

2016 Docent Training: Interactive Gallery Experience

Gallery Name: First Californians

Docent Name: Anne Llewellyn

Activity Name: "THINK LIKE AN ARCHAEOLOGIST"

Audiences: Check all that apply

Adults

Families

School Children: Grades 3 & 4

Homeschooled Students

Essential Question(s) (all activities)

How did the resourcefulness of the 1st Californians and their economical use of natural materials help to conserve their environment for future generations?

Common Core Standards (Activities for school children and homeschooled students)

English Language Arts

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

History-Social Sciences Content Standards

3.2 Students describe American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past.

4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

List Touring Techniques

Problem solving, Critical thinking, Asking/answering questions, Facilitating group processes, Active engagement with artifacts

List Gallery and/or Interactive Learning Station Artifacts/Objects

IDEAS FOR SETS OF OBJECTS/ARTIFACTS:

The task is easier with 2 objects; a 3rd object makes it more complex.

1. Acorns, bone awl, burden basket
2. Stick, arrowshaft straightener, arrow head(s)
3. Abalone shell, abalone fish hook, mussel shell
4. String of dentalia shells, block of soapstone/steatite, obsidian
5. Deer hoof, deer hoof rattle, turtle rattle
6. Soap root brush, picture of soap root plant

Introduction/Theme/Purpose

Students are invited to "think like an archaeologist" and to work together to solve a **puzzle** related to their artifacts.

Activity Description/Steps in Presenting the Activity

Children are seated on the floor; the docent is sitting on a bench. Children working in teams of 2 or 3 engage in problem solving using objects from the 1st CA learning station. They are asked to:

1: What are your objects or artifacts?

2: From what are they made? (Fiber, shell, stone, feathers, or animal parts such as bone or fur.)

3: How are your 2 or 3 artifacts or objects related or connected to one another? Why do they go together? What purpose do they serve together? Think about how they were made, found, traded, or used.

Sample interactive questions (2-3)

What is an archaeologist – and what do they do?

What do your objects or artifacts tell you about how the First Californians lived?

What does it mean that “nature was the store” of the First Californians?

What are some of the different ways they obtained their tools, food, clothing, and other resources? (Gathered, found, hunted, made, and traded)

What evidence do you see in your artifacts or objects that makes you think the First Californians were resourceful or smart?

What skills did they have to make the objects you have in front of you?

How did the First Californians make sure that their people would continue to have food and other resources in the future?

Conclusion/Review/Reflection

1st Californians used only what they needed, repurposed and reused materials, and took care of the environment, so that “nature’s store” would continue to be available to future generations of families.

Date approved by the Education Committee: _____

Think Like an Archaeologist! **(Small Group Task for First Californians)**

Timing: 20 minutes; can be done in 15 minutes if reduce Introduction and Wrap-Up. Placement of the station, except for the first round, should directly follow children’s experience in the gallery. Docent should ask team member touring the gallery to include the bone awl and abalone fish hook in his/her presentation. *Students will be asked to “think like an archaeologist” and to work together to solve a **puzzle** related to their artifacts.*

SET UP

Artifacts from the First Californians cart will be placed in sets of 2 or 3 on red plastic plates. The plates will be placed on 9 x 12 foam pads spaced on the floor in a semi-circle around the docent(s). The plates/objects will then be covered by a sheet of paper so students cannot see the objects. The paper will have the following title and questions.

Think Like an Archaeologist!

1. What are your objects or artifacts?
2. From what are they made? (Fiber, shell, stone, feathers, or animal parts such as bone or fur.)
3. How are your 2 or 3 objects or artifacts related? Why do they go together? What purpose do they serve together? Think about how they were made, found, traded, or used.

IDEAS FOR SETS OF OBJECTS/ARTIFACTS

- Acorns, bone awl, burden basket
- Stick, arrowshaft straightener, arrow head(s)
- Abalone shell, abalone fish hook, mussel shell

- String of dentalia shells, block of soapstone/steatite, obsidian
- Deer hoof, deer hoof rattle, turtle rattle
- Soap root brush, picture of soap root plant

Paper with questions:

Students should be lined up as they enter the area. Their teacher or a docent should assign them places to sit - in twos or threes – behind each set of objects. (Two children for two objects, three children for three objects). *Ask them, please, not to touch the papers or objects/artifacts until you’ve told them to go ahead.*

INTRODUCTION

Good morning boys and girls! Today you are visiting the Bowers Museum to learn more about the original native people – the First Californians – when they lived in our area before nonnative people primarily from Europe (Spain) or Mexico moved in and changed their lives forever.

First, tell me something you already know about the First Californians? What do you remember from school or the gallery at the Bowers? *(Students provide answers.)*

Good! What you know will help you with this activity, “Think Like an Archaeologist.” All of you are going to be archaeologists so you can explore more about the First Californians! *What is an archaeologist?* It’s a person who studies people from long ago and discovers how they lived based on artifacts that they have left behind. The artifacts or cultural objects you’ll see (or saw) in the First Californians gallery are primarily made of fiber, shell, stone, feathers or other animal parts such as bone or fur. They were either **gathered (or found), made, or traded** by the First Californians. I think you know what shell, stone, and feathers are, *but what is fiber?* It comes from plants – grasses, bark, leaves; red fern, yucca, saw grass, devil’s claw, willow, bracken fern.

TASK INSTRUCTIONS

Just as you saw in the gallery, the artifacts in front of you are also made of fiber, shell, stone, feather, or other animal parts such as bone and fur. You’re going to pretend you are archaeologists who have discovered the objects or artifacts you’ve been given. Think of them as a puzzle that you need to solve!

Working with your partner(s), you have to figure out the answers to 3 questions:

1: First, you will identify what your objects or artifacts are.

2: Next, decide whether they are made from fiber, shell, stone, feathers, or other animal parts such as bone or fur.

3: Third, how are your artifacts/objects related or connected to one another? Why do they go together? What purpose do they serve together? Think about how they were made, found, traded, or used.

Demonstration

Before you begin, let’s work together on an example so you’ll know exactly what to do: Docent presents 2 or 3 artifacts/objects: acorns, basket, and a natural flat stone.

What are these objects or artifacts? Acorns, basket, and a stone

What are they made of? (fiber, shell, stone, feathers) An acorn has a shell that holds a nut that was an important food for First Californians. The basket is made from grasses or fiber. The stone is a tool made from natural stone.

How do the acorns, basket, and stone belong together? One clue is how they are used. The basket holds the acorns. The stone is used to break open the shell of the acorn to release the nut. Later, after the nuts have dried, a stone will also be used to pound the acorn nut to make mush or food. Together, the 3 objects are used in the process of gathering and preparing food for the First Californians.

Students Work Together in Their Small Groups

Now it's your turn to work with your partner. **Be sure and handle your objects/artifacts gently and carefully.** Give students 4-5 minutes to explore their objects and talk in their small groups. It is helpful if the docent(s) interact(s) with each group of students, asking them questions, and supporting their discoveries.

STUDENTS SHARE THEIR FINDINGS AND IDEAS

Okay, archaeologists, now it's time to share your discoveries! Each group of 2 or 3 students will **stand up, demonstrate, and share** what they've discovered about their artifacts or objects. With 10 students, 4 or 5 groups will take turns reporting back. If students are having trouble identifying their artifacts and their relationships, the docent may provide additional clues. Children in other groups may also have ideas.

WRAP-UP

- *Name the types of materials you learned about today?* Fiber, shell, stone, feathers, bone, and fur.
- *What have you learned about the First Californians based on your objects or artifacts?*
 - Food was obtained through hunting, fishing, and gathering (berries, nuts)
 - Tools were made from bones (e.g., bone awl) and stones (obsidian, steatite, natural stone)
 - Baskets, made from grasses, were used for many purposes
 - They engaged in trade, sometimes using shells for "money"
 - They had ceremonies and created musical instruments
- *What evidence do you see in your artifacts or objects that makes you think the First Californians were resourceful and smart?*
- *What does it mean that "nature was the store" of the First Californians?* Nature provided everything they needed: food, shelter, and clothing – as well as their tools and even music.
- *How did the First Californians make sure that their people would continue to have food and other resources in the future?* They used only what they needed and took care of the land and resources in their environment.

Thank you for being great archaeologists today! I enjoyed learning from you.

ANSWER SHEET

SETS OF OBJECTS: RELATIONSHIPS

1. Acorns, bone awl, burden basket

Relationships: **Acorns** were gathered in a **burden basket** (students demonstrate). The **bone awl** was used to remove the nut from the acorn shell after it was broken open. The awl was also used in making baskets. *More information:* Acorns were a primary source of food.

2. Stick, arrowshaft straightener, arrow head(s)

Relationships: A stick of wood or plant stem was straightened in the stone (steatite) **arrowshaft straightener** so it could be used as an arrow (with a bow and arrow). An **arrow head** was attached to the tip for hunting. Feathers were attached to the opposite end to also help the arrow fly straight.

More information: The arrowshaft straightener was heated. Sticks or plant stems were soaked in water and then run back and forth through the groove of the straightener. What would happen if the arrow was not straight?

3. Abalone shell, abalone fish hook, mussel shell

Relationships: **Fish hooks** were made from the inside surface of **abalone shells** as a way to catch fish. The shells were also used as bowls. The **mussel shell** could be used to scoop food from the bowl.

More information: The First Californians collected abalone/shells from the sides of rocks in the ocean. The fish hook's iridescent colors would flash in the water to attract fish.

Abalone was a source of food; it was pounded in a stone mortar to tenderize the meat.

4. String of dentalia shells, block of soapstone/steatite, obsidian

Relationships: **Strings of dentalia shells** were used as "money" to trade for other goods.

Soapstone/steatite from Santa Catalina Island and the Channel Islands was an especially valued trade good. Obsidian from the mountains could be carved to form a sharp edge – for cutting and scraping, and making arrowheads and spearheads. (Use the map of the California coastline to illustrate place and distance so students can appreciate concept of trade.)

More information: The soapstone could be carved into a variety of artifacts such as cups, bowls, animal effigies, pipes and fancy beads. Large pieces were made into cooking pots that could be heated over a fire. Clam shells were the most used currency among First Californians.

5. Deer hoof, deer hoof rattle, turtle rattle

Relationships: Two of the artifacts are **rattles**. One is made from deer hoofs (actually toenails) while the other is made from a turtle shell. The deer leg/hoof has fur. Rattles were a form of music and could be used in ceremonies or rituals. (Use the photo of the Pomo wearing feathers and playing a flute to illustrate music and ceremony.)

6. Soap root brush, picture of a soap root plant

Relationships: **Soap root brushes** were made from the **soap root plant**. The brush was used to clean baskets, brush hair, or sweep up acorn flour during the pounding process.

More information: The curved fibers that surrounded the bulb in the soap root plant were removed and dried in the sun. The fibers were tightly tied together to make a brush. The bulb was cooked to make a thick paste that would hold the fibers together. The bulb was also cooked for food.