



Theme: Archaeology (Grades 6 to 8)

Sub Theme: Native Americans

Pre-Visit Activity #2

Stratigraphy

Overview:

Stratigraphy is the natural or artificial arrangement of layers in the ground. The concept of stratigraphy is the further down into the ground, the farther back in time you are going. This layering can be very helpful in separating and dating the artifacts from different layers found on the site. Based on the soil layers and artifacts found within layers, the archeologist can place a site within a chronological framework.

Objectives:

The students will:

- Work in cooperative groups to create strata in a box using various colors of modeling clay.
- Probe the stratigraphy of the box with a straw for the least intrusive method of examination.
- Locate, identify and measure the different strata.
- Record data through writing and drawing.
- Discuss findings within the group.
- Record their data through writing or drawing.
- Report conclusions to the entire class.

Materials:

- A cardboard shoebox
- Plastic modeling clay – 4-5 colors
- Plastic straws
- Small sharp scissors
- Metric ruler
- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- Crayons/Markers

Procedures:

1. Discuss vocabulary: stratigraphy, layers, and depth.
2. Create a geological structure in the shoe by placing different layers of clay, one top of each other in the box. Varying the thickness of the layers.
3. "Drill" the structure by inserting one plastic straw into the top and push it down all the way to the bottom of the box.
4. Remove the straw. Carefully cut the straw lengthwise, starting at the bottom.
5. Using the ruler, start at the bottom of the straw and measure the thickness of each color of clay.
6. Record, draw and label the findings on paper.
7. Take a second straw and repeat the process on a different location in the box.
8. Optional: These steps can be repeated several times.
9. Cooperative groups discuss the results of this activity to draw conclusions about their findings.
10. Groups discuss their findings, interpretations and conclusions to whole class.