

**Purpose**

Students will be able to classify various kinds of items based on their chronological age. They will analyze the objects discovered and write a story based on their discoveries. Students also are using primary source documents (the book) to further their understanding of the Wheeler’s Daily Life.

**Time:** 60-minute s

**Level: Grade 4-6** Elementary

**Materials**

☐ Fish Tank

☐ Different Colors of Sand

☐ Pottery Shards, dishes, old things and new things

☐ *Sunset of a Farmer*  by Beverly Wheeler Mastrim and Ethel Ohlin Bradford. This can be purchased at the farm or online at <http://sunsetofthefarmer.com/mailform.html>

☐See attachments for other materials for the Indep. Acitvity

**Essential Questions**

* What did you discover about each layer of sand?
* How can you tell which is the oldest and which is the newest?
* Can you predict what you might find in the bottom?

**Reading Standards for Informational Text K-5:**Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text

**Resources:**

http://smithsonianeducation.org/images/educators/lesson\_plan/decoding\_the\_past/DecodingThePast\_lesson2.pdf

**The History of Privees**

**Background**

Can you believe that Henry Wheeler Sr. and Carl Ohlin thought that going to the bathroom in your own home was disgusting. We never stop to think that modern technology and change may be a solution, however it was considered improper to use the restroom near where you sleep and eat. Many of you can probably relate to the Wheelers when you went camping and had to decide if it was worth walking to the outhouse. It wasn’t until the 1930’s that plumbing became more common. “Bathroom tissue of those days was not white, double woven, wrapped on a tube, or perfumed. Just a page torn from last year’s catalog and well crumpled before using,” according to Ethel. Some Privee’s are now Archeological sites. Not only did people use it for going the bathroom; they also discarded old bottles, bullet castings, and a million other things our ancestors wanted out of sight. These reminents tells us much about how they lived back then.

**Activity Procedures**

1. Bury the items in each layer of colored sand. Have the oldest item be in the deepest layer and the more modern items near the top.
2. Put the sand in a fish tank or a clear container so that it is visible to the class for a demonstration

**Modeled Activity**

1. Read the story to the class from the book, Sunset of the Farmer about Privee’s and point out that what is commonly accepted now was previously thought of during that time period.
2. Write the essential questions on the board and do a KWL on the board.
3. Discuss how even a privee can tell us about how people lived during the time of the Wheelers. Also explain that the role of an Archeologist is to tell the story of the past from what was left behind.
4. Have students describe the difference between a historian and an archeologist. Students should conclude that an archaeologist seeks physical evidence (clues) of the past.
5. Then fill the fish tank with various colored layers of sand and objects (oldest in the bottom layer youngest artifact near the top)

**Independent Activity**

See the attached documents. For upper grade elementary use the worksheet from the soil layers. For lower grade elementary students will act out being an archeologist. Both activities are valuable to the core content of social studies and science. As a teacher you could emphasize how erosion affects archeological sites or how archeologist contribute to the ongoing process of discovering history and how people once lived.

**Post Fieldtrip/Extension**What types of artifacts would be left behind by your generation? For example what would we find in their bedroom after 50 years, what things would dissolve over time? Have students make a time capsule for their lives and put in a bottle. What type of artifacts were original to the Wheelers at the farm? How were they preserved or discovered? Is Beverly Wheeler Mastrim’s artwork an artifact or primary source?

*Wheeler Farm Friend*