

DIG

A simulation of the archaeological reconstruction of a vanished civilization

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PURPOSE

The original simulation DIG written in 1969 has been extensively revised. In DIG your classroom will become an archaeological lab, filled with the heated discussions and questioning of interpretations that characterize the discipline of archaeology. Your students will not just read about archaeology; they will experience archaeology. They will participate in a dig, using the scientific techniques employed by professional archaeologists. Their observations and measurements will be on forms similar to those used by many universities and museums. In addition to experiencing the skills needed by archaeologists, your students will likely realize that archaeology is part of that much larger study of humans called anthropology. Specifically, students will experience the following:

Knowledge

- All people, past and present, have shaped their beliefs and behavior in the face of universal human needs and problems.
- The various elements of any culture are interrelated and cannot be understood without examining the culture as a whole.
- Physical creations (artifacts) of a people reflect many of their beliefs and values.
- The culture of any society is constantly being altered, and a change in one element will effect changes in other elements.
- Art reflects many of the ideas, moods, and beliefs of a culture.
- Individual effort and group success are closely interrelated.
- There are many ways of successfully meeting the needs of individuals and groups.
- Archaeologists (anthropologists) play an important role in our understanding of human history.

Attitudes

- Respect and admiration for the individual capable of creative thinking
- Realization of the importance of individual effort to a successful group activity
- Respect and admiration for creative and skillful craftsmanship
- Appreciation for the complexity and interdependence of the skills and knowledge of physical and social scientists

Skills

- Using the techniques of field archaeology and metric measurements
- Writing accurate descriptions and observations
- Working within a group and/or leading a group
- Preparing a report and making oral presentations to a group
- Using various craft techniques (e.g., drawing and painting)
- Preparing maps and restoring artifacts
- Preparing and filming a video presentation

OVERVIEW - 1

In DIG competing teams create secret cultures. Artifacts are made that reflect these cultures. Each team buries its artifacts for the other team to excavate and reconstruct. A final confrontation reveals the accuracy of each team's reconstruction and analysis.

Phase I: Introduction to Cultures and Artifacts

Students are introduced to the concepts of culture and culture universals (those basic elements that all human societies share). They examine a representative sample of contemporary American artifacts. Going one step further, students next examine the culture of a student-created civilization. By the end of Phase I, students will understand the concept of culture and how specific artifacts can reflect a culture's various elements.

Phase II: Creation of Cultures and Artifacts

The class is divided into two teams which have the challenge of creating complete cultures independent of each other. The geographic setting, the historical time, and the major themes are decided before students are asked to create specific culture universals (government, religion, economics, etc.). The final activity of Phase II is the actual creation of artifacts that represent the culture, ranging from huge murals and secret tombs to perhaps videotapes of strange rituals.

Phase III: Big Dig—Real or Imagined

Each team's artifacts are broken and salted in the ground for excavation—time, weather, and school location permitting. (If not actually placed in the ground, the artifacts are exchanged between teams as if already excavated.) If an actual dig is feasible, excavation of the civilizations then proceeds according to strict archaeological practices, especially in regards to measuring, recording, and storing of the artifacts.

Phase IV: Reconstruction of Artifacts

Back in tile classroom lab, teams now reconstruct the recovered artifacts from the unknown civilization. A Museum Catalog is prepared from which an analysis of the culture of the mysterious civilization is constructed. The final activity in this phase is to complete MUSEUM CARDS for each artifact that explain the supposed function of each object excavated.

Phase V: Final Confrontation

Both teams face each other for the final confrontation. Using their catalog and prepared written reports, team members present their analysis of the excavated civilization. Immediately following, the team that created the civilization presents the correct interpretation of the artifacts. This is followed by a heated discussion about the validity of various artifacts and interpretations. An open house museum display complete with BEFORE and AFTER MUSEUM CARDS is the final activity of this phase.

Phase VI: Debriefing and Evaluation

DIG ends with an oral or written debriefing and evaluation of what students learned while creating and analyzing their two imaginary cultures.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES - 1

DIG can easily be expanded to provide additional activities that fall within the area of anthropology and world history. Here are some suggestions:

1. **Waste Basket Project** Bring in a waste basket of trash and ask the class which universals of our culture are represented. Of course, you can also ask the students to bring trash in, but be prepared for some embarrassing items! Use the CULTURE UNIVERSALS SHEET found in the Student Guide (pp. 8-9). Explain that throughout history, archaeologists have had to analyze civilizations' trash.
2. **Mural Project** If your class is studying specific cultures such as the Mayans, Incas, Aztecs, Egyptians, etc., a classroom mural on butcher-paper can greatly reinforce the concept of culture universals. In addition, it will aid in pointing out the similarities and differences in the cultures being examined. Follow steps such as the following:
 - **Step 1:** Divide the class into groups whose task is to research specific cultures.
 - **Step 2:** Individuals in the group will research specific culture universals (food, clothing, shelter, religion, etc.) of their team's assigned culture.
 - **Step 3:** Research findings are next depicted on the mural. Arrange the spaces on the mural so that the similarities and differences can easily be compared. Here is an example of how you might do this. (Only the first two vertical columns, GOVERNMENT and FOOD, are found in the example below. Other columns should be created for CLOTHING, SHELTER, RELIGION, RECREATION, etc.)

	GOVERNMENT	FOOD
MAYAN		
AZTEC		
INCA		

Depending on the level and ability of the class, depict the universals pictorially as well as with brief written explanations.

*This sample chart is for the regular unit. Alter it as desired.
If for any reason the actual burial and excavation of the artifacts
is not feasible, simply eliminate the activities for Days 11-15.*

UNIT TIME CHART

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
<p>PHASE I</p> <p>Introduction to Culture and Artifacts</p> <p>Read Introduction</p>	<p>Introduction to Culture Universals</p>	<p>PHASE II</p> <p>Creation of Culture and Artifacts</p> <p>Decide on Culture, Time, Setting, and Themes</p>	<p>Creation of Culture and Artifacts</p>	<p>Creation of Universals</p>
DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10
<p>Final Decision on Universals</p>	<p>Creation of Artifact Blueprints</p>	<p>Construction of Artifacts</p>	<p>Construction of Artifacts</p>	<p>Construction of Artifacts</p>
DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14	DAY 15
<p>PHASE III</p> <p>Big Dig—Real or Imagined</p> <p>Burial of Artifacts</p>	<p>Preparation for the Big Dig</p>	<p>Preparation for the Big Dig</p>	<p>The Big Dig</p>	<p>The Big Dig</p>
DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20
<p>PHASE IV</p> <p>Reconstruction of Artifacts</p>	<p>Reconstruction of Artifacts</p>	<p>PHASE V</p> <p>Final Confrontation</p>	<p>Final Confrontation</p>	<p>PHASE VI</p> <p>Debriefing and Evaluation</p> <p>Open House</p>

DAILY DIRECTIONS - 1

PHASE I: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE AND ARTIFACTS

DAY 1

1. Hand out Student Guides and have students immediately turn to pages 6-7. Have them read the directions and write down their guesses about how earthlings use each artifact. (You may want students to write their answers on their own paper.)
2. Ask for student interpretations. Stress how completely different ideas can still be valid interpretations. Make certain students understand what function means in relationship to an artifact.
3. Have everyone read pages 2-5 in the Student Guide in order to get a feeling for what is going to happen during the simulation.
4. Hand out the TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL POINT CHART. Explain to students how they will be graded during this unit.
5. **Homework** Have students complete the Culture Universal assignment on pages 8-9 of the Student Guide. (Distribute copies of these CULTURE UNIVERSALS pages if you do not wish students to write in the Student Guides.)

DAY 2

1. Ask students for examples of how our Culture Universals can be determined by the artifacts shown in the Student Guide (pp 6-7).
2. Stress how elements (universals) of a culture tend to be interrelated.
3. Tell students to turn to page 10 of the Student Guide and follow the directions.
4. Discuss the Specibian culture, being certain the class has seen how the various universals have reflected the civilization's themes. Be certain the mural has been understood, especially the central symbol.
5. Distribute AS #1 (ASSIGNMENT SHEET #1). Go over the model on page 14 of the Student Guide. Prepare students for tomorrow, when they will be split into two groups that will create the secret civilizations.
6. **Homework** Students will complete AS #1.

DAILY DIRECTIONS - 2

PHASE II: CREATION OF CULTURE AND ARTIFACTS

DAY 3

1. Read your team assignments to the class. Explain how you have balanced the teams by sex and ability, keeping in mind that both sides will need leaders, artists, crafts people, etc. Point out the honor involved in your choosing the two Crew Chiefs, persons who are organized, who are able to grasp what is expected, and who are leaders.
2. Divide the teams, sending them to the separate locations decided upon earlier. Explain to both Crew Chiefs that they are to have each person in their team present their ideas for their civilization's background and themes (AS #1). Give each Crew Chief a clean AS#1 sheet. Once everyone in the group has presented his or her ideas, the group should create its secret society and record necessary information on a single AS#1 sheet. The process of coming to consensus will likely continue into Day 4.
3. If possible, go back and forth between groups. A common problem at this point is an initial lack of imagination. Since students find it difficult to create a value system different from one they know or desire, stress that what they create need not be a reflection of their own ethics or idea of Utopia.
4. If ideas come hard, you may have to “prime the pump” by introducing some science fiction, etc. But once students begin using their imaginations and new and exciting ideas begin exploding through the team, your problem becomes one of guiding and directing this creativity toward the specific goals of the culture.
5. It is imperative that ideas not be ridiculed or stifled at this point! The loudest students may be the least creative! It is difficult for students to accept new ideas at first, as you well know. If “unusual” and creative ideas are smothered at this point, one of the great values of DIG will be lost.
6. Determining the geographic setting may present problems. Stress the limitations which physical environment can place upon a society, even though the students will quickly invent a technology that will overcome such a “minor” roadblock.
7. Mention that unusual mutations are welcome as long as the basic concepts of human culture as represented by the CULTURE UNIVERSALS outline are maintained.