

Artifacts: Finding Clues to the Past

Artifacts are items that have been made or were changed in some way to be used by humans. Anything from pieces of trash to a priceless painting can be considered an artifact. By looking closely at the materials people use, we can learn all sorts of information about their lives such as where they lived, what they ate, what types of clothes they wore, what technologies they used, etc.

Suggestions for analyzing artifacts:

1. When describing an artifact on paper or out loud, start with the general and become more and more specific.
2. Look for clues (words) that will help you do additional research on this topic.
3. If you have difficulty describing something using words, use drawings and diagrams to help document what you see.

Describe your Artifact:

4. What material(s) is it made out of?
5. What color is it ?
6. What is its shape/size?
7. Describe any moving parts.
8. Describe any words, symbols, or other markings.
9. Is there anything else you notice?

Draw conclusions

10. How might this artifact have been created?
11. Why was this artifact created? What was it designed to do?
12. Who might have used this artifact?
13. When and where might this artifact have been used?
14. Is this artifact still used today? If not, what has replaced it?
15. What does the artifact tell us about life in Washington at the time it was created?