

Archaeology Lab

Grades 6-8 Teacher Guide

OAS

6-8 Grade OAS Content Standard 2

Program Overview

During this program, students will experience the process of archaeology from excavation through identification, analysis and report writing. Students will excavate a simulated site using appropriate tools. They will carefully recover the artifacts and then identify them as to material and use. The identification (hoe, spear point) will lead them to an identification of the culture's subsistence style and place in the sequence of Oklahoma's cultures.

Objectives

After participating in this program, students will be able to:

- Discuss the general characteristics of several prehistoric cultures, from 10,000 years ago to the present;
- Relate a culture's artifacts (material remains) to other aspects of culture such as how people make a living
- Explain how archaeological research is done
- Give some general examples of ways that cultures relate to or interact with their natural environment.

Background

The earliest cultures for which we have evidence in Oklahoma were the Big Game hunters. These people hunted mammoth, giant bison, and other animals that were alive in Oklahoma until between 20,000 and about 8,000 years ago. As the climate changed the large animals died out and the people needed to adapt their substance activities to smaller prey, including deer, rabbits and modern bison. People in Oklahoma remained hunters until today, but around 500 A.D. some groups began to also farm crops such as corns, beans, and squash. Once people begin farming there are many cultural adjustments, such as permanent houses and larger groupings of people into villages. This mixed hunting-farming life style lasted, with variations, into the historic time period.

At the Museum

Hall of People of Oklahoma

Have students visit the Hall of the People of Oklahoma where they can see trace the 30,000-year history of the Native people of the state. Exhibits begin with the earliest archaeological evidence of humans in Oklahoma, and travel through time to an examination of what it means to be Native American in Oklahoma today.

Vocabulary

<i>Artifact</i>	Anything made by man. Arrowheads, parfleches, and sneakers are all artifacts. Studying the artifacts people make can tell you about how they lived.
<i>Chert</i>	A type of rock used to make stone tools; it breaks with a sharp edge.
<i>Excavate</i>	To dig scientifically; archaeologist map a site, lay out a grid of squares and excavate inch-by- inch inside the squares
<i>Forage</i>	To go out and gather food.
<i>Site</i>	A place where there is evidence of human activity; a site range from an entire village to a firepit used once by hunters.
<i>Trowel</i>	Small hand tool for excavation.

Correlating the Archaeology Laboratory and Museum Exhibits

During the archaeology lab, each culture is designated by the way the people secured their food. This approach is easy for the students to remember and makes the sequence sensible because it proceeds from the big-game hunting cultures, with relatively few artifacts, to the hunting and farming cultures with more complex artifact assemblages. However, when your students visit the exhibits at the museum they will not see the names used in the laboratory. The exhibit labels use specific site names, time periods, or the archaeological terms used by professionals. You can use the chart below to correlate the exhibits to the names used in the archaeology lab.

Term used in Archaeology Laboratory	Term used in Museum exhibit labels	General Term
Big-game Hunters, Folsom, Dalton	Burnhan, Clovis	Paleo-Indian
Foragers	Early Holocene Hunters-Gatherers, Late Holocene Hunters-Gatherers, Calf Creek	Archaic
Early Farmers	Fourche Maline	Woodland
Plains Village Farmers	Washita River, Antelope Creek	
Caddoan	Spiro, Arkansas River Basin, Mississippian Cultural Universe	Mississippian Southern Cult
Historic Wichitas	Historic Wichitas	Wichita