



Examining Pottery with Scope-On-A-Rope

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Adventures in Archaeology

OBJECTIVES

- To use Scope-On-A-Rope to heighten students' senses, hone their observation skills, and strengthen concepts such as magnification and scale.
- For students to gain an understanding of multicultural perspectives; to understand the change in cultures over time; to appreciate the history of peoples in Louisiana

BACKGROUND

Native-Americans have inhabited Louisiana for at least the last 12,500 years. During most of this time, cooking and food storage was accomplished without pottery. Although pottery was being made by at least 5,500 years ago in Florida and South Carolina, it was not until around 1,000 B.C. (or 3,000 years ago) that the Native-Americans of Louisiana began to extensively make and use pottery. **Archaeologists** study remains of past peoples, such as **pottery sherds** (broken pieces of pottery), in hopes to learn more about the history of our ancestors. Pottery was a great invention of Native Americans that improved food storage. Pots had covers to keep out animals, rain, and other environmental elements. Pottery was also used for new cooking techniques.



One aspect of pottery that archaeologists examine is the **temper**. Temper is any material that is added to clay so that a vessel, made from the clay, doesn't shrink while it dries or explodes when it is heated. In general, temper makes a piece of pottery last longer. Archaeologists look at temper, as well as other aspects of pottery, to determine the spread of technology, relations between pre-historic cultures, and as a marker of time change.



The three main types of tempers used by Native-Americans in Louisiana were plant fibers (such as Spanish moss), grog (which was made by finely grinding up fired clay or broken pieces of pottery), and finely-ground shell. It is generally thought that fiber tempered pottery is the oldest, followed by grog tempered pottery, and last was shell tempered pottery. Grog temper was the Native American's way of recycling used materials. Even people living 3,000 years ago appreciated the need to recycle their waste!

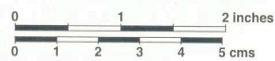
MATERIALS NEEDED

Scope-On-A-Rope*
Pottery samples*
Copies of "Pottery Worksheet" (attached)

*The Scope-On-A-Rope and miscellaneous pottery sherds can be borrowed from LSU.

ACTIVITY

1. After reviewing a little background information with your students about archaeology and Native American pottery, hand out samples of pottery for students to examine. What do you think it's made of? What does it feel/look like? Can you figure out which side was the outside of the container? Are there any markings on it? How did the Native Americans use this pottery?
2. Make sure each student has a copy of the "pottery worksheet". Have students draw the outside of a sherd in the first box provided. They can choose to draw the piece they found the most interesting. Be sure to include any patterns observed!
3. Use the 30x lens of SOAR to examine the outside and inside of the pottery sherds. What do you see? Make sure to look at the edges of the sherds to see what it is made of. Take a snap shot by pressing the *REC* button, and view by pressing the *PLAY* button.
4. Have students draw the close-up view of the pottery in the second box provided on the worksheet. Encourage them to really look at the image and draw as much detail as they can. What does you see? Can you tell what it was made of?
5. Review the three types of temper. Each type looks different under a microscope. For instance, one vary rarely ever finds a piece of Spanish moss, instead we see the burnt out vesicles where the Spanish moss was. Grog looks like little, gray/brown, rectangular bits of dirt embedded in the clay, and shell looks like little platy, rectangular white flecks.



Fiber-tempered Sherd
(look for "tunnels" in the clay
or burnt areas where
Spanish moss used to be)



Grog-tempered Sherd
(look for large graybrown
objects imbedded in the
clay, like small rocks)



Shell-tempered Sherd
(look for plate-like,
rectangular white flecks
embedded in the clay)

6. Archaeologists also attempt to reconstruct pottery vessels from the sherds they find. In the last box on the "pottery worksheet", have students draw what they think the whole vessel may have looked like. Creativity here should be encouraged!

LOUISIANA GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	6 th	8 th
Science As Inquiry	4, 10	5, 11	6, 12	6, 15	7, 17	29	29
Social Studies	18	32, 33	35, 46	49, 52	62	9	9, 75

ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS

ELA: Read a book to your class about Native Americans in Louisiana. Have students write a story as if they were living 3,000 years ago. What type of pottery did they make?

Writing GLE's = K: 20, 24-25; Gr. 1: 26, 29; Gr. 2: 21, 24; Gr. 3: 22, 24; Gr. 4: 20, 23; Gr. 5: 18, 21

ART: Have your students create a piece of pottery inspired by one sherd they examined in class. What do they think the rest of the container looked like? They can sculpt with clay or use other methods in the creation process. **Visual Art Standards** = VA-CE-E1 & E5

Websites for additional information:

<http://www.uark.edu/campus-resources/archinfo/> (archaeology info and teaching materials)
<http://crt.state.la.us/archaeology/LAPREHIS/lapre.htm> (Louisiana Prehistory)



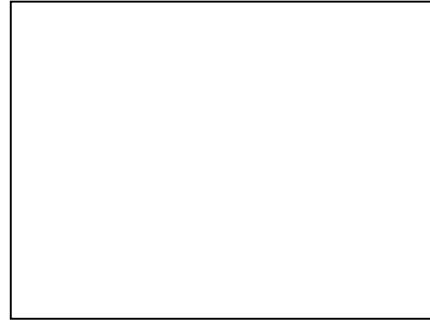
Pottery sherds and stone points from Avoyelles Parish, LA, 400-1100 A.D. (taken from *LA Prehistory* – see website above)

Name _____

Date _____

Pottery Worksheet

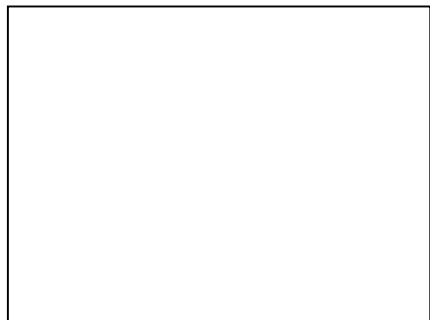
Choose one pottery sherd and draw what it looks like.



Draw what this same piece looks like when magnified (30x lens).



Draw what you think the whole pot would have looked like.



What is the pottery made of? _____

How could this object have been used by Native Americans?
