of class, put sand in the bin. Don’t fill it to the top because students will be putting their hands in the bin and if it is too full, the sand will spill out of the bin.
2. Place bin on a table that is low enough so students will be able to “dig” easily. Bury the 10 to 12 artifacts down in the sand.
3. Divide the class into groups of three or four students depending on the size of the class. Give each student a copy of the “Guide for Young Archeologists” and the “Tools of an Archeologist.”
4. Have students read the guide and complete the “Tools of an Archeologist” in their groups, or individually. Discuss what an archeologist does and tell students that they are going to pretend to be archeologists.
5. The Archeology Word Search may be used at the teacher’s discretion.
6. Have each group take turns “digging” through the sand and discover what’s buried in it.
7. Give each group one of the “found” artifacts. Tell each group to decide:
 - a. When was it made (recently or in the past)?
 - b. Why was it made?
 - c. Who might have made it?
 - d. How it was used.
8. Give each group time to do this and choose one person in their group to report their findings to the rest of the class.
9. Have each group report their findings to the class.
10. Give each student a copy of “Chicago and the American Civil War.” Tell students that archeological excavations have taken place in Chicago and that the handout will explain why and where.
11. Students may read this as a class, in groups, or individually.
12. Once the reading is completed, give students the follow-up questions to complete. Students may complete the questions in groups or individually. Discuss answers.