



Reconstruct an Ancient Pot #ArchaeologistAtHome Family Activity

Have you ever been to a museum and seen an old pot found by an archaeologist? Did you know that most things archaeologists find are broken and need to be put back together? This is your chance to practice being an archaeologist and put an artifact back together from just small pieces.

An archaeologist is a scientist who uses artifacts to tell a story about the past. They go on digs to find new information and artifacts to bring back to a lab to study. In the lab, they clean the artifacts and put them back together to learn more about what happened in history. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office takes care of many artifacts from across Idaho as well as information about all of Idaho's known archaeological sites and historic buildings to tell the story of Idaho and the past of our state.

Become an #ArchaeologistAtHome by putting an ancient pot back together to learn more about it. Because archaeologists don't always find all the pieces of the past, some pieces of your pot are missing. Try to finish the design that you think someone might have painted on your pot in the past. Take a photo of your reconstructed pot and tag @idahoshpo so that we can see your wonderful designs and the stories of your pots!

What you will need

- 1 Potsherd printout
- 1 Pair of scissors
- 1 Glue stick (tape or liquid glue can be used too)
- 1 Blank piece of paper
- Pencils, crayons, or markers

Instructions

1. Work with an adult to print out the potsherd page and cut out each of the potsherds.
2. Lay out all your potsherds on a flat surface. Do any of them look similar? Match up pieces next to one another. Like the pots you use at home, this pot is round, and the designs connect just like the pictures on a puzzle.
3. Once you have arranged your potsherds into a pot, glue the pieces next to one another on your blank piece of paper. You should have two or three pieces of your pot missing just like archaeologists working in the lab!

4. On your piece of paper, draw in what you think the missing potsherds would have looked like. Do you think the design would be similar or different than what is on the other potsherds? Do you think the pot has any patterns that might have been repeated on your missing potsherds?
5. Tell the story of your pot. When was it made? Who made it? What was it used for? It is important for archaeologists to be able to use artifacts to learn about the past. Answer these important questions on the worksheet or on a piece of scratch paper.
6. Show off your reconstructed pot and its story! You are now an archaeologist!

Activity Vocabulary

Archaeological site: A place where people lived and left objects behind. This can be a place from a long time ago, or from more recently. Some places that our grandparents lived as kids could be archaeological sites now!

Archaeologist: A scientist who studies the past through material evidence and artifacts.

Archaeology: The scientific study of past human cultures through artifacts and sites.

Artifact: An object made, modified, or used by humans. Lots of things can be artifacts, from gold coins to rocks used only a few times to hammer tent stakes into the ground.

Context: The relationship artifacts have to each other as well as the place they were found and the time they were left there.

Reconstruct: To make something look like it did in the past by putting it back together.

The History of Your Artifact

Archaeologists use artifacts to better understand the past. Help your family and everyone else understand the history of your pot by answering the following questions.

1. **When was your pot made? Where was it made?** Was your pot made a long time ago or very recently? It is important for archaeologists to know when something was made and used so that they can put the artifact and what they are learning in the right place in history. This is called context. Without knowing when and where something was made and used, the artifact loses its scientific importance. It becomes just a cool item instead of something to be studied.
2. **Who made the pot?** Was your pot made by the best potter in town or by someone who was just learning how to make pots? Was this person part of any of the groups of people who you have learned about in school?
3. **How did people living in the past use your pot?** Was it used for any certain foods? Was it used only on special occasions or is this one of the pots that were used everyday? Think about the different pots, plates, cups, forks, and knives you use at home, do you use special plates or silverware that are only used for certain things?

