

Context Cards I

Grade Level	Grades 4-6	Duration	50 minutes
Overall Goals of the Lesson	Through a combination of group work and a classroom discussion students will be introduced to the important role context serves at an archaeological site.		
The Ontario Curriculum 2013 Social Studies Grades 1 to 6	Overall Expectations		
	<p>Grade 4 – Strand A A2. Inquiry: Use the social studies inquiry process to investigate ways of life and relationships with the environment in two or more societies (3000 BCE-1500 CE), with an emphasis on aspects of the interrelationship between the environment and life in those societies.</p> <p>Grade 5 – Strand A A2. Inquiry: Use the social studies inquiry process to investigate aspects of the interactions among and between First Nations and Europeans in Canada prior to 1713 from the perspectives of the various groups involved.</p> <p>Grade 6 – Strand A A1. Application: Assess contributions to Canadian identity made by various groups and by various features of Canadian communities and regions. A2. Inquiry: Use the social studies inquiry process to investigate different perspectives on the historical and/or contemporary experience of two or more distinct communities in Canada.</p>		
Required Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Index cards (one per student) • Context Cards – Student Handout 		
Prerequisites	This activity may be done before or after the students have participated in the MOA educational programs.		

Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize the class into groups of 4-5 students. Each group will brainstorm what objects and items are found in a bedroom and record their answers on a sheet of paper. Each group will share their list with the class. The teacher may wish to record the answers on the board. 2. The teacher will explain that objects and items located in any room is a clue left behind by humans that help us determine the use of the room. When this is applied to an archaeological site, the clues left behind are artifacts, and the people who are researching the past are archaeologists.
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Main Activity	<p>The following activity requires students to think like an archaeologist.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide the class into groups of 4-5 and assign each group a different number. Each student will be given an index card. They will write their group number on the back of the index card. 2. Each group will secretly choose a room (i.e., kitchen, library, etc.) and brainstorm what objects make that room unique or the teacher can secretly assign each group a specific room. 3. Each student will write a clue on their index card referring to a different object that is found in that room. This portion of the activity is complete when each group has 4-5 clues or objects written down on their cue cards. 4. Each group will rotate to another station where they will have the challenge of reading the clues written by another group. They will have to determine what room is being described. They will list their conclusions on the student handout. Groups will continue to rotate throughout the classroom until they have visited each station. 5. The class will take up the results. How many groups correctly guessed the rooms being described? What rooms were easily confused with other rooms? Did some clues give away the function of the room? 6. This activity demonstrates that archaeologists are not just in search of artifacts but also in search of the context at an archaeological site. If an archaeologist was to remove an artifact from its location without recording where it was found, the artifact is stripped of its context (i.e., a sink can be found in the kitchen and a bathroom, the context within which it is located will tell the students what purpose the sink held). As archaeologists dig at a site, they are able to preserve an artifact's context by recording in detail the locations of every artifact they have uncovered. If they do not properly record this information, the context will be forever lost, and impossible to recover. <p>*Looking for a challenge for older grades? Remove one index card each time the groups rotate to a new station. Fewer clues will offer this activity the added challenge, until one clue remains. Is it possible to identify the room based upon one clue alone (i.e., a book may be found in a bedroom, classroom, library, etc.).</p>
Follow up Lessons and Activities	<p>This lesson is designed to complement a second lesson, "Context Cards 2." If time is limited, this lesson may be done on its own.</p>

Context Cards

Station Number	What do you think the room is?	Justify your conclusions.
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

