

LESSON DESIGN

ARCHAEOLOGY

MEASURING ARTIFACTS

OVERVIEW: Students will learn to measure and record using both the English and Metric systems.

OBJECTIVE(S): The students will be able to measure artifacts of various shapes and sizes with calipers, tapes, rulers, and string utilizing both the English and Metric systems.

SET: The teacher holds up an artifact or artifacts and says, “How do archaeologists measure artifacts? Today we are going to find out.”

INSTRUCTION AND ACTIVITIES: Discuss with students that after a survey or an excavation (such as the mock one you may have just completed) it is time to measure the artifacts and record them. Model for students how to measure artifacts of different shapes and sizes by using tapes, rulers, calipers, and string. Put students in pairs. One person can measure and the other can record, then they can switch. A third person may be added to draw the artifacts (in advanced classes this can be done to scale).

TEST OF OBJECTIVES: Have each pair measure and record in front of you. You may have them enter recordings on a sheet or on prepared drawings for you to check. In advanced classes you may want them to draw to scale.

EXTENSION: The more advanced students can be given more challenging artifacts to measure (advanced geometry). For homework have the students measure and record 3 or 4 artifacts at home.

GRADE LEVEL, MATERIALS AND TIME: K-12 depending on the sophistication of the measuring. Tapes, rulers, calipers in the English and Metric systems, and string. Paper and pencils. Artifacts: these may be items that you had in your mock dig or survey, items that you bring in, or photocopies of artifacts. Simple artifacts can include pieces (potsherds) of broken pottery (like a flower pot), a newly made arrowhead (projectile point) from a rock shop, etc. One to two periods depending on the number of artifacts and attention spans.

GENERAL COMMENTS: Kindergarten and 1st grade could measure and record items in the room with cutouts of trowels, arrowheads, and whiskbrooms on cardboard. For example, how many arrowheads long and wide is the table or room. For smaller artifacts have them measure how many beads long or wide, etc.

ANY QUESTIONS? E-mail me at schneiderg@sbcglobal.net
George Schneider, B.A., M.A. (Anthropology), Elementary Teacher