

Now & Then: A Scavenger Hunt

Social studies, language arts

SKILLS.....Knowledge, comprehension, analysis, evaluation

STRATEGIES.....Discussion, brainstorming, inquiry, compare and contrast, writing, analogy

DURATION.....1 class period; 2-hour field trip to Aztec Ruins

CLASS SIZE.....Any; students can work in singles, pairs, or small groups

OBJECTIVES

In their study of Aztec Ruins, students will:

1. Observe and identify artifacts and structures that supported the daily lives of the inhabitants.
2. Compare artifacts and building features of the prehistoric inhabitants to those of people today.
3. Speculate about the relative use and importance of different artifacts and structures.

digging stick: sturdy stick pointed at one end, used for digging holes for the planting seeds.

feature: something made by humans but not easily picked up or transported, such as a wall, firepit, concentration of artifacts, or doorway.

fire drill: artifact used to start fires where a wooden stick was rotated briskly on another piece of wood, creating friction and heat.

firepit or hearth: a stone- or plaster-lined pit used for containing fire.

kiva: room with distinctive features, usually underground, probably for ceremonial use; similar structures are still used by Pueblo people today.

MATERIALS

- “A Scavenger Hunt” WORKSHEET

VOCABULARY

artifact: any object made or used by humans.

awl: animal bone sharpened at one end, used to punch holes in hides and basketry.

cordage: rope or string made from plant fibers twisted together.

deflector: vertical stone slab or masonry wall between the fire and ventilator shaft that deflected incoming air and reflected heat and light.

mano: small stone held in the hand used to grind corn and other substances by rubbing on a larger stone called a metate.

metate: large stone used to grind corn and other substances by rubbing with a smaller stone (mano).

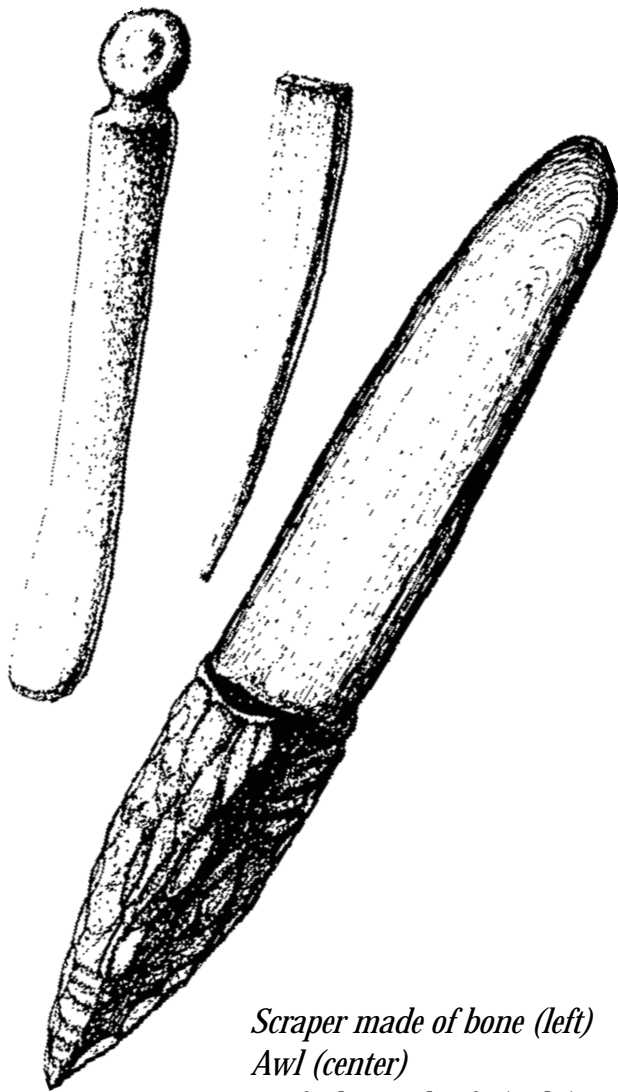
pilaster: low masonry-encased horizontal log or upright masonry pier on a kiva bench.

vault: rectangular sub-floor pit found in kivas; large stone-lined vaults occur in great kivas.

vent: small rectangular opening in a wall, usually placed just below the roof, that allowed passage of air.

ventilator shaft: a tunnel running from the exterior of a kiva to the area of the firepit that allowed fresh air to enter.

yucca: native plant with pointed, fibrous, stiff leaves, used in many ways by Ancestral Puebloans.



Scraper made of bone (left)

Awl (center)

Hafted stone knife (right)

BACKGROUND

Much has changed since the Ancestral Pueblo people lived at Aztec Ruins about 900 years ago. Today we live in an age of computers and technology, plastics and metals, combustible gas-powered engines, and electrically-driven conveniences.

But the Ancestral Pueblo people lived under much different conditions. Lacking the available manufactured, packaged, processed, and preserved goods of today, they instead relied on a vast assortment of raw materials that they gathered and used ingeniously. Despite not having "modern" amenities, they successfully lived in their environment, creating and using the artifacts they needed to survive.

Many of the artifacts we use to accomplish everyday tasks were found in prehistoric times, although some take different forms or are made of different materials. For example, for gardening we use a hoe with a wooden handle and metal end. The Ancestral Pueblo people also used a hoe – but one made with a sharpened stone fastened to a wooden handle. Our needles are slender metal wires pierced with a hole. Their needles were often rodent or bird bones, ground to a point at one end, with an eye pierced through the other. A variation of the needle was the *awl*, made similar to the modern needle but with no eye. Awls were probably used for punching holes in hides or basketry. We use aluminum and stainless-steel pots for cooking; they used ceramic vessels. We use paintbrushes made with a wood or plastic handle and synthetic or animal hair bristles; they used the leaf of a yucca plant, chewed at one end to expose the fibers.

Their shelter also took a different form and used available raw materials. Stone and mud were plentiful, and they traveled to obtain certain trees to construct roofs. At Aztec, the West Ruin was a multi-storied, massive complex of interconnected rooms built around an open plaza. People used the building off and on from the early AD 1100s until about AD 1300, changing and using it in different ways to meet their needs. While at some times it may have been used primarily for administrative or ceremonial purposes, at other times people used it for storage, work areas, latrines, tombs, midden deposits, or, for a small number of people, habitation. In the plaza was a large, semi-subterranean structure called the *great kiva*, which was used for community-wide events. Interspersed throughout the pueblo are specialized rooms called *kivas*, which were probably used for ceremonial purposes.

Some elements, such as doorways and roofs, are similar to ours today, but there are others that we do not have. Kivas and their features are an example. These rooms were frequently round and subterranean, with a central firepit. A ventilator shaft, constructed much like a chimney, allowed fresh air to enter the kiva and feed the firepit. A vertical stone slab or low masonry wall, called a *deflector*, diverted the air entering through the ventilator shaft from rushing over the fire and either extinguishing the fire or allowing it to burn too quickly. Many kivas have a low masonry wall, called a *bench*, encircling the edge. It was probably not used for seating for the occupants, but rather for supporting the pilasters for the roof and/or as a shelf on which to place items.

Archeologists are unable to determine for certain the functions of some of the features in the great kiva. The two large rectangular pits, called vaults, may have been covered with

wooden planks and used as foot drums. They may have been filled with dirt and used for winter germination of plants for spring ceremonies, or have had another ceremonial function. The four stone disks found beneath each pillar provided a good footing, but one under each would have sufficed for that purpose. Why four? The number may relate to spiritual beliefs. The raised stone platform with the circular design on it in the north entrance room may likewise have held significance in spiritual beliefs and practices.

The doorways found throughout the pueblo are smaller than ours today and had no hinged doors to easily cover them. However, on some doorways are horizontal wooden poles where the people could have hung a hide or blanket, or propped a large stone slab to effectively seal the doorway. A doorway that we do not commonly see in our construction today is the corner doorway, which connected rooms diagonally. Because corner doors weakened the overall structure and were more challenging to construct, they may have had special ceremonial significance.

Windows – called *vents* – also were much smaller than ours. The builders lined them up in the same corner of adjoining rooms. This provided ventilation from outside to deep interior rooms.

The Ancestral Pueblo people successfully used the materials available to them to create the artifacts and structures they needed. Upon examination, we find that today we have many artifacts and building features in common with these people, although theirs may look different and use different materials. And even though some of our features and artifacts share the same appearance, their intended functions or significance may not be the same.

SETTING THE STAGE

Review the definition of the word "artifact." Students list on a piece of paper at least ten artifacts that they use in their daily lives. Examples: hairbrush; curling iron; clothes; kitchen appliances, such as toaster, oven, blender or can opener; eyeglasses; pencils; automobile; eating utensils such as plates, cups, and silverware.

Review the definition of the word "feature." Students list at least five features in their homes. Examples: central heating, swamp coolers, carpeting, counter tops, glass on windows, faucets, doors with hinges, wood burning stove, or fireplace.

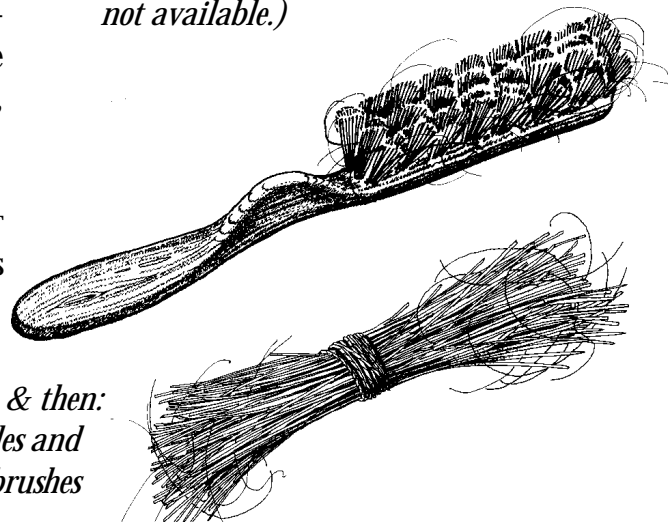
As a group, discuss students' answers from each list. Write responses from both lists on the board without duplicating. Which of these items and features do you think the Aztec Ruins inhabitants had, or had an equivalent for? Circle them.

PROCEDURE

1. Provide BACKGROUND information introducing students to the structures and people of Aztec Ruins. Mention some of the conveniences we enjoy that they did not, such as electricity, plastics, metal, and combustible engines. Nevertheless, the prehistoric inhabitants made tools and artifacts and built their houses from available resources to meet their particular needs, just as we do today.
2. Distribute "A Scavenger Hunt" WORKSHEET to each student. Divide students into pairs or small groups.



*Now & then:
needles and
hairbrushes*



3. Take a field trip to Aztec Ruins and complete the following assignments:
 - For each modern artifact listed on the worksheet, find the artifact in the museum or feature in the West Ruin that is similar. Write the name of the artifact next to each. Some items may not have similar Ancestral Pueblo artifacts or features.
 - List three prehistoric artifacts or building features for which it appears that there are no equivalents in our lives today.
 - Search in the museum and trail (you may need to use the trail guide booklet) for information to answer the remaining questions on the WORKSHEET.
4. Discuss answers from the worksheets. Discuss the following questions:

What artifacts do we have today that the Aztec Ruins inhabitants appear not to have had?

What are some reasons why they did not have them? (Examples: no need, raw materials not available, technology not available.)

NOW & THEN: A SCAVENGER HUNT

Listed are artifacts we use today. Find artifacts in the museum or on the trail that appear to be the Ancestral Pueblo version of today's artifacts. Write the name of that artifact or building feature.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Shoe | 10. Food processor |
| 2. Tupperware container | 11. Arrow |
| 3. Coffee cup | 12. Telephone |
| 4. Doorway | 13. Window |
| 5. Matches or lighter | 14. Bowl |
| 6. Twine | 15. Aluminum ladder |
| 7. Stainless steel knife | 16. Roof |
| 8. Wool blanket | 17. Fireplace |
| 9. Nintendo | 18. Slipper |

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- List three artifacts or building features for which we do not have a good equivalent or version.
 - Name one artifact or raw material found at Aztec Ruins that tells us that these people either traveled or traded to obtain it.
 - Describe an artifact or building feature whose function is unknown for certain.
 - Name one kind of material or artifact that you would expect the people used, but you did not observe or learn about. Give reasons why you think this material or artifact was not here.

CLOSURE

Summarize findings. Which artifacts do you think were most used by the Ancestral Pueblo people? Explain your reasoning. What building features do you think were most important to the inhabitants? Why?

EVALUATION

Evaluation is based on individual activity sheets, and cooperative participation and individual contributions to discussion.

EXTENSIONS

1. Use the trunk of replica artifacts from Aztec Ruins in the classroom or during the field trip to facilitate discussions about artifacts and their functions.
2. Students write a paper about the artifacts and features that are most important in their lives and why.

REFERENCES

Barnett, Franklin, *Dictionary of Prehistoric Indian Artifacts of the American Southwest*, Northland Printing Company, Flagstaff, 1991.

Lister, Robert H. and Florence C., *Aztec Ruins on the Animas Excavated, Preserved, and Interpreted*, Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, Tucson, 1987 second edition.

Aztec Ruins National Monument, Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, Tucson, 1992.

A Trailguide to Aztec Ruins, Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, Tucson, 1994.

Answers to "Now & Then: A Scavenger Hunt" WORKSHEET

1. yucca sandal
2. pot with lid
3. ceramic mug
4. doorway
5. wood fire drill
6. fiber cordage and rope
7. stone knife
8. turkey feather or rabbit fur blanket
9. no equivalent
10. metate and mano
11. stone-tipped wood-and-reed arrow
12. no equivalent
13. vent
14. ceramic bowl
15. wood ladder
16. roof
17. hearth or firepit
18. fiber footwear
19. Answers are highly subjective and can be interpreted variously, but some answers that could be argued include: vault, ventilator shaft, corner doorway, kiva, deflector, digging stick, throwing stick, potrest
20. Vigas made of Douglas fir, spruce, and pine; shells, copper, turquoise, certain pottery, salt, obsidian, scarlet macaw feathers
21. Vault, corner doorway, greenstone on wall, crystals, stone slabs, animal figures, pottery discs, tchamahia, yucca leaf bundle, miniature vessels, etc.
22. Subjective answers could include: horses; sheep; cattle; written records; a range of foods such as chocolate, wheat, various fruits and vegetables such as peaches, apples, apricots, tomatoes, broccoli; public sewage system; furniture such as chairs and tables; metal axes. Various reasons why these things were not here: some, such as certain foods, horses, cattle, and sheep, were not introduced into this area until the Spanish came in 1540; some perishable items like food and plant remains did not survive the centuries; oral traditions most likely replaced written records; technology was not developed for metals, electricity, etc.