

Activity #1
The Archaeology of Me

Education Level: Grades K-12; college

Time to Complete: 30 minutes in class

Intended Outcomes:

- Students will learn about material culture and what it says about the people who make, own, or use it.

Concepts and Skills:

- Descriptive writing
- Classifying
- Drawing
- Linking observations to prior knowledge and experience
- Interpreting evidence to draw a conclusion

Materials:

- Paper or plastic bags handed out to the students the day before.
- Students will need to take their bag home, fill it with five items or “artifacts” that relate to who they are, and bring it back to school for the activity. Students should not label the bags.
- Laboratory sheets to record information (samples are provided at the end of this activity; one sample is intended for use with younger children, the other for older children)
- Pencils.

Introduction:

- The goal of this activity is to enhance students’ understanding of a material culture and how archaeologists use their knowledge of the material culture of past peoples to interpret how past peoples lived.
- Students also will find that their own interpretations might not always be correct. Archaeologists deal with the same difficulties. Archaeologists may not be correct in their interpretations of particular past peoples, but as they continue to gather more data they learn from their mistakes, reevaluate their interpretations, and build a better understanding of past cultures.

Instructions:

- The teacher should hand out identical bags to each student. Have each student fill the bag with five things that they feel best represent who they are. They are not to put their name on the bag.
- In class, students exchange bags in such a way that no one knows whose bag they have.
- Each student then examines the items in the bag and on the laboratory sheet draws, describes, and identifies what each item is (or what they think it is).
- After analyzing all the items in the bag, ask each student to make an assessment of what the person is like based on their analysis of the personal material culture.
- Ask each student to identify the individual that belongs to the items.
- Some examples:
 1. *A video tape cover:* This item shows several things – the person owns or has access to a VCR, a television, electricity, and probably lives in a house or apartment. You can also identify what types of movies this person likes.

2. *An earring*: This item tells us that the person has pierced ears and may be a good clue to the identity of that person.
3. *A hair clip*: This item reveals that the owner not only likes to wear his/her hair back in a certain style, but also that he/she has enough hair to do so. The obvious conclusion is that the owner is a female, though today that is not necessarily true.
4. *A guitar pick*: This item indicates that the person plays a musical instrument.
5. *A soccer shoe*: This item reveals something about the person's athletic interests. Depending on how worn the shoe is, it may provide hints about how long the person has played soccer.
6. *A glass horse*: This object may indicate that the person is interested in horses, or it may tell us that the person likes to collect fragile objects.

Artifact Analysis Sheet

Artifact:	
Sketch It. Include as much detail as possible.	Describe It. Shape: Size: Color: Texture: Material: Decoration:
Explain It. Who used the artifact? How old is the artifact? How was the artifact used?	Analyze Its Meaning. What does it tell us about the people who used it?

Activity #2
Introduction to Context

Education Level: Grades 4-8

Time to Complete: 30-60 minutes

Intended Outcomes:

- Students will learn what context is and how to interpret material culture based on its context.

Concepts and Skills:

- Critical thinking
- Classifying
- Visualizing
- Linking observations to prior knowledge and experience
- Interpreting evidence to draw a conclusion

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils

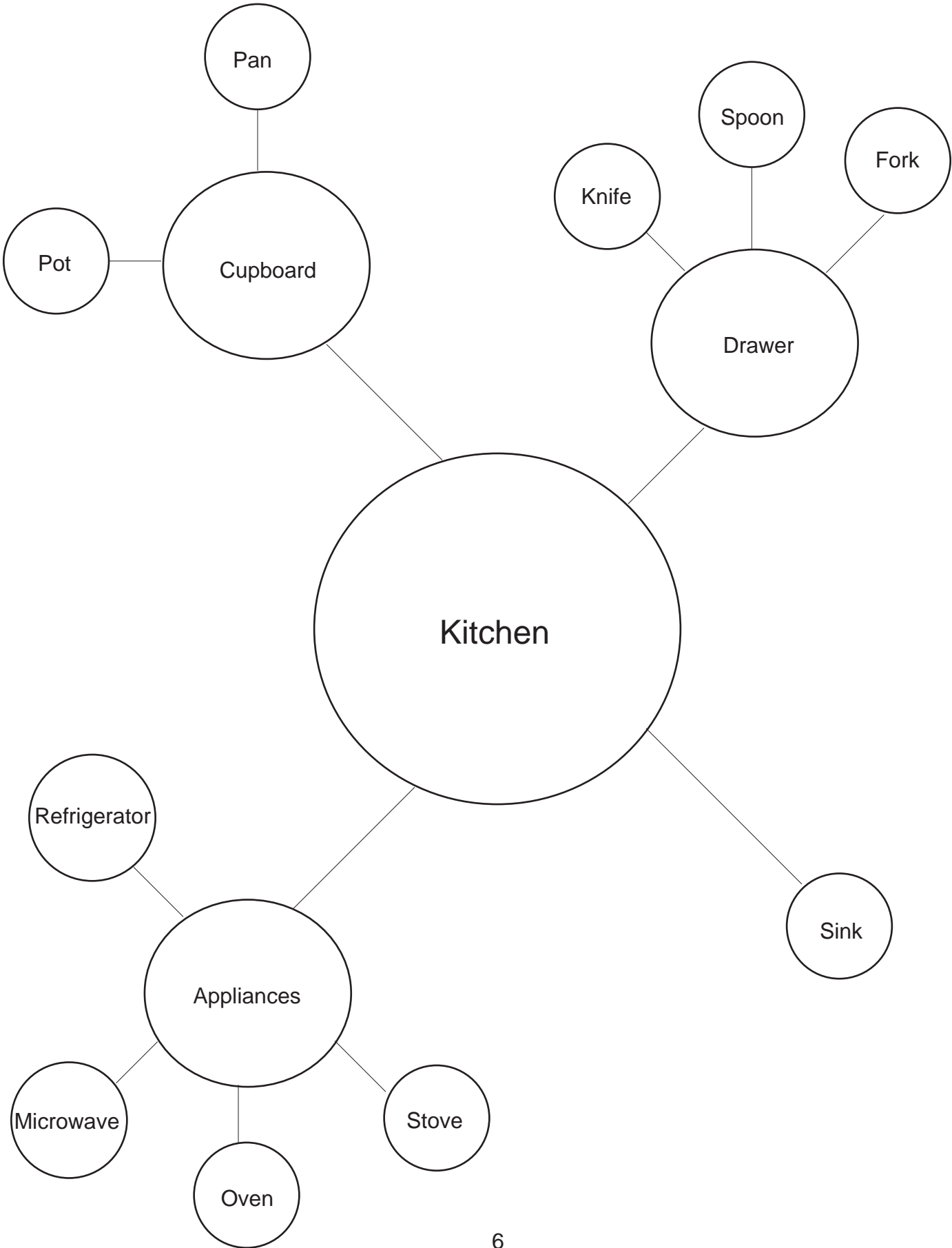
Introduction:

- Much of what archaeologists can learn from artifacts relates to where they were located when they were found and with what other artifacts and features they were associated. In other words, archaeologists rely on an artifact's *context* to reveal information about the people who made, used, and deposited it. If an artifact is not found in its original context, then an archaeologist can tell little about the people who made it.
- The goal of this activity is to introduce students to the concept of *context* using everyday places and items with which they are familiar (perhaps how future archaeologists might think of them).

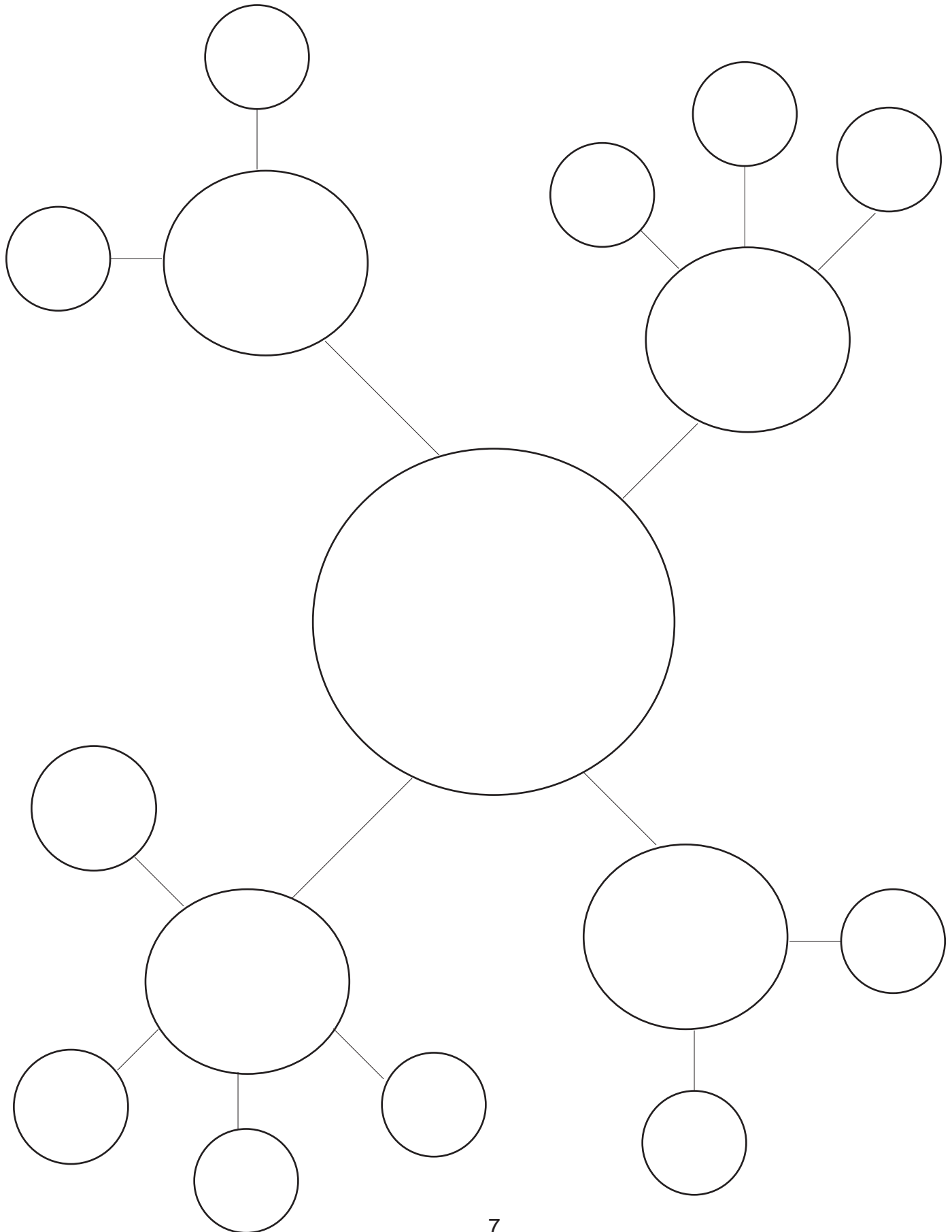
Instructions:

- This activity can be done by individual students in small groups.
- Ask students to think of a particular type of room or building (such as a hospital, school, house, science classroom, bedroom, etc.).
- Instruct students to write down on a piece of paper at least fifteen items that would be found in that building or room (**see the kitchen example on the next page**).
- Ask students to exchange lists and determine what building or room the other person or group had in mind.
- Discuss the results.
 1. Ask the students if they were able to correctly identify the building or room.
 2. Select one of the lists and write the items on the board. One-by-one, erase the items and ask the students if they can still identify the building or room. Or, take the opposite approach and write the items on the board one at a time. Ask the students to identify the building or room that the item(s) came from. As more and more items are added to the list, the context will become clearer.
 3. When students know only one of the items, how easy is it to identify the context of the object?

Example of semantic map showing possible relationships between items in the kitchen.



Handout: Semantic Map for looking at possible relationships between items or concepts.



Activity #3
More Context

Education Level: Grades 6-8

Time to Complete: 30-60 minutes

Intended Outcomes:

- Students will learn how archaeologists use context to help them interpret past cultures.

Concepts and Skills:

- Reading comprehension
- Critical thinking
- Classifying
- Visualizing
- Interpreting evidence to draw a conclusion
- Cultural diversity

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Handouts

Introduction:

- Much of what archaeologists can learn from artifacts relates to where they were located when they were found and with what other artifacts and features they were associated. In other words, archaeologists rely on an artifact's *context* to reveal information about the people who made, used, and deposited it. If an artifact is not found in its original context, then an archaeologist can tell little about the people who made it.
- Activity #2 introduced the concept of *context* by allowing students to understand it in terms of their own present-day culture. The goal of this activity is to allow students to apply what they have learned about *context* to their interpretations of two scenarios that are commonly encountered by archaeologists.

Instructions:

- Ask the students to think like an archaeologist.
- The same artifact is described in two different contexts (**see handout on next page**). Have the students read the scenarios and answer the questions in the discussion section.
- Discuss the students' answers in class.

Student Instructions:

- Read the following scenarios and answer the discussion questions in the space provided.

Scenario 1: Ceramic bowl with a prehistoric burial	Scenario 2: Ceramic bowl in the remains of a prehistoric house
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Scenario 1: A ceramic bowl was found next to a burial of a prehistoric woman in an archaeological site along the Muddy River in Marathon County. She was also buried with a necklace of shell and copper beads, a shell pendant, and a sewing kit. Archaeologists have carefully excavated other burials from this site where people were not buried with any of these items.

□ **Discussion Questions:**

1. What was the bowl used for?

2. Does the bowl have special meaning?

3. Where did the woman in this burial live?

4. What else can we tell about the woman who was buried with these items?

Scenario 2: A ceramic bowl was found lying on the floor of a house at an archaeological site near the Blue River in Oslow County. Most of the material used to build the house has rotted away through time. There is evidence of a fire pit (called a *hearth*) in the center of the house. Charred deer bone was found within the ashes of this fire pit. Archaeologists also found the remains of charred beans inside the ceramic bowl.

□ **Discussion Questions:**

1. What was the bowl used for?

2. Where did the people live who made and used the bowl?

3. What was the diet of the people who lived in this house?

4. What else can we tell about the people who lived in this house?

Possible Answers for the Discussion questions:

Scenario 1:

1. Ritual; ceremony; cooking; getting water; storing food
2. The fact that the bowl was found in the context of a burial suggests that it did have special meaning. People have long been known to bury items of special meanings with their loved ones.
3. Near the Muddy River in Marathon County (a fictional location).
4. Based on the fact that this woman was buried with numerous “special” items that were not found in any of the other burials, it is likely that she was of some importance to her community. She may have been respected for her sewing abilities. She may have also been respected for holding some position of authority. The copper beads on her necklace are not found in Kentucky; they were brought here through trade and would have been considered to be items of wealth. The shell beads and pendant may be made of freshwater mussel shell, locally available in Kentucky, or they may be made of marine shell that was brought to Kentucky through trade.

Scenario 2:

1. Cooking food; storing beans.
2. Near the Blue River in Oslow County (a fictional location).
3. Their diet at least included beans and deer.
4. They used a hearth for cooking and to heat the house. Based on what is left of the house, archaeologists may be able to tell how big it was and maybe how many people would have lived in it. They may also be able to tell what materials were used to build the house. Charcoal or burned bone from the hearth can be dated to find out when people were living in the house.

Activity #4 **Timeline**

Education Level: Grades 4-8

Time to Complete: 1 hour

Intended Outcomes:

- Students will learn to put Kentucky' past into context with major historical events in other parts of the world.

Concepts and Skills:

- Historical perspective
- Cultural diversity
- Geography
- Accessing sources for information
- Reading
- Comparing and contrasting information

Materials:

- Reference material like encyclopedias, history books, the internet, or other sources that offer timelines of major events of the past.
- Paper
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers

Introduction:

- In the Teachers Pack, calendar dates are given for the major time periods in Kentucky's past (summarized below). As you have learned, many interesting events and cultures make up Kentucky's prehistory and history. However, while people here were hunting mastodons, inventing pottery, or making contact with European settlers, people in other parts of the world were erecting massive stone monuments, inventing writing, or building an empire.
 - **Paleoindian Period:** ca. 12,500 – 8,500 B.C.
 - **Archaic Period:** ca. 8,500 – 1,000 B.C.
 - **Woodland Period:** ca. 1,000 B.C. – A.D. 900
(includes **Adena**, 500 B.C. – A.D. 600)
 - **Late Prehistoric:** ca. A.D. 900 – 1650
(includes **Mississippian** and **Fort Ancient**)
- The goal of this activity is to help the student put Kentucky's past into context with major historical events in other parts of the world.

Instructions:

- Pass the Timeline Worksheet out to students.
- Review the Timeline of Kentucky's past with the students.
- This worksheet has a series of questions. To answer the questions, the students will have to do research in encyclopedias, history books, the internet, or other sources that offer timelines of major historical events in the world.
- After they have answered the questions, ask the students to prepare their own timelines that incorporate events from Kentucky's past and events from around the world.

Timeline Worksheet

Instructions: Select the best answer to the following questions. Key words are italicized to help you decide what to look up in your reference material.

Questions:

1. Which of the following events were taking place around the same time that Paleoindians were hunting and gathering wild animals and foods across Kentucky's landscape during the end of the last glacial period?
 - a. The *Roman Empire* was expanding
 - b. *Magdalenians* were creating paintings and engravings in caves, such as *Lascaux* in southwestern France
 - c. *Stonehenge* was built at *Avebury* in Wiltshire, England
 - d. *Pyramids* were built at *Giza* in Egypt
2. Which of the following did **not** happen while Archaic peoples were hunting and gathering wild foods, inventing the atlatl (spearthrower), and making decorated bone hairpins?
 - a. *Alphabetic writing* was invented in several places around the world, like China, Minos, Mycenaea, and Mesopotamia
 - b. The commoners overthrew the king and began the *French Revolution*
 - c. *Pyramids* were built at *Giza* in Egypt
 - d. *Stonehenge* was built at *Avebury* in Wiltshire, England
3. The Woodland Adena peoples are distinctive for their ceremonial earthworks, burial practices, long-distance trade networks, and personal ornaments or jewelry. Which of the following did **not** take place during the same time that Adena peoples were living in Kentucky?
 - a. The *Pyramid of the Sun* was an important ceremonial center at *Teotihuacan* in Mexico
 - b. *Petra*, known for its great rock-cut temples, was a major *Roman* provincial city in the *Levant* region.
 - c. The *Han Dynasty* was in power in *China*
 - d. Large, stone *Olmec* heads were carved by master craftspeople in *Central America*
4. During Kentucky's Late Prehistoric Period, Mississippian and Fort Ancient peoples were living in villages, growing corn, and building different kinds of mounds. Which of the following took place during this same time period?
 - a. The *Incas* ruled much of western *South America*
 - b. *Neanderthals* were living in Eastern Europe
 - c. *Ptolemy of Alexandria*, the great geographer, made a map of the known world using latitudes and longitudes
 - d. The *Egyptians* invented paper (*papyrus*)

5. European settlers first made contact with Native peoples of Kentucky around AD 1650. What other event occurred at about this same time?
- The *Industrial Revolution* in western Europe
 - Christopher Columbus* set sail from Spain to the New World
 - A new religion, known as *Buddhism*, began in the Far East
 - Marco Polo* returned to Venice after his trip to the *Orient*
6. What significant event took place during the first two decades of the twentieth century when miners were living in the town of Jenkins, Kentucky?
- The *French Revolution*
 - Captain Cook* discovered the island chain that is now the state of *Hawaii*
 - World War I*
 - Anthropologist *Margaret Mead* wrote her first major cultural study of *Samoans*, island peoples of the South Pacific

Answers to questions in Activity #3

1 (b)

2 (b)

3 (d)

4 (a)

5 (d)

6 (c)

Literature Sources

Some of these sources provide additional activities that can be used in the classroom.

Darst, Stephanie and David Pollack, editors

1994 *Native Peoples, Continuing Lifeways: The Native American Cultural Project*. Frankfort: Kentucky Heritage Council.

(*note: This teacher resource packet should be available in every primary and secondary public school library in Kentucky. We have found, however, that some librarians and teachers have not been able to locate it. If you cannot find this in your school library, please contact the Kentucky Heritage Council at (502)564-6661 or A. Gwynn Henderson, educational coordinator for the Kentucky Archaeological Survey, at (606)257-1919.)

Henderson, A. Gwynn

1992 *Kentuckians Before Boone*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Smith, Shelley J., Jeanne M. Moe, Kelly A. Letts, Danielle M. Paterson

1993 *Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades*. Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

(No author listed)

1997 *Archaeology: Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge Series*.