

Lesson Plan for Archaeology Month Presentation

This lesson plan is designed to act as a crutch for anyone who has a basic background in anthropology and archaeology but does not feel comfortable putting together a presentation to give to school children. It is meant to act as a fill-in-the-blank, one size fits one-hour lesson which can be applied anywhere in the state of California (and probably beyond). It is designed so that you need no props or slides at all; of course archaeology is inherently materialistic and therefore artifacts and technological replicas are always a big hit, as are pictures of people doing archaeology.

To be used by: Professional Archaeologists, Undergraduate and Graduate Anthropology Students

Purpose: To give students a basic understanding of the ethnographic cultures of their hometown and the state at large and a basic understanding of how archaeologists reconstruct past cultures.

Outline:

This lesson plan is broken into two parts. Each can easily take about 20-30 minutes to go over.

Part I. What is Archaeology? What is Anthropology?

- **Anthropology:** The study of human cultures includes language (Linguistic Anthropology), customs (Cultural Anthropology), human evolution (Physical Anthropology), human genetics, primate behavior and evolution (Primatology), and all of these things in the past (Archaeology).
- **Archaeology:** The study of previous human cultures using the material remains they left behind
- **What Preserves:** Ask the group to look around the room and think about what would happen if everyone left and 1000 years past. What would be left, what would be gone? What might we infer from what we find. For instance, we might find rows of the metal frames of chairs and infer a classroom or some other organized place where people gathered.

Part II. How did Groups Live?

- **Ask the students to imagine that they were living without any modern conveniences. What would they need?**
 - o **Food:** What animals and plants are available in the area. How would you prepare them. (Let the students direct the discussion, but fill in with things like “would you only eat meat? What about plants?”). What kinds of tools would they use to get and process their food?
 - o **Shelter:** What kind of houses did the groups in your area live in? Did everyone live together or did men and women sleep separately? Did people live in the same place all the time or did they move around?
 - o **What were some other things like to do?** What games did they play? What kind of religion did they have?