

# UNCOVERING THE PAST AND PRESENT

**Learning Objective(s):** the student will

- A. Understand the role of archaeology and anthropology in the study of prehistory and history.
- B. Explore the methods used by archaeologist and anthropologist to uncover the past.
- C. Gather artifacts to serve as clues to their personal history
- D. Analyze artifacts to draw logical conclusions

**TEKS:** US.25A; WH.2B; WH29.A

**Materials Needed:** chocolate chip cookies, toothpicks, artifact bags of items reflecting the personality and life of the teacher-(these items can serve as an introduction to the teacher as well as a model for the students' bags).

**Teaching Strategy:**

1. Ask the students for the definition of an archeologist and an anthropologist. After discussing their ideas, clarify the definitions as follows:

**Archeologist**-a person who digs, extracts, then analyzes artifacts of ancient times.

**Anthropologist**-a person who studies artifacts and human fossils to understand human life and culture.

Explain that both are like detectives uncovering and analyzing clues and evidence in order to solve a crime or a mystery.

2. Demonstrate the role of the archeologist by placing the students in pairs or small groups of three. Give each group a chocolate chip cookie and a toothpick. Giving the groups two to three minutes, have the students attempt to extract the chocolate chips from cookie. At the end of the time, debrief the activity by discussing the difficulty in not breaking the chip. Make the correlation that some sites (cookies) have more chips (artifacts) than others, further complicating the work of the archeologist.
3. Next, give each group an artifact bag prepared by the teacher. Ask the students to analyze each item to draw conclusions about the person to whom the items belong. Discuss all possible conclusions that can be drawn from the artifacts before identifying that the items are from the teacher as well as their true meaning. Use this portion of the activity as an introduction of the teacher to the class.

4. Have the students prepare an artifact bag to share the next day with the class. Items should reflect some or all of the following:
  - Interests
  - Family
  - Hobbies,
  - Personality
  - Dreams for the future
  - Accomplishments
  - Favorites
  
5. Put the students in pairs and have them trade the artifact bags. Allow the students to analyze the contents to draw conclusions about their partner. After each person has verified their conclusions, each student should introduce their partner to the class citing at least three things they learned about their partner from the exercise.

**GT/Pre-AP Extension:** Redistribute the student artifact bags and have each person write a personal life history about the person to whom the bag belongs. This can serve as a writing sample for the beginning of the school year.