Activities

The Magic School Bus Shows and Tells

Grades: 1–2, 3–5

Overview

As a way of understanding archaeology, students learn about guessing the use and context of items and materials in a "deposit."

Field Trip Notes

It's the international and Very Important Show-and-Tell Competition, and Arnold and D.A. are representing Ms. Frizzle's class. Arnold brings a webbed hoop, left behind by his great-aunt Arizona Joan, a famous archaeologist, but he has no idea what it is! Using clues from the hoop and from Joan's old journal, the kids make educated guesses about its use. To test their hypotheses, Ms. Frizzle turns the bus into a Supposeatron, a magical device designed to evaluate guesses. Can the kids solve the puzzle before Arnold and D.A. take the stage?
Artifact Detectives
Time: 15+ minutes to make artifact box, 20 minutes for activity
Group Size: 5-6
What artifact did Arnold find in the trunk of his great-aunt Arizona Joan? The Magic School Bus kids test their guesses. Your kids explore how artifacts tell a story.

What You Need
- Shoe box with lid, or paper bag
- Copies of ARTIFACT DETECTIVES page

Talk About It
Ask: If I walked into your room, what could I discover about you from all your things? Would I know as much from just one thing?

What To Do
1) Pass out boxes or bags. Let each group name their team. Write the name on the box.
2) Ask: What are activities and events that occur here? What things do we use for each?
3) Each group chooses an activity privately. Each team member puts an object associated with that activity in the box. If the object is not available, draw it or write its name.
4) Ask each group to pass its box to another group. That group huddles to examine and record the artifact clues on the activity page, then infer the activity.
5) Ask this group to remove one object from box, and put it out of sight. They pass the box, minus one object, to another group.
6) This group tries to guess the activity from the remaining objects. They then remove one object and pass the box to a new group. Continue, with one object removed at each pass, until each group has seen all the boxes.

7) Ask: Were you able to guess the activity from the last boxes you saw? How many clues to the activity did they contain? Why do archaeologists need as many artifact clues as possible?

**Next Step**

On separate paper, ask kids to reprint their “Personal Archaeology” list. Distribute lists randomly. Ask kids to describe the person, and identify him or her, if possible.

Subjects:

*Archaeology, Science, Technology*