

Elementary Learning Activity 2: How archaeologists and historians help us understand the past

Digging into the past...

Course Links: Elementary Social Studies (In Newfoundland and Labrador, Grade 5 Social Studies.)

Outcomes addressed:

Grade 5 Social Studies

SCO icp.0 – The student will be expected to demonstrate proficiency in utilizing concepts and processes from the social sciences

icp.1 Use an inquiry model to explore and resolve significant questions

icp.2 Apply intellectual tools to analyze events, ideas, issues, patterns and trends

icp.3 Make reasoned assessments based on appropriate criteria

Unit 1: Exploring the Past

1.0 - Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of how we learn about the past.

1.2 describe how archaeologists and historians help us understand the past

Learning Goal and Description

Goal: To examine how Archaeologists and historians go about revealing and interpreting history, in this instance aspects of the history of Trinity and Fort Point.

Brief Description: Students will examine artifacts from the 1969 Archaeological dig at Fort Point (and historical documents) in order to understand how Archaeologists do the work of uncovering and verifying “what happened” during the period between 1740 and 1820.

Planning and Preparation

Sources: Primary sources (artifacts and historical documents) that are listed under the **Connection** section.

Preparations will include:

1. Access to (and preferably the ability to project enlargements of) images for a virtual tour of the Trinity Historical Society’s archival material.
3. Student access to **Organizers 5 - 7** for recording their observations from their examination of artifacts and historical documents (which will be placed in their Portfolio).

Strategies for Completion

Activation: (30 to 40 minute brainstorming, instructional session.)

Teachers may begin this activity by building students’ understanding of what historians and Archaeologists do that make their work critical in interpreting history. Teachers may begin with the following questions for discussion:

What is meant by the term Archaeology?

What does an Archaeologist do?

How does he do his/her job?

(Students may research for answers in their learning resource (*Investigating Past Societies*) and other sources, and record their answers in their notebooks. They should come to understand that Archaeology is the study of human activity based on the analysis of the objects and changes to the environment resulting from human activity. Archaeologists examine historical sites and objects to learn about the past. They do excavations (commonly called 'digs') and record, analyse and interpret archaeological remains.)

Teacher may then discuss with students the important contribution of Archaeologists work to the **ongoing** interpretation of history.

Teachers may then ask: *How does an historian go about writing history?* Again students may research for answers in their learning resource (*Investigating Past Societies*) and other sources and record their answers in their notebooks. For this task, it is important that teachers guide students to an understanding of the methods and tools historian use to ensure their writing is accurate and as reliable as their sources if information (their evidence) will allow. It is also important to discuss what is meant by interpretation and perspective (that historians decide perspective and ultimately interpret their findings to draw conclusions that may or may not be the “actual history”).

In the time remaining in the class period, teachers may set up the cooperative learning task that students will undertake in the next class period (see **Connection** section).

Connection: (30 to 40 minute group activity followed by a sharing session.)

Using a cooperative learning structure (e.g., think-pair-share), teachers may organize students with a partner to conduct an examination of items from the archaeological digs/explorations at Fort Point and the surrounding waters. Using **Organizer #5 or #6** and **Organizer #7**, students will analyze artifacts to determine what can be learned and inferred about the location. [*Images 151-171 cover the 1969 Archaeological dig, including the report (historical document). Images 72-88 cover the underwater Archaeological dig. Students may also be encouraged to use the an historical document that informed one of the digs.*] Next, students should create a list of unanswered questions they have about the location. Finally, teachers may ask students to identify what they feel are their three most important learnings, inferences and unanswered questions.

Consolidation: (Students will complete this activity independently.)

Students may create a virtual time capsule containing 10 objects that future archaeologists will use to tell the story of Trinity, including the period between 1812 and 1815. Each student will recommend one object for the capsule. The class will then vote on the top ten. When selecting objects, students will consider what each object will tell future archaeologists about Trinity and Fort Point during the 1700s and early 1800s. Students will provide a summary as a journal entry in which they will speculate the answers to the following questions an Archaeologist might have:

- *What conclusions / inferences can be drawn / made, based on my examination of this object?*
- *What question(s) do I have that need further research?*

Extension: *(Optional activity that may be completed independently and/or combined with other activities throughout the year.)*

Students may create comic art that (i) shows an archaeologist or historian working on a specific (real or imaginary) project, and (ii) identifies some of the questions that the archaeologist or historian faces. (**Note:** Online comic art creations tools, such as www.pixton.com, may also be used for this activity. Students may also use the Comic Art Template found in the *Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012*, page 134.)

Assessment and Evaluation

For this learning activity, teachers should

- Check to ensure students completed **Organizers 5-7**(assess level of detail).
- Use a simple point system rubric that addresses both detail and insight to assess students' journal response entries (their answers to the questions that form part of the Consolidation lesson).

Organizer # 5: Primary Source Analysis – Artifact*

Name: _____		Date: _____	
Artifact Analysis			
Questions		Observations	
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it made from? • How does it look or feel? Consider: <i>size, shape, color, texture, mass, sound, markings, decorations, smell, condition</i> • Is the object complete? • How might the object have been constructed? 			
<p>Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What might it have been its purpose? • Who might have used it? • Where might it have been used? • When might it have been used? • Is this similar to objects used today? 			
<p>Inference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it suggest about technology of the time in which it was made and used? • What does it suggest about the people who made and used it? • How important might this artifact have been? Why? 			
<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on your description, analysis and inferences what do think your artifact is? • What information supports your conclusion? 			

*Adapted from *Artifact Analysis Organizer*, Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, page 124

Organizer # 6: Primary Source Analysis – Historical Document*

Name: _____		Date: _____
Historical Document Analysis		
Question	Observations	For further research
1. When was the document created?		
2. Where was the document created?		
3. How was the document created?		
4. What are the main points made by the author / editor in the document?		
5. What inferences can be made about the time period (era) in which the document was created?		
6. What happened around the world during this time period?		

*Adapted from *Historical Document Analysis* in Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, p. 129

Organizer # 7: Artifact Examination*

Artifact / Document Summary		
Facts I learned	Inferences I made	Questions I have

*Taken from *Artifact Summary*, Appendix E, Grade 5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide, 2012, p. 135