

**Jean-Paul's Daring Adventure:  
Stories From Old Mobile**

## Overview

This lesson introduces students to the archaeological discipline using garbage as an analogy. It requires students to use critical thinking and inference skills. The lesson plan can be used on its own or can be complemented with the *Old Mobile Site Mapping & Analysis* Lesson Plan.

## Objectives

In this lesson, the students will:

1. Gain a clear understanding of the archaeological discipline;
2. Apply critical thinking skills in a garbology activity.

## State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY Grades 3-10
  - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on appropriate topics, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SOCIAL STUDIES Grade 3
  - 13.) Describe prehistoric and historic American Indian cultures, governments, and economics in Alabama.
    - Identifying roles of archaeologists and paleontologists

## Historical Background

This link is to the article *Archaeology 101* on the study of archaeology. This information will be helpful when learning about the discipline and what those that work in this field do.

<http://www.archaeological.org/pdfs/education/Arch101.2.pdf>

## Novel Connection

In the last pages of the graphic novel *Jean-Paul's Daring Adventure*, you see archaeologists digging and finding some artifacts at the site of Old Mobile. Use this as your springboard by asking students what the artifacts listed are made out of? How long do they think these materials last in the archaeological record? And ask them to brainstorm a list of objects that would have been found had someone returned to the site one year later.

## Prior Knowledge

No prior knowledge necessary; students will gain content knowledge as they do the activities.



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## Activities

*Archaeology 101*

Introduce students to the archaeological discipline. You can do so through discussion (refer to the Archaeological Institute of America website (teacher section) for background information) or by showing students Bill Nye the Science Guy Archaeology Episode: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45TwKC08QTg>

- Questions to use during/after video include:
  - What is archaeology?
  - According to Bill, when you find an artifact, should you move it? Why or why not?
  - How can we find out how old something is?
  - How can garbage be used to teach us about the past?

*Garbology Activity*

Before class, the teacher will need to collect a sample of 'clean' garbage. They will need to also create a story that goes along with this garbage. For example, the garbage collection could include a party hat, decorations, popped balloons, candles, cat food can, etc., and students can discern that someone who has a cat had some kind of party. Maybe the party garbage can allow students to tell approximately how old the person is. There are several ways you can conduct this activity. You can simply model the process of analyzing the trash and then have your students do the same with other pieces of garbage in a large group setting; or you can divide the students into groups. You want the students to decide whom this garbage might have belonged to before it became trash. As a closure, the teacher can tell the students a story that he/she has come up with to go along with this trash.

Students need to answer the following questions about the garbage:

- How many people do you think are represented by these objects? Does this garbage collection belong to one or multiple individuals? How can you tell?
- What can you tell about the lives of the people who left this garbage behind? Do any of the objects provide clues to their job, family, hobbies, age, socio-economic status, etc?
- How long do you think these objects will last in the archaeological record? Order them accordingly.
- What other types of things may have been included in this trash but would decompose over time?

## Materials

- "Clean" trash for Garbology Activity
- Internet access and projector with speakers to view Bill Nye video



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### Extra Resources

- Old Mobile Newsletters –  
<http://www.usouthal.edu/archaeology/newsletters.html>
- Website for the Archaeological Institute of America:  
<http://www.archaeological.org/>

