

Investigate: Native American Cultural Artifacts (Grades 3-12)

Program Description:

During the *Investigate* program, students will take the role of Museum curators and use close observation and critical thinking to discover the origin, meaning, and importance of real objects from the Museum’s Collection. Students will learn how to handle and study primary sources and will be pushed to consider how singular objects or groups of objects can tell meaningful stories about our place.

What content standards align with this program?

Michigan K-12 Social Studies Standards: H1 The World in Temporal Terms: Historical Habits of Mind, H2 Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago, H3 The History of Michigan and the Great Lakes Region, G2 Places and Regions, G4 Human Systems, P1 Reading and Communication, P2 Inquiry Research and Analysis
NGSS Science and Engineering Practices: Constructing Explanations, Engaging in Argument from Evidence
ELA Common Core Standards by Domain: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Museum Program Strand:

- Empower individuals to use observations and inquiry to understand arguments and design creative solutions
- Help learners tell, interpret, create, and share compelling stories so no history is ignored or untold.

This program is aligned with the following Museum Learner Outcomes:

Holders of Foundational Knowledge	Masters of Fundamental Literacies	Creative Thinkers and Doers	Generous Collaborators for Tough Problems	Learners For Life	
X	X			X	

What will students know and be able to do after completing this program?

- Learners will be able to analyze primary sources (artifacts, specimen, and photographs) and make inferences about the story or significance of the sources.
- Learners will be able to describe what these cultural objects can tell us about the lifestyle and values of the Native Americans who used them.

What questions will students answer?

- What is a primary source?
- What is an artifact?
- What is a specimen?
- How can we ‘read’ a primary source in order to learn from it?
- What do these objects tell us about Native American culture?
- What can we learn about Native American lifestyle and values?

Key Vocabulary

Artifact
 Specimen
 Primary Source
 Curator
 Accession Number

Observations
Inferences

Materials List and Setup:

- Collection of 10 artifacts
- Gloves
- Artifact Investigation Handouts
- Reflection sheet
- Whiteboard and expo markers or chart paper and markers

Program Activities: 60 minutes

- Engage
 - Informally assess student prior knowledge of key terms: artifact, primary source, specimen.
 - Introduce essential question for artifact investigation:
 - What can we learn about Native American culture from these primary sources?
 - What was important to the Native American groups who lived in the area?
- Explore
 - How do we learn from objects? Observations to inferences
 - Model how to 'read an artifact' with whole class
 - Protocol for handling artifacts
 - Small groups of students will perform a close and detailed analysis of a series of artifacts, using an artifact investigation handout.
- Explain
 - Groups will share out the results to the rest of the group. Instructors will give prompts as needed
 - Groups will generate lists of the major takeaways we learned about the essential question from the artifact investigation. Instructor will record these on the board.
- Extend
 - [For older groups, if time] Instructor will introduce the concept of pre and post contact and have students review objects, thinking critically about whether they may be pre or post European contact.
- Evaluate
 - What do the artifacts tell us about the people who created them? What can we learn about their lifestyle and values?