

Leave What You Find: Exploring Natural Settings and Archeological Areas

Students will learn about the value of leaving natural features and cultural artifacts undisturbed.

Grade Level : 4th Grade

Objectives:

- Students will be able to describe the characteristics of an archeological or historical resource.
- Students will discuss what happens when cultural resources are removed from a site.

Materials:

- Old Camping items (tent peg, piece of rope, frying pan, etc.) Have one item for each person.
- Copy of Handout (p. 4) 1/group.

Time Considerations

- Activity 1– Beam Me Down: 40 minutes

Related Activities:

Forensic Anthropology, Dental Forensics, Mud Fossils



Nevada Department of Education Standards

- **Scientific Inquiry: (Nature and Science Unifying Concept A) N.5.A**—Students understand that science involves asking and answering questions and comparing the answers to what scientists know about the world
- **History Standards: 1.0 Chronology**—Student use chronology to organize and understand the sequence and relationship of events

Excellence in Environmental Education Guidelines

- **Strand 1—Questioning, Analysis, and Interpretation Skills (A, B, C, G)** Learners are able to develop question, design investigations, collect information, and draw conclusions in order to learn about the environment.
- **Strand 2.3—Humans and their Societies (A,B)** Learners understand that people act as individual and as group members and that groups can influence individual action. Experiences and places may be interpreted differently by people with cultural backgrounds, at different times or with other frames of reference.

Background

Your students will imagine themselves as part of a futuristic science mission returning to Earth to uncover the secrets of our planet's ancient inhabitants. Students will try to construct a picture of a vanished people based upon the objects they find.

Explain to the group that they are traveling to in the year 2172 on spaceships returning to Earth. They are on a science mission to find out how earth-

lings lived hundreds of years ago. You may want to use props such as a space-

ship to embellish the story. Two different science teams will visit Earth. What will they find?

Preparations

- Gather old camping items such as a tent peg, old frying pan, piece of rope, burnt wood, blackened rocks, a child's toy, an axe, and a bullet shell casing, or cut pictures of these items from magazines or newspapers. Use your imagination to add other items. Have one object for each person. If conducting this activity inside, you may want to place these items on a bed sheet to protect floors.
- Scatter artifacts in an area away from the view of the group, preferably outside.



Doing the Activity

Activity 1— Beam Me Down

Tell the students: It is the year 2172 and you are from the planet of *Inzania*. You are one of the top archeologists from the planet and have been sent to the planet Earth to discover how the extinct species of *Homo sapiens* (humans) lived. In order to discover the most intricate details of the human's lives you must be very observant and aware of the surroundings and the artifacts left behind by these people.

1. Break the group into two science teams. Explain that the two teams will take turns visiting the planet. One team will “beam down” to observe the site while the others wait inside.

2. Have the first team view the objects and site without picking up the artifacts. Give the first group of students the handout on page 4 to fill in. Tell team members to think of their initial impression of the site and to be able to describe what the people who lived there were doing.



3. After viewing the site have each member of the first team pick up one or more objects and hide it so it's not visible. This leaves only half the objects to tell the archeological story when the second team arrives.



4. Beam down the second science team, and have its members look at the site and the remaining artifacts. Have the students fill out the handout (p. 4) as well. Tell them to remember their initial impression of the site and be able to describe what the people that lived here were doing. Have each person from this team pick up an artifact. Have both teams sit down together. Ask members of the second team describe their impression of the site of the past civilization. Ask participants: *What did your team learn about this past culture based on the artifacts you find?* Review the rest of their information from their handout.

Have the first team show the artifacts they removed from the site. Ask members of the first team to describe their impressions of the site and civilization. Ask participants: *What did you learn about this past culture based upon your evaluation of the site when all the artifacts were present?* Review the information they wrote on their handout.

Return to the site and discuss what later explorers might think about this site. Ask participants the following:

- What impression would you have now that all of the artifacts are gone?
- How has the value of the site changed since the artifacts

have been removed?

- How has this activity helped you understand the efforts of today's archeologists?

Your participants are great scientists! Your group knows the importance of leaving items that they find in their natural setting. A group discussion will help determine how well each

person has learned the value of this lesson.

- Discuss the idea that the items discovered by the group represent artifacts and evidence about our culture. Similarly, the artifacts we sometimes find outdoors provide valuable information about people who lived a long time ago.
- Have participants relate the objects they found on their science mission to something that may be found on public lands (from Native Americans or Pioneers). Have the group summarize why it's important for people to leave what they find. Clarify the difference between objects of historical value and common trash or debris. If necessary, remind participants that it is against the law to remove or destroy cultural resources.
- Talk about what people do with artifacts when they take them



home. Generally the artifact sits on a shelf or in a drawer. How much pleasure does it bring when it is removed from the site? Have the group brainstorm ways to enjoy and learn from archeological site without taking the artifacts home.

- Important: Discuss how leaving what you find applies to animals, plants and the outdoor setting in general. Picking flowers, removing antlers or petrified wood, cutting tree branches building lean-tos and chairs, moving rocks and stumps, carving on trees and stone and digging tent trenches are all examples of ways people detract from the natural outdoors. Use the background on the principle of Leave No Trace to further discussion.

tell you about the people? Which contents are likely to remain unchanged for hundreds of years (non-biodegradable items)? What will people in the future think about our culture when they examine our garbage? Will there be a lot of non-biodegradable items for them to study?

Vocabulary

Archaeological: material remains (as fossil relics, artifacts, and monuments) of past human life and activities

Artifacts: an object remaining from a particular period

Evaluation—

Assess the student's understanding of the concept of "leave what you find" by monitoring the discussion times. Have students write in a journal instead of discuss some of the questions above.

Extension Activities—

- Have the students fill out the handout on page 5 pertaining to the Leave What You Find activity.
- Visit an archaeological site. Discuss what might have been found there 1000 years ago, 100 years ago, and 10 years ago.
- Tip over a garbage can or discuss what you might find in one. What would the contents

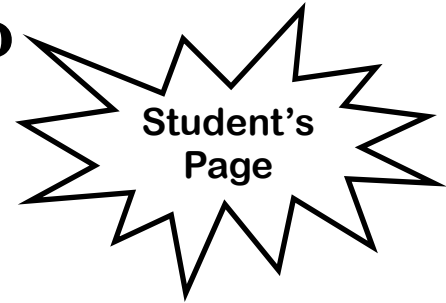


Sources—

Central Nevada Emigrant Trail Association, Battle Mountain Nevada, viewed February 9, 2007, <<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/trailofthe49ers/trail.htm>>.



LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND



WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM ARTIFACTS?

It is the year 2172 and you are from the planet of *Inzania*. You are one of the top archaeologists from the planet and have been sent to the planet Earth to discover how the extinct species of *Homo sapiens* (humans) lived. In order to discover the most intricate details of the human's lives you must be very observant and aware of the surrounding on Earth and the artifacts left behind by these people.

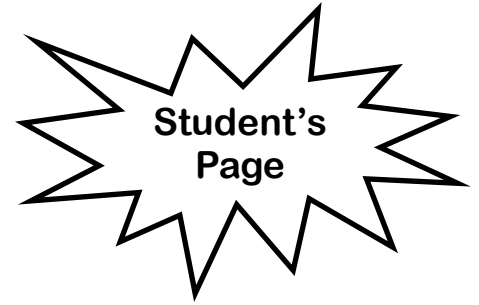
Here are some questions and lists that will help you to understand the humans and their lives.

- What is your first impression of the site?
- What type of environment are you in? Where were the humans living?
- What plants do you see to indicate this?
- List the artifacts that have been left:
- Which artifacts do you find together?
- Based on these artifacts what activities were the humans performing?
- What did the humans do for fun/entertainment?
- Who was at the site? Ages? Gender?
- How did the humans sleep/relax?
- What did your team learn in general about the human culture from this site?



LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

WHAT CHANGES WHEN ARTI- FACTS ARE GONE?



- If this was your first time to the site, what would your first impression be (now that artifacts are gone)?
- What information are you missing that you knew before?
- How has the quality and amount of knowledge of the human culture changed with the removal of the artifacts?
- Why is it important to not take artifacts from a site?
- Think about the Paiute artifacts found in Lovelock Cave. List some of these.
- Choose one artifact from those found in Lovelock Cave. What would happen (what would we not know about Paiutes in the area) if this artifact was taken by an emigrant or present day teenager?
- Explain why artifacts are important to archeologists.