

Bones & Stones

On-Site Summary

Grade 5

Favorable climates of the Late Archaic Period enabled Indian populations to grow and flourish. Trade networks were established and most Texas Indian cultures were relatively stable. Around 750 A.D. a drought occurred that changed the Texas Archaic way of life. Small springs and creeks that the people of the Archaic period depended on dried up, and they found themselves moving closer to large rivers and springs. As people competed for diminishing water resources, they became more crowded and conflict became more common. The number of people, dropped dramatically due to conflicts, starvation and disease.

The people of this new Prehistoric period had to adapt themselves to new ways of life in order to survive. The appearance of the bow and arrow, and increase in planting food, and the use of ceramics define this period. Planting prohibited the mobility common to the people of the Paleo-Indian and Archaic periods. The people of this period began to settle in small areas for longer periods of time to work with and protect their food crops. The fact that they remained in particular sites for extended periods of time is evident through examination of various sites which have been uncovered. These sites often include, camp or home sites, butcher or kill sites, and quarry sites which often have a great deal of assemblage.

In this activity, students will uncover three relatively settled and well-utilized sites, which resemble ones left by previous inhabitants of North Texas. Students will recognize key factors, elements, and/or implements that differentiate periods of time as they relate to the pre-history of Texas Indians. Students will map their excavation units, and measure their artifacts. Students will classify their artifacts and use ratios to construct reasonable explanations, and draw conclusions using given information and prior knowledge. Based on their discoveries students will make conclusions as to which period, Paleo-Indian, Archaic, or Pre-historic is represented in the excavation site.

TEKS CONNECTIONS:

Science TEKS - Fifth 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 people regularly produced and used pottery as well as using bows and arrows.
- Late Prehistoric people in North Texas appear to have been semi-nomadic hunting and gatherers.

Above information adapted from “*Bones & Stones On-Site Activity*,” Elm Fork Education Center and Denton ISD, 1998.