



San Diego Museum of Man ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE

Pre- and Post-visit Activities



Terminology

The Museum of Man is a museum of anthropology. Some useful vocabulary includes:

Anthropology – the study of humankind in all times and places.

Archaeology – the study of material remains from the past to describe and explain human behavior.

Physical Anthropology – the study of the way the human body is formed and how it works. Physical anthropologists study people through time, including the most ancient remains of human bones.

Artifact – anything made or altered by humans in the past. Examples of artifacts commonly found by archaeologists include tools, pottery, and art.

Site – a place where artifacts are found. A place where people lived or a place where animals were butchered for meat are examples of archaeological sites.

Excavate – to dig in the ground. Since most artifacts are buried in the ground, archaeologists have to dig to find them.

Background Information about Archaeological Ethics

Archaeologists are specially trained to record archaeological sites so that the information learned about the people who once lived there can be shared by everyone. Once a site is excavated, it can never be excavated again. If an archaeologist was not able to properly record a site, but instead an untrained person simply dug up the ground to look for “treasure,” then valuable information about the past will be lost. (To understand this concept, try the activity on the following page.) In fact, it is illegal to take artifacts from public property. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), which was passed in 1979, finds that unauthorized digging at sites is considered vandalism, and that a person who collects artifacts from public lands may be prosecuted. Each State also has its own laws which may be more strict. For example, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that proposed construction sites be surveyed by archaeologists, and that an archaeologist monitors the construction project to be sure that known and unknown archaeological sites are not being disturbed.

Archaeologists have to follow rules, too. In 1990, a law called the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was enacted to help protect and respect American Indian grave sites and artifacts associated with the grave sites. Through this law, not even archaeologists are allowed to excavate the burials of American Indians. In



California, archaeologists have to have a Native American monitor their work while excavating. If a human burial is unintentionally discovered while digging, the archaeologist must stop and report the find to the county coroner, who will determine if the human remains are of an American Indian. If the remains are determined to be Native American, then the archaeologist and the Native American monitor will report the find to the nearest American Indian Nation, who will make sure the remains are reburied in a respectful manner. This is also true for any artifacts associated with the burial. For example, a person’s belongings in life, like a shell necklace, may be buried with him or her at death. Those items are to be kept with the burial. The law also requires that

archaeological facilities and museums must return American Indian burials and associated artifacts excavated before the law was enacted to the Native American Nation to which it belongs.



San Diego Museum of Man

The Importance of Context in Archaeology

Pre-visit Activity



Archaeology is not just digging around in the dirt, it is serious business. See if you can answer the following questions.

1. What can you write about the artifact pictured here?



2. Just by looking at this picture, can you tell where the artifact is from? Can you tell what it was used for? Can you tell who (what culture) used it? Can you tell how old it is?

3. Now, what if I told you this arrow point was found next to a pile of deer bones. Do you now know what it was used for?

4. What if I told you the arrow point was found in the Cuyamaca Mountains in San Diego County. Do you know who (what culture) used it?

5. What if I told you archaeologists tested the deer bone and found the animal lived between 1,000 and 1,500 years ago (similar tests cannot be done on stone). Can you now write about how old the arrow point is?

So, What's the Point?

Just by looking at a single artifact, you were not able to write much about it other than what it looks like. Once you were given more information, you were able to see the story that surrounded the arrow point—that perhaps a Kumeyaay hunter used it to kill a deer in the Cuyamaca Mountains about 1,000 to 1,500 years ago, or sometime in the eleventh century. Just like if you had a single puzzle piece, would you necessarily know what the whole puzzle looks like? You need more pieces. The information that allows you to see the bigger picture is called **context**. Without it's context, an artifact loses much of its meaning. Without more puzzle pieces, you won't know what the image is supposed to be.

Archaeologists are scientists who are trained to properly document the existence of sites. They take careful notes to be sure to gather all the available information, or context, of each artifact at a site so they can see the bigger picture. This information is kept in Collection facilities so people can come to do research, like you would in the reference section of a library. Museums have the ability to display some artifacts and share information about them for all people to enjoy.

If you went hiking in the Cuyamacas or in Mission Trails, and you found an artifact, do you think it would be a good idea for you to take it? What would happen if another hiker came by and found an artifact near the one you took and also decided to take it? What if another hiker found another artifact, then another? What would eventually happen to the site? Not only would valuable information be lost, but did you know it is illegal to take artifacts from public property? You can be fined, or even put in jail! It is best to report your find to a park ranger, who can call an archaeologist to record the site. Then everyone can learn from the past.





San Diego Museum of Man

The Importance of Association

Post-visit Activity



Goal: For students to observe artifacts in their original position (*in situ*) to determine the relationships between them.

Procedure

Have the students draw a simple blueprint-type outline of their classroom, including the arrangement of their desks, the front board, and any other equipment or significant objects in the room that they use regularly.

Now, have the students answer a few questions about the classroom layout.

1. Why are the student's desks arranged how they are?

Possible answers may include:

1) *So everyone can see the teacher* 2) *So students can move around the room easily* 3) *To make the best use of space*

2. What seems to be the focal point of the room?

3. Does the placement of classroom objects effect where certain activities will take place?

Copy and pass out the diagram of a Paleolithic camp and ask the students to answer these questions, as they appear on the handout. You can share these answers with them when they are finished.

1. What activities may have taken place at this site? In particular, what was taking place at the locations labeled A, B, C, and D?

This was a seasonal dwelling for Paleolithic nomads. It was their resting place after a long day of gathering and hunting, and a place to manufacture stone tools. At the rear of the hut, in locations A and B, were areas where tools were made, where stone tools and surrounding flakes were found by archaeologists. The animals that were hunted by the group were butchered and consumed in locations C and D, shown by the scattered animal bones and stone tools found together.

The postholes indicate the presence of wooden beams, which archaeologists infer were used to support the roof of the structure.

2. What do you think the pit of ash is the remains of, and why is it important?

This was the hearth, central to survival, which provided warmth in cold seasons and allowed the nomads to cook their food. It also indicated that these people could control fire.

3. Archaeologists predict that the walls of the hut were made of long branches hastily stuck into the ground, supported by a rock base. Why might the nomads choose this method?

As this was only a seasonal dwelling for nomads, they didn't want to spend much time building it when there was food to gather and stone tools to construct.



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The Importance of Association

Paleolithic Camp Activity



This is a diagram that is based on a seasonal Paleolithic camp excavated near present-day Nice in France. Nomadic hunters occupied the site, called Terra Amata, about 300,000 years ago.

Study this basic plan view of the site, similar to a sketch that an archaeologist might draw, and answer the questions below.

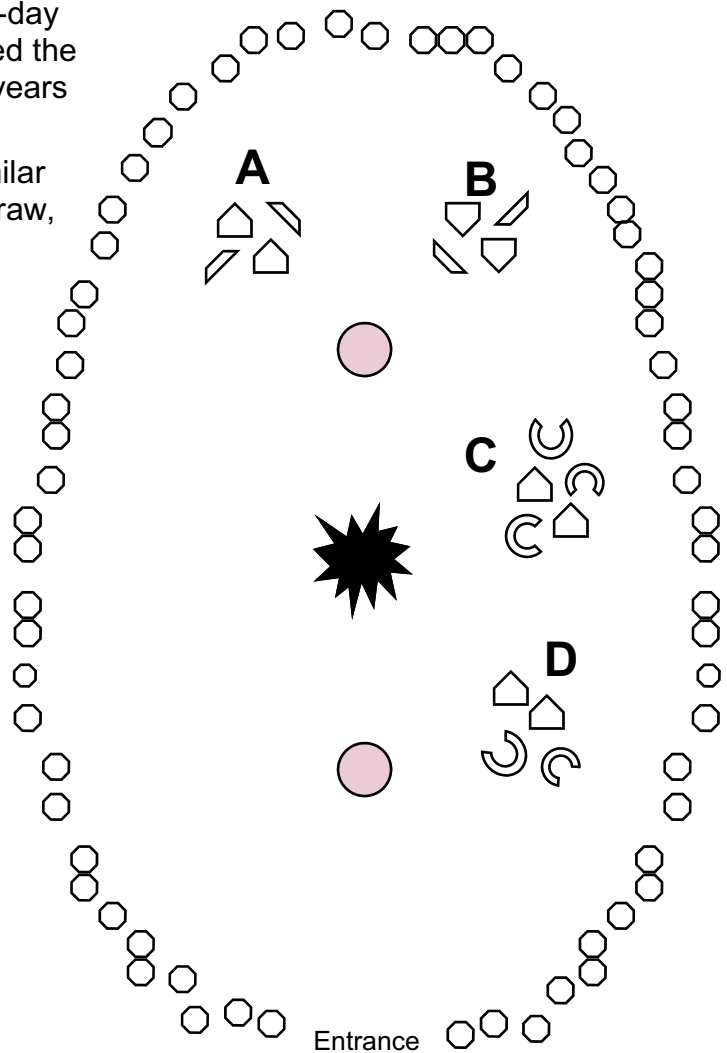
Legend

-  Unshaped stone
-  Stone tool
-  Stone flake
-  Animal bone
-  Post hole
-  Hearth

Large unshaped stones were placed up against the base of the outside walls to strengthen them.

Post holes remain where large wooden posts supporting a roof used to be.

The hearth is a pit full of charcoal and ash.



What activities may have take place at this site? In particular, what was taking place at the locations labeled A, B, C, and D?

What do you think the hearth was used for, and why is it important?

Archaeologists think that the walls of the hut were made of long branches hastily stuck into the ground, supported by a rock base. Why might the nomads have chosen this method?