

Middens On-Site Summary

Grade 4

Much of the knowledge archaeologists have gained about early human cultures comes from studying the objects these humans have left behind. Much of the time, archaeologists focus on old village sites, where they might find *Middens*. Middens are the trash heaps of these early cultures.

Archaeologists are able to learn a lot about the culture based on their trash. Depending on what is found, they are able to interpret various things about what the people of the period valued, the materials they may have used in their daily lives, a lot about what they ate, and what types of tools they may have used.



In this activity, students will uncover a Midden, which might represent one left by the North Texas Plains Villagers, during the Late Prehistoric period, after 800 A.D. The students will uncover and thus discover ancient prehistoric artifacts. They will extensively analyze and make inferences about what they believe the items are and what they believe they were once used for.

The students will begin to develop an understanding of the importance of measurement as it relates to archaeology by measuring what they find. Students will also map what they find, classify objects based on given information, and construct reasonable explanations and draw conclusions using given information and prior knowledge. The students will record their findings in the EFEC journal.

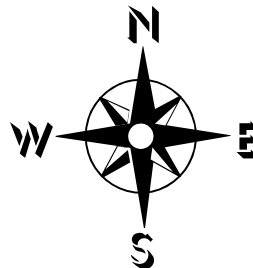
TEKS CONNECTIONS:

Science TEKS - Fourth Grade:

- 4.2 (B) – Students will collect information by observing and measuring.
- 4.2 (C) – Students will analyze and interpret information to construct reasonable explanations from direct and indirect evidence.
- 4.2 (E) – The students will construct simple graphs, tables, maps, and charts to organize, examine and evaluate information.
- 4.10 (B) - The students knows that certain past events affect the present and future events and is expected to draw conclusions about “what happened before” using fossils or charts and tables.

FUN FACTS:

- The Late Prehistoric Period lasted from about 700 A.D. to about 1200 A.D.
- The Late Prehistoric Period is broken into two parts - Late Prehistoric I (A.D. 700 to 1200), and Late Prehistoric II (A.D. 1200 to 1700).
- Beginning at about 700 A.D., the Late Prehistoric peoples regularly produced and used pottery as well as using bows and arrows.
- The Late Prehistoric peoples in North Texas appear to have been semi-nomadic hunting and gathering groups.



Above information adapted from, “Middens”, Elm Fork Education Center & Denton ISD, 1998.