

Tools and Utensils: How Is This Used?

Hypothesize the use of artifacts classified as tools and utensils

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Reproduce by drawing artifacts to scale using a grid system
- Generate a list of functions for the artifact tools/utensils based upon their form
- Compare the selected artifact to its contemporary counterpart
- Discuss the similarities and differences among artifacts and their present day counterparts
- Explain, by writing, the factors considered in pairing an artifact with a tool or utensil

VOCABULARY

Artifact: any portable object made, modified, or used by humans. “The town museum has a collection of local artifacts on display.”

Attribute: a characteristic or property of an object, such as weight, size, or color. “One important attribute of this vase is its light weight—just six ounces!”

Archaeology: the study of people in the past using material remains (physical objects and other clues that have been preserved and discovered). “The people excavating the old house site have training in archaeology.”

MATERIALS

- Photographs or drawings of artifacts of various materials (stone, bone, and shell) that have a modern counterpart with tools or utensils used today
- Tools and utensils from home or school
- Grid paper or tracing paper
- Pencils

GRADES: 5-8

Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts, History, Art

Standards:

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5-8](#)

Skills: Observation, hypothesizing, comparison, illustration, writing

Duration: Two 30-minute lessons

Class size: 25

BACKGROUND

When archaeologists recover objects, they analyze and document their characteristics, like: shape, size, color, type of material, and how they were made. Using those attributes they can form hypotheses about what their purpose was. There are times when people in the past used similar tools to what we use today, which can help archaeologists better understand how an artifact was used.

Archaeologists record artifacts' attributes through written notes, photographs, 3D models, or drawings. Illustrations of artifacts can highlight certain features that might be less visible in a photograph.

PROCEDURES

Day 1

1. Have students select an artifact illustration or photo to redraw. Encourage them to use a grid system so that proportions will be accurate.
2. Ask students to write down on their drawing the attributes of the artifact (shape, structure, material, colors etc.), its possible uses, and justification for their answer.

Day 2

1. From the tools and utensils brought from home or chosen at the school, allow students to select and draw a contemporary tool that could be used in the same way as the artifact.
2. Similar to the artifact, ask students to write down on their drawing the attributes of the tool or utensil and its use.
3. Referring back to their previous drawing of the artifact, have students write one paragraph about the similarities, differences, and connections between the artifact and the modern tool.

ASSESSMENT

Collect both drawings from each student and assess students' one-paragraph explanation of the connections and similarities between the modern-day tool and the artifact.

WRAPPING UP

Lead students in a discussion about the similarities and differences among artifacts and the present-day tools, and discuss in particular the commonalities among their functions.

RESOURCES

- Crow Canyon glossary: https://www.crowcanyon.org/educationproducts/pueblo_history_kids/glossary.asp
- Plaza of the Columns Complex: <http://ppcteotihuacan.org/en/field-work/archaeological-materials>
- Helpful Professor examples: <https://helpfulprofessor.com/artifact-examples>
- The Met Museum collections: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection>



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