

Lake Mead

Environmental Education

National Recreation Area
National Park Service



CLASSROOM PROGRAM

Grade 4 - "Puzzle Pieces of the Past"

Theme Archeologists use material remains to attempt to understand early cultures. It is important to preserve and protect these resources so that we can learn more about the people who came before us.

Objectives Students will explore the function of a variety of artifacts.
Students will describe why artifacts and archeological sites are valuable.
Students will describe what an assemblage is and why it is important.
Students will list two ways they can protect archeological sites.

Vocabulary archeology - a science that deals with past human life and activities
archeological site - a place where archeological resources are located
artifact - an object shaped, changed, altered or used by a human
assemblage - a continuous collection of artifacts associated with a site
context - an artifact's relationship (orientation, depth, position) to other material remains

Background Information Archeological sites are places where material remain of past human life or activities are located. The material remains may be ancient or recent. Archeological resources include (but are not limited to): pottery, basketry, bottles, weapons, projectile points, tools, structures, rock art, graves, human remains, or any piece of these items.

Traces of several prehistoric cultures can be found within Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Some artifacts have survived undisturbed in the places where their creator culture left them. These artifacts are valuable because they represent the remaining physical evidence of cultures which existed before written history, including people of the past with ties to people of today. If the artifacts are examined in context, their relationship to overall activities at the site may be discovered and archeologists can continue the painstaking process of piecing together the puzzles of our past.

Before the Ranger Visits your Classroom Create an "archeological site" in the classroom. Divide the class into two different groups. Working on different sides of the room, have each group work on a different activity. After some time, have them all stop what they're doing, leaving out their activity materials. Have the groups switch areas and record materials which were left out by the other group. Have students share with the class what they have learned about the other group from the clues left behind.

After the Ranger Visits your Classroom Have students list at least three items that they used within a 24-hour period. What do they think earlier cultures used in place of modern-day items.



Teachers! - check out our new web site at <http://www.nps.gov/lame/classindex.htm>