

What Can We Learn From the Past?

Alice Elia

Lesson Overview: Looking at items from the students' pasts will provide them with examples of future artifacts. They will make observations and inferences about their culture based on the items.

Objectives:

Students will

- Make observations and inferences about a culture based on materials provided
- Work in groups

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

Social Studies, Grade 4

- Social Studies 114.6 (22A), locate and use primary and secondary sources
- Social Studies 114.6 (22B), analyze information by drawing inferences and conclusions

Materials:

Items brought in by students; Worksheet "Learning from Artifacts"

Activity:

Step 1: Have children each bring in one or two items from home that represent them.

Step 2: Label the items brought in to make sure that they are returned to their proper owner after the activity is finished.

Step 3: Lay all of the items out on a table.

Step 4: Discuss the meanings of the word "observation" and "inference." Explain that an observation is a fact, something you can be positive of based on looking at an object. An example of an observation would be to look at a blanket and say it is made of cloth. Another example of an observation would be to look at a mirror and say that you could see yourself in it, and it is made of glass. An inference is something that you are guessing about based on looking at an object. An example of an inference would be to say that whoever used the blanket lived in a cool climate. Remember that the students are supposed to act like they have not seen any of these items before.

Step 5: Have children get into groups of three.

Step 6: Hold up one item and show the students how you want the worksheet filled out. Let them know that if they were archeologists in the future and they found this "artifact" they might not know exactly what it is or what it was used for.

Step 7: Pass out the items so that each group has an equal number of "artifacts."

Step 8: Allow the groups time to discuss what they are looking at and fill out the worksheet.

Closure: Have students stand up with their group and share their observations and inferences with the rest of the class. Depending on time constraints you may only want to allow them to share their observations and inferences on one of their items.

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Learning from Artifacts

Sketch of the Item (Observation)	Description of Item (Observation)	Guess as to Use or Purpose (Inference)

