Material Evidence and Culture

Location: Archaeology Gallery

Intended grade level: K-7

(Grade 3 Social Science has the strongest curriculum connection, however, the program can be used to highlight the overarching Social Studies inquiry processes in the new curriculum (ask questions, gather, interpret and analyze ideas, and communicate findings and decisions). There are also ways to expand this tour to make connections to grids and mapping.)

Duration: 90 minutes

Objective: This trailhead tour encourages students to explore the actions and choices of the early inhabitants of British Columbia, through the raw materials they used. The Archaeology Gallery will provide a window into the past and offer the opportunity to examine different types of objects and their life histories, and investigate the relationship between archaeology and meaning making. Students will be encouraged to ask questions about the types of evidence archaeology provides, and to look at its limitations.

Student Lunchroom Introduction (15 minutes)

With all trailhead tours, begin by introducing the students to the Museum in the Student Lunchroom. Begin the discussion by asking questions about them; *what are they studying, why are they here at the museum, what are they expecting?*
From there, transition into program specific questions; *what is archaeology? What do archaeologists find? What is a raw material?*

Archaeology is the study of past people using material remains. Archaeologists look for the things that humans left behind to find out about how people lived in the past.

Archaeologists can find artifacts made of stone, minerals, bone, antler, shell and other materials that have signs that past humans used them. Archaeologists also collect soil samples, and animal and plant remains, which can help to tell the story of how past people lived. We can use artifacts, and the raw materials they are made out of, to appreciate past technologies, choices and skills. We can also use raw materials to understand the resources that were available to people in the past.

Raw materials are things found in the world that we can then make into something else. They are often found in nature. For example, the raw material for a t-shirt is typically the cotton plant.

Exploration (45 minutes)

Gallery Orientation (15 minutes)
The purpose for a quick walkthrough of the Archaeology Gallery is to show students and chaperones where they will be exploring during the program. Helpful spots to point out include your meeting place (i.e. lobby) and the washrooms. For younger learners I would suggest limiting your tour just to the archaeology exhibit space; for older students who can be on their own responsibly, you may wish to incorporate the whole First Peoples Gallery.

Gallery Exploration (10 minutes)
After students and chaperones feel more comfortable in the space, encourage an unstructured brief time in the gallery. This can be coordinated with the teacher if needed, if they would prefer to assign small groups or ensure some students are supervised, etc.

Activity Part 1: Understanding a Material (10 minutes)
All together in the large group, present the students with an example of a raw material from the handling collection (do not identify the object, although general categories of rock, bone, or shell may be used if required). Start by describing it as a group and continue to work out what the material is and how you would get it from the environment.

Make sure to go over proper handling procedures. Include directions on holding the artifact with two hands (or in one hand with one hand underneath) and holding the object close to the ground or table in case of accidental dropping.

Activity Part 2: Characteristics of a Material (10 minutes)
Divide the students into smaller groups and present them with another object.

Suggested artifacts:

- metapodial deer bone (Arch 28 and/or Arch 29)
- bird bone (Arch 76)
- antler (Arch 8)
- abalone shell (Arch 67)
- coarse grey rock (Arch 116 for hammer/fire-cracked rock or Arch 41 for core and flake/blade production)
- fine-grained colourful rock (Arch 35)
- jade (Arch 117 - however this artifact is heavy so it may be difficult to use)

In the groups, participants are asked to use their senses to study their raw material and make some observations. Take turns handling the object.
How would you describe it? Is it large or small, rough or smooth, broken or whole, heavy or light, strong or delicate? What is its overall shape? Is the artifact similar to any objects you have seen or used before? What else would you like to know about the object?

Once each group has had time to observe their material, give groups the opportunity to go out into the Archaeology Gallery to hunt for examples of the raw material.

Depending on the amount of time students take with their first object, introduce additional artifacts of different materials to extend the learning. Look for similarities and differences. *Did anything you learned about the first object apply to other artifacts?*

Kinder-Connection!
For younger learners, modify the program slightly by incorporating a focus on (almost) all the senses. Perhaps separate into smaller groups to begin with and hand around an object with their eyes closed. Ask them to try and describe the object without looking at it first. Then go around the circle again for another round. Encourage the small groups to report their findings to the rest of the group.

Ways to Extend the Learning
If students are older, or eager, pose a series of more challenging questions.
What would you do with this type of material? What would you use this material to make? How would you use it? Would you need any other tools or materials to help you make it? Would you need any other tools or materials to use with it?

When students take their object with them to explore the Archaeology Gallery through a material and technological lens, this portion of the tour is largely unguided. Teachers may ask prompting questions to help frame students' thinking.

With your raw material in the gallery, see if you can use the displays to help identify and learn more about the material and its uses.
What questions would you ask to help with identification?

Observe the different ways your raw materials were used in the past.
Thinking about your raw material, what would you choose to make with it? Is it similar to something you found in the gallery; why or why not?

Did you see any artifacts similar to something you would use today?
Did you see any artifacts that you are puzzled by? What questions do you have? How would you look for answers?

Brainstorm some questions you would like to ask the person who made things from your raw material that you can see in the gallery.
Who do you think might make and use each tool?

How do you learn to make things? Why do you choose to make something in a certain way? How do the types of materials you have available effect what you make?

Do you think your raw material was local and easy to get? What can you learn about the local environment (what you can find nearby) from the raw materials? Is there any evidence of materials coming from far away? How can people get things from far away? Do you think people travelled? Do you think people could have traded items?

Are there other types of materials that might have been used in the past? Why are these materials not part of the archaeology display?

Do you think the archaeological artifacts in the gallery were made as they were needed by the person who would use them? Would your answer be the same for all artifacts? What is "mass-production" and large-scale manufacture? What do objects made that way look like?

Additional Activities
Looking through a different lens, have students choose an artifact that interests them and draw it. Archaeologists often draw artifacts to show specific details that are not obvious in photographs. Concepts of scale can also be discussed.

Choose something to make with a raw material. Write or draw step by step instructions to make your object and/or how you would use it. Looking at your step by step instructions, discuss the following archaeological applications:
Would you be able to find any evidence of these steps after time has passed? What pieces might get taken away and used for other things? What pieces might disappear over time?

Archaeological materials can also be related to maps and grids. Ask students to find and write down any letters or numbers they can see on artifacts in the cases. Those numbers and letters help identify where the artifacts are found. There is a grid system for all of Canada. Archaeological sites also use grids and co-ordinates to record the location of artifacts before they are removed from the ground. Artifacts and archaeology can be used to demonstrate different mapping concepts back in the classroom.

Discussion and Conclusion (15 minutes)

Gather together and have each group share an artifact they looked at, what they learned about it, and its relationship to objects found in the gallery. Students could share how they would use the objects. Look for connections between the different artifacts and how you learned about them. Students could act out the steps to make objects with their materials and their uses (this dramatisation could also be carried out back in the classroom). Facilitate a group discussion around any of the questions in Activity Part 2 and Ways to Extend the Learning.

Back in the classroom
Discussion or further research:

- how the objects explored might be used together as part of daily life in the past
- telling stories about why artifacts might be found together
- making and/or using some of the traditional aboriginal objects seen at the RBCM
- grids and mapping in archaeology

Prior to Your Visit

This tour does not require preparation prior to your visit. However, some optional suggestions are provided below to prepare your students and enhance the tour experience.

Ask Some Preliminary Questions

This activity can help students prepare for the visit by encouraging them to think about the themes of materials and technology in a broad sense with familiar objects.

You can choose some objects that are used in your classroom and have a class discussion around one or two objects (e.g. a pencil, a cup) or you can have students bring in an object from home (e.g. a toothbrush).

Then discuss:

- What is this object made of?
- How was it made?
- How do you use it?

Curricular Connections

	Social Studies	
Shared Learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K-10. British Columbia Ministry of Education, Victoria, 2006.	**Society and Culture, page 27** • Provide pictures and examples of local Aboriginal tools (e.g., adz, fish hooks, spears, fishing weirs, traps, fleshing tools, awls, mallets, knives). Display them in a gallery walk. Have students discuss what they think the tool was used for and how it was used, and record their ideas at each gallery station. Poll students to find out which object puzzled them the most. Invite a knowledgeable member of the local Aboriginal community to identify and demonstrate the uses of each tool. (Gr. 2-3) **"Teaching Tip: Use materials that show respect for and understanding of the sophistication and complexities of Aboriginal societies." (Shared Learning, 2006, 27)**	**Economy and Technology, page 28** • Collect a variety of Aboriginal tools (e.g., root digger, fish smoker) for display in the classroom. After a discussion on the making and use of the tools, divide the class into small groups and give each group a tool. Ask them to make an illustration of the tool as it was used. Display the completed work. As part of the project, students produce a short demonstration of the tool's use. (Gr. (K-3) • Define technology and provide students with material describing traditional Aboriginal technologies used locally (e.g., fishing weirs, dugout canoes, fishhooks, nets, bark moose callers, baskets, and hides). Have students choose a technology to research and represent it in a poster illustration that includes answers to the following questions: - Who used it? - How was it used? - When and where was it used? - What was it used for? - Is this technology still in use today? (Gr. 1-3)
B.C. Draft Curriculum (2015) Social Studies Grade 3 https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/social-studies/3	**Curricular Competencies** **Inquiry Processes (Gr. 4-7)** • Ask questions • Gather, interpret and analyze ideas • Communicate findings and decisions **Evidence** • Ask questions and make inferences about the content and features of different types of sources (Gr. 3) **Big Ideas** • Different environmental features present people with different challenges and opportunities. (Gr. 3)	**Content (Gr. 3)** • cultural characteristics and ways of life of indigenous people, including local Aboriginal groups • the impact of the environment on cultural characteristics and ways of life in indigenous societies • aspects of life shared by and common to human cultures and societies, regardless of time and place • cultural and technological accomplishments of global indigenous people, including local Aboriginal cultures • how indigenous societies, including local Aboriginal groups, meet their needs and wants • the role of oral history, stories, and artifacts as evidence about pre-contact Aboriginal cultures