

# Analyzing a Culture — The Story Continues

Length:	30 minutes
School:	FAIR School (Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource School)
Location:	Crystal, Minn.
Grade:	6
Teachers:	Rick Wright, 6th-Grade Teacher Rachael Hoffman-Dachelet, Visual Art
Description:	Students analyze artifacts and create exhibitions.

## About This Program

This program continues the story of the Island Cultures unit. Students tell how they felt when their carefully created culture was “conquered,” and they compare how native peoples must have felt when they were invaded.

Rick Wright introduces the project that will occupy the students after their spring break: each group will receive the remnants of a culture from another classroom and analyze them according to the 10 universals of culture.

We see students analyzing the artifacts they receive, and then preparing a museum exhibit to show what they have figured out. To help them do this, they visit a local museum and work with the visual art teacher on understanding the elements of museum display.

At the end of the program, the teaching team gathers to reflect on the overall unit and discuss ways to improve it in the following year.

## Arts and Non-Arts Standards Addressed in This Program

Standards listed refer to the McREL Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks, a synthesis of national standards in each of the disciplines, found at [www.mcrel.org](http://www.mcrel.org).

### Visual Arts

Standard 4: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

### Language Arts

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

### World History

Standard 1: Understands the biological and cultural processes that shaped the earliest human communities

# Viewing Suggestions

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## Who Should Watch This Program

*Teachers and museum educators*—"Analyzing a Culture — The Story Continues" provides a model for using museums not simply as content, but as form, and will be of value to teachers interested in using archaeology as a way for students to interpret culture.

*Administrators and professional development providers*—This program can be useful in encouraging teachers to make fuller use of community resources.

## Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions.

- What are cultural artifacts? What do artifacts communicate about a culture?
- How do you help students decode and interpret an artifact's symbols?
- What role could the arts play in a unit about the remnants of past civilizations?
- How do museums display artifacts? How does this influence how the artifacts are viewed?
- How do curators arrange exhibits? What information do they include on their display cards?

## Watch the Program

As you watch, note how the task of curating a museum exhibit is used to help students look at artifacts and what they symbolize from multiple perspectives. Also note how the challenge of interpreting ambiguous symbols and deciphering messages with spelling mistakes refocuses students' understanding of the significance of good writing and visual communication skills. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning you see in this unit.

## Reflect on the Program

- How did the museum visit and exhibit project serve to deepen students understanding of culture and artifacts?
- What kinds of preparation do you think preceded the lessons seen in the program to make these activities successful for students?
- How do the culture and resources of this particular school help support the type of instruction shown?
- Which components of the study—social studies, visual arts, theatre, or music—would be most challenging for you and your colleagues to incorporate in an integrated unit?
- What evidence, if any, did you see of the ways students benefited from this unit of study?

# Additional Resources

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Consult some of these resources for more information.

## Books

Carter, Howard, & Mace, A.C. *The Tomb of Tutankhamen: Discovered by the Late Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter: The Annex and Treasury*. London: Duckworth Publishing, September 2000. ISBN: 0715629646

Lipetzky, Jerry *DIG Curriculum*. Fort Atkinson, WI: Interaction Publishers, Inc., DBA Interact, 1998. ISBN: 1-57336-037-6

McIntosh, Jane R. *Eyewitness: Archeology*. New York: DK Publishing, 2000. ISBN: 0789458640

Panchyk, Richard. *Archaeology for Kids: Uncovering the Mysteries of our Past*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2001. ISBN: 1556523955

## Videos

Heinemann, George A. (Executive Producer), & Welles, Orson (Host). (1978) *Tut: The Boy King* [Television Broadcast]. United States: Monterey Home Video. ASIN: 630286996X

Capelle, Ed (Executive Producer), & Neibaur, Bruce (Director). (1998) *Mysteries of Egypt* [Motion Picture]. United States: National Geographic. ASIN: 0792297520

## Web Sites

**ArtsConnectED/Minneapolis Institute of Arts:** Simulated approaches to learning that enliven arts education for teachers and students  
<http://www.artsconnected.org/>

**Metropolitan Museum of Art:** Rich online collections, educational resources, and a timeline of art history  
<http://www.metmuseum.org/home.asp>

**The Ology Website:** An interactive site where students can explore scientific topics including archaeology  
<http://ology.amnh.org/index.html>

# Notes

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