Investigating Artifacts
Making Masks, Creating Myths, Exploring Middens
For Grades K-6

LAWRENCE HALL OF SCIENCE • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY
Session 1

What You Need

For the class:
☐ a few samples of natural and not-natural objects
  gathered from the nearby environment
☒ a large brown paper grocery bag
☐ two yarn loops at least 15" in diameter
☐ a large class litter bag

For each group of four students:
☒ a large brown paper grocery bag
☐ two or three lengths of different colored yarn, to
  make loops at least 15" in diameter
☐ three index cards or sentence strips
☐ pencils
☐ newspaper or newsprint for covering tables

Session 2

What You Need

For each group of 4 students:
☐ 4 cardboard or card stock squares (approximately
  8" by 8") or 4 paper plates (8" in diameter)
☐ 4 bottles of white glue (4 oz. size)
☐ 4 pairs of scissors
☒ bag of objects from Session 3
☐ newspaper for covering tables
☐ pencils

For the class:
☐ adhesive note paper ("post-its") or scrap paper
  (optional)

Session 3

What You Need

For the Class:
☐ The 5 full-page pictures of the stars, moon, sun,
  rainbow, and butterfly, provided at the end of this
  guide (or any additional pictures you may wish to use,
  see "Getting Ready.")
☐ 1 to 5 pieces colored construction paper (11" x 19")
  to use as backing for the full-page pictures
☐ 1 wide-tipped felt marking pen to write captions
  (optional)
☐ 1 roll masking tape
☐ chalkboard or large paper to record ideas

For Each Pair of Students:
☐ 1 or 2 sheets of large drawing or newsprint paper,
  19" x 11" (large construction paper size)
☐ 1 sheet of lined writing paper (optional)
☐ 2 pencils
☐ 1 set of crayons or colored felt pens
Session 4

What You Need

☐ the pictures (sun, moon, rainbow, etc.) from the previous session
☐ student drawings (and written stories, if any) from the previous session
☐ 1 roll of masking tape

Session 5

What You Need

For each group of 3 students:

☐ 1 shoe box midden (see “Making the Middens”, “Getting Ready,” page 50.)
☐ tray or box for sifting or spooning soil into
☐ 1 stiff-bristle inexpensive paint brush or toothbrush (to remove soil above an artifact and to clean artifacts)
☐ 3 plastic spoons
☐ 1–2 plastic strawberry baskets to use as sifters
☐ 1 egg carton with the lid removed
☐ 1 ruler (optional)*
☐ 1 student sheet: “Archaeologist Checklist Task Cards” (master included, page 110)
☐ 3 pieces of 8-1/2” x 14” white paper for mapping midden
☐ 1 piece of lined paper for making a key
☐ 3 pencils
☐ newspapers to cover table
☐ string about 18” long for making a grid (optional)*
☐ scissors to cut the string (optional)*
☐ tape to attach the string grids to the shoeboxes (optional)*

For the Teacher/Class Demonstration (Stepping Back in Time)

☐ 1 shoe box lid to use as a tray
☐ 1 cup of soil
☐ 1 cup of leaves
☐ 1 object that represents something 2000 years old, such as a simulated arrowhead or piece of burnt wood
☐ 1 object from 10–50 years ago such as a horseshoe, coin, or old sterling spoon
☐ 1 modern bottle cap (or other modern item)
☐ chalkboard
☐ a timeline chart showing the present and going back 2000 years (optional)
☐ clothing/props for the volunteer actors (optional)
☐ large drawing of the midden site (see page 108)
Making the Middens
☐ 1 spray bottle containing water for misting soil when making middens
☐ several large buckets or plastic trash bags for dumping the soil that students remove from their middens during excavation

*For each shoe box midden:*
☐ 1 adult-sized shoe box (about 6” wide x 12” long)
☐ 6–10 cups of potting soil (without styrofoam beads or vermiculite)
☐ leaves to cover the surface of the soil
☐ 4 cups of sand (optional)*
☐ 9–10 different kinds of objects hidden in the midden (2–3 of each per box):
  — shells with holes (as from a necklace)
  — shells without holes (as for food, e.g., oyster and clam)
  — broken pieces of earth-colored clay pots (unglazed)
  — chicken bones
  — popping corn
  — dried beans
  — small pieces of obsidian rock to indicate tools (Be careful not to include sharp pieces.)
  — wood, small burned and unburned pieces
  — suede leather or rawhide (natural colors)
  — small pieces of woven grass mat or hemp string (natural colors)
  — feathers (not artificially colored)

Session 6

What You Need

For the class:
☐ large map of the midden site showing hill, stream, trees (optional)
☐ chalkboard or large paper for recording ideas
☐ marker to write names of artifacts on the cards
☐ pocket chart for organizing the objects into categories (optional)
☐ about 30 blank cards that fit into the pocket chart (optional)
☐ masking tape (optional)

For each group of 3 students:
☐ maps of midden artifacts made in Session 5
☐ 1 egg carton containing the team’s artifacts
☐ 3 pieces of 8 1/2” x 11” paper for describing an artifact
☐ 3 pencils
☐ 1 ruler