

What is an Atlatl?

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Lesson Overview: Using mnemonic devices, students will learn new vocabulary words which will be used during their field trip to the Nightengale Archaeological Center. Students will employ visual memory techniques that include repetition, kinesthetics, and illustrations. This method is supported in learning theory. Integration of social studies, art, and language arts skills is included.

Objectives: Students will

- identify vocabulary terms
- match terms with illustrations
- utilize mnemonic devices as memory aids
- write an illustrated story using new vocabulary

Materials: Teacher Information Sheet, Student Vocabulary Cards, paper, drawing materials

Activity:

Step 1: The teacher puts the following words on the board or overhead and asks students if they know what they mean: atlatl, metate, chert, midden. As part of the lesson introduction, the teacher tells the students that they will hear these words at the Nightengale Archaeological Center. Although some are difficult terms they have never heard before, they will learn a “trick” for each word to help them remember what they mean (see Teacher Information Sheet). They will also have pictures to match with the words, like a game. By the end of the lesson, they will be successful at learning 12 new words and definitions.

Step 2: The teacher introduces each word, with the picture, one at a time. (See student handout which is to be cut in cards.) This may be done with the overhead projector or on the board, but only one at a time in order to avoid confusion (See Teacher Information Sheet). After each explanation, the teacher asks the students to repeat the word and what it means. When more than one word has been introduced, the teacher periodically asks individual students to volunteer to repeat each one of the words and give its definition before going on to the next one. They are also asked to remember the “trick” they can use to help them remember what the word means. Other students are to point at each word and picture during these reviews.

Step 3: At the end of the lesson, students take their words and pictures to review with a partner. As the teacher monitors students, she praises them for learning so many hard, new words!

Closure: Students are put in cooperative learning groups to write and illustrate a story using at least ten of their new words in context. They may use a rebus format, with pictures substituted for new words, and have other students try and read the story correctly.

Student Vocabulary Cards -- What is an Atlatl?

Cut apart

Artifacts	Mano
Atlatl	Metate
Chert	Midden
Dart Point	Mussels
Firestick	Rabbit stick
Hearth	Yucca

Student Handout - Vocabulary Lesson

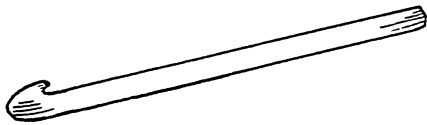
Artifacts



Mano



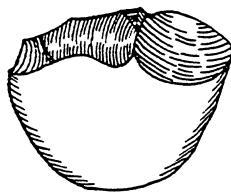
Atlatl



Metate



Chert



Midden



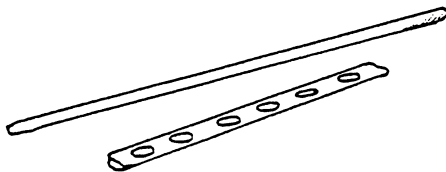
Dart Point



Mussels



Firestick



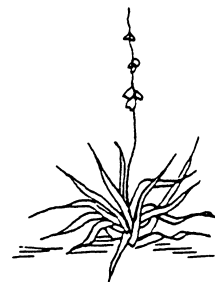
Rabbit stick



Hearth



Yucca



What is an Atlatl?
Teacher Information Sheet

Inform the students that on their field trip to the Nightengale Archaeological Center they will learn many things about Archaeology. (Although this word is not on their vocabulary list, they will be given the definition at the site.) Archaeology is defined as the study of past humans by using the material remains of human activity. This concept should be discussed with the class. The words that the students will be learning in this lesson deal with these material remains left at the Kingsland Site, as well as some general archaeological terms. The pictures and the "tricks" will help the students to picture in their mind what the words mean, and when they hear them on the field trip, they will solidify their understanding.

Begin with the word artifacts. As you point to the word on the board or overhead, have the students point to the word on their card. Discuss the illustrations. Tell the children that artifacts are anything made, used, or modified by humans. The trick they will use for this word is that it is made up of two little words - "art" and "fact." (The teacher should underline the word parts for each trick during the lesson.) Tell the students that it is a "fact" that some artifacts are a kind of "art." Have them point to the rocks painted with designs on them, and also to the arrowheads, which may be considered "art." They will have a chance to see many artifacts at the Nightengale Archaeological Center. (Review trick and have students respond aloud.)

atlatl (AT-LAT-UL) An atlatl is a spear thrower. People used the atlatl to make a spear go farther. Tell them the trick is to think about the first part of the word - "at." An atlatl was used to throw a spear "at" animals when hunting. The students will get an opportunity to throw a spear using an atlatl at the Center. (Review trick and previous word.)

chert (CHURT) Chert is another word for flint, the kind of rock used for making stone tools, such as arrowheads. Tell the students that these tools had to be very sharp, like a knife. So, the trick is a rhyming word, "hurt." If people were not careful when making stone tools, they could get hurt with the chert. The students will see many tools made of chert at the site. (Review trick.)

dart point Although most people have heard of arrowheads, bows and arrows were not used by the earliest people in North America. For hunting big game such as mammoth and bison, spears or darts were used. These points were larger and heavier than arrowheads. The only trick needed for this term is to reverse the terms; it is the "point" of the "dart" or spear. (Review trick and previous words.)

firestick Because early people did not have matches, they used two sticks to make a fire. Where the top stick rubbed into the bottom stick, holes were formed. The top stick is called a firestick. Once again, the two words tell just what it is, a "stick" for making "fire." When the students go to the Nightengale Archaeological Center, they may be shown how a firestick works. (Review trick.)

hearth (HARTH) A hearth is where people made a fire. Today, we find circles of burned rock to indicate where ancient fires were made. The trick is to find the word “heart” in the word “hearth.” Instead of rocks for a fire being “heart” shaped, they were in a circle for a “hearth.” The students will see hearths in excavation pits and at the model hut. (Review trick and previous terms.)

mano (MAHN-OH) This is the Spanish word for hand. A mano is a rock shaped like a ball or a sphere, which was used for grinding food. Tell the students the trick for this word is to listen to the end of the word where it makes an “oh” sound. A mano is shaped like the letter O. There are many of these at the Center. (Review trick.)

metate (MEH-TAH-TAY) This was what was used under the mano for grinding foods. The way we know is that it is a large rock, with an indentation in it from the grinding action. This task was usually done by the women, and was probably a time for them to meet and chat. The trick for this word is to find the word “met” at the beginning of the word. The women met together to talk while they did their work with a metate. Students will have a chance to try this for themselves with replicas of metates and manos. (Review trick and previous terms.)

midden (MID-UN) A midden is actually a trash pile. Archaeologists like to find middens of materials people have thrown out because they contain large amounts of objects that can tell us about those people and how they lived. Tell the students the trick is that this word is made up of the two words “mid” and “den.” We would NOT want a trash pile in the middle of our den!! (Review trick.)

mussels These kind of mussels are not the ones in your arms. They are a kind of shellfish, like an oyster or clam. Mussels are found in fresh water and were eaten by ancient people. We know because the shells are found in piles at campsites. The trick for this word is to remember that people “must” find the “shells” or they would not know that Native Americans ate mussels a long time ago. A pile of mussel shells is in one of the excavation pits at the Nightengale Archaeological Center. (Review trick and previous terms.)

rabbit stick When hunting for rabbits, it was possible to just throw a kind of special stick at them if the hunters were skilled. Students will get a chance to practice throwing such a stick at the site. No trick is needed here except to reverse the words, a “stick” for hunting “rabbits.” (Review this term.)

yucca (YUK-UH) A yucca is a tall plant with sharp pointed leaves at the bottom and a tall stalk with blooms at the top. Native people used the roots of the plant for food. The stalk made a good firestick, and the leaves could be dried and used for weaving. The trick is to think of what the students might say if they tried to eat this plant, “YUCK!” Students will see yucca growing along the trail at the Center. (Review trick and all terms.)