

ARCHAEOLOGY: PUTTING THE PUZZLE PIECES TOGETHER

Analysis: the process of studying and classifying artifacts, usually conducted in a laboratory after an excavation has been completed; to analyze an object and draw conclusions.

Artifact: any object made or modified by man.

Attribute: an observable characteristic or property of an object, such as weight, size, or colour.

Context: refers to an artifact, its location, surroundings, and relationship to other artifacts.

When archaeologists record the *artifacts* they find, they will write down the *attributes* of the object. They do this in order to classify, or organize, them into different categories to be *analyzed*, stored, or showcased at museums. As they are observing and analyzing the artifacts, they are also trying to figure out what they are and what they were used for. Some artifacts are easier to figure out than others. For the harder artifacts to figure out, they need to make connections between the different attributes and the *context* in which the artifacts are found. For example, if an artifact is found in an ancient sports arena, it may have been something used by athlete. Basically, they are trying to put the puzzle pieces together to see what fits in order to see the bigger picture.

To this day, there are some ancient artifacts that continue to confuse archaeologists because they still don't know exactly what these objects were used for. Remember, some of the world's discoveries are based on *educated guesses* because none of us were around during ancient times to verify the truth. Luckily, we have some written records to help us, but that is not the case for all things.

There are many different attributes an archaeologist can write about, but we will only look at a few.

Types of Attributes

Colour – other than the colour, you can also mention that it is brightly coloured, faded, shiny or matte.

Shape – describe the shape or what the shape looks like – circle, round, square, cube, cylinder, triangular, flat, pointed, etc.

Size – archaeologists would measure the object, but for this activity, we will use general terms – small, medium, large, it is the size of, it is smaller or bigger than, etc.

Weight – archaeologists would weigh the object, but for this activity, we will guess or use a comparison – it is about the weight of 3 apples or a bag of rice, etc.

Texture – describe what the object feels like or what it is made of – smooth, rough, soft, hard, rubbery, slippery, bumpy, fluffy, velvety, spongy, wooden, stone, metal, glass, etc.

Smell – use only if it applies to your object.

Other – are there any inscriptions (writing), pictures, or symbols on the artifact?

- *Keep in mind that your object might be a combination of different attributes, especially if it is made up of different materials.*

Name: _____

ANCIENT ARTIFACTS

In groups of 3-4, you will look at pictures of ancient artifacts. Some attributes such as weight, smell, and texture will be difficult to do, but make *educated guesses*. After looking at the ancient artifacts, the answers to what they are will be revealed.

You can use point-form to answer the questions.

You will hand this in, so make sure it is completed neatly.

Object #1



1. List at least 3 attributes.

2. List 1-2 questions you have about the object.

3. List 1-2 possible uses of the object based on the attributes.

4. What do you think the object is? _____

➤ *Please repeat the same questions for the other objects on lined paper. Please set up your page the same way as the worksheet. You must number the questions, but you do not need to re-write the questions.*