

“Cache”

**Resource Summary:** The recovery of ancient relics makes archaeology an exciting pursuit. The work is painstaking though, and discoveries are far and few between. This activity helps students understand the joy of discovery and the difficulty in recovering items. Students will create artifacts and bury them in the sand box. The items need to be located and extracted as intact as possible. The items will be analyzed and information about the civilization will be constructed from the items recovered.

**Subject Areas:** Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, History

**Grade Level Range:** 4-6

**Standards: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](#)

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.6-8.9](#)

Compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic.

**Resource Details:**

**Concept:** By constructing and recovering artifacts, students gain an appreciation for the challenges involved in recovering items that have been buried, and construct theories about the civilization based upon what they recover.

**Title:** Can You Dig It?

**Anticipatory Set:** view the WOTW tale: *Cache*

**Objective:** After viewing the tale, the class has a discussion about how recovering items from an ancient culture can reveal facts about the people and what their daily life was like. The activity also emphasizes how difficult it is to recover artifacts, so sometimes we are working with just small pieces and must theorize about what is missing.

**Materials:** DVD: *West of the West*, index cards, Play Dough or clay, glitter, beads, string, foil, construction paper, duct tape, small plastic trays or whiteboards in which to place excavated items.

**Teacher prep:** using chalk, the teacher should mark off quadrants along the sides of a nearby sandbox. Quadrants should be three feet long, one foot wide and one foot deep. Skip a three foot section between the quadrants so it is not too crowded. Number the quadrants 1-6; The information about each quadrant is recorded on an index card. These cards will be used to assign a given quadrant to each group.

(Option 1: quadrants can be marked off using string and rulers as to distinguish the exact spot more accurately. Option 2: shoeboxes with sand inside could double for the sandboxes if it is not convenient to go outside due to weather or logistics.)



Modeling:

Day One:

**Class Discussion:** Teacher makes a list of items (on the board), that a given culture would use. Possible items: weapons, toys, jewelry, cookware. The teacher should guide the students to make the connection between the item and what we can learn about the culture. (Note: some items could be buried purposely as in the film *Cache*, but others would be buried just as a natural progression of one civilization being built upon another. For example, it has been said that there are twelve layers to the city of Troy, indicating twelve different civilizations in the same location.)

Note: the Channel Islands have no gophers, squirrels or burrowing rodents that would contribute to the disturbance of artifacts. This is an advantage to the archaeologist.

Divide the class into groups of four or five. Each group will assume an Indian name. Each group will make five artifacts to be buried.



**Guided Practice:** Students make the artifacts and bury them, one group at a time, outside, according to the information on the index card. The teacher should assign a given quadrant to each group.

Groups of students attempt to uncover the artifacts, very gently, using paintbrushes and toothpicks. Any gross movements could damage the artifacts. Once all five artifacts are recovered, each group makes theories about how the other group lived, based upon the artifacts recovered. Example: the jewelry has a picture of a horse on it. This would mean that the horse was considered important in that civilization, and perhaps they had horses. The theories could be written on the back of the index card that has the quadrant information on it, and presented to the class.

**Independent Practice:** Students look at the contents of their own home and write down theories about what their family does and how they live.

Example: There is a lot of sports equipment. We can assume the family is very active and values exercise. Each student can complete this activity on an index card as well. The student can write observations on one side of the card, and theories on the back.

**Extra Activity:** Various Native American tribes do not want their burial sites excavated. Although recovering ancient artifacts is exciting for the archaeologist, it casts the activity in a whole different light when confronted with the fact that Native Americans, for one, do not want their remains disturbed. There were artifacts in a cave on San Nicolas Island that was being analyzed by a Navy archaeologist. The Pechanga Tribe near Riverside, California demanded that work in the cave cease. All excavation was terminated. How do you feel about that? What is appropriate when balancing a desire to learn about the past and tribal concerns? Write a half page essay on this topic. Share with the class.