

PEEK AT THE PAST

Grades 4 - 6

NJCCCS: 5.1, 5.3, 5.4

Field Trip Overview:

Students will discover how the early settlers lived in the Meadowlands. While in their role as “junior archaeologists” they will uncover and analyze artifacts (some over 100 years old!). This interpretive journey will allow students to identify natural resources from the past and present. During good weather days students will participate in an archaeological dig outside to uncover clues to the mystery of how people lived here in the past. If the weather isn't conducive to being outdoors, then our study will concentrate more on Lenape lore by analyzing some of their written culture and piecing together a clay mystery.

Background Information:

The Hackensack River is not a remarkable river as far as waterways go but it is the lifeline of the Meadowlands salt marshes. Since its formation nearly 15,000 years ago people have lived and prospered on its banks. The native Lenape lived here long before the Dutch and English arrived from across the Atlantic. Many changes have occurred in the area since then changing the landscape and habitat dramatically. For decades the Meadowlands area was used for indiscriminate dumping which led to the slow disappearance of many native species; but thankfully because of human efforts the habitat is much better off now. Through the millennia the human inhabitants have left evidence of their occupation. Archaeological digs have given us the ability to learn how these people lived: what resources they relied heavily on and how they met their needs. This program will allow your students to learn how archaeologists work, what tools they use and what we know now about how the early settlers of this area lived.

Vocabulary:

Archaeologist: Archeologists are anthropologists, meaning they study people, but they are not geologists (who study rocks and minerals) or paleontologists (who study very ancient reptiles); Archeologists look at old things and sites to investigate how people lived in the past

Archaeology: The branch of anthropology that studies prehistoric people and their cultures

Artifact: An object made by a human being, typically an item of cultural or historical interest

Disposable: Designed for or capable of being thrown away after being used or used up

Excavation: The exposure, processing and recording of archaeological remains

Fossil fuels: A natural fuel such as coal or gas, formed in the geological past from the remains of living organisms

Lenape: Native American people in Canada and the United States

Natural resource: Resources which occur naturally in the environment

Non-renewable resource: Natural resource which cannot be reproduced, grown, generated, or used on a scale which can sustain its consumption rate, once depleted there is no more available for future needs

Renewable resource: Any natural resource (as wood or solar energy) that can be replenished naturally with the passage of time

References / Resources:

- [Hackensack Riverkeeper: History](#)
- [Lenni Lenape](#)
- [Lenape Lifeways](#)
- Hitakonanol'laxk. (1994). The Grandfathers Speak: Native American Folk Tales of the Lenape People. Interlink Books. Brooklyn, NY.
- Bierhorst, John. (1995). Mythology of the Lenape: Guide & Texts. The University of Arizona Press. Tucson, AZ.

PEEK AT THE PAST
Pre-Trip Activities

1. Archaeology Webquest

This webquest leads young explorers through a comprehensive journey to discover what an archaeologist is, how and where they work and what artifacts are.

[National Parks Service: Archaeology Webquest](#)

Following up from that you could have your students be interactive archeologists in Historic Jamestowne. Students can “dig, collect, analyze and classify” artifacts that the first colonists used here:

[Historic Jamestowne: Archaeology Module](#)

2. Peanut Butter and Jelly Archaeology

If you can use food in your district to conduct an activity or if you are ready to try converting this food activity into a non-edible version then try out this experiment! Your students will see study stratigraphy (how layers in the ground are formed) and then exchange their own created sites with others who become the archaeologist in charge of excavating this “new site”! Adapt to our New Jersey environment.

[Peanut Butter and Jelly Archaeology](#)

PEEK AT THE PAST
Post-Trip Activities

1. New Jersey History Kids Webquest

Using this webquest, students will learn about the earliest inhabitants of our state. Once online and with the New Jersey map image up, have the students click on the number one (#1) to follow the webquest on the Lenape. They can watch a video on The Lenape Indian Village at Waterloo where they will be introduced to what archaeology is and how archaeologists have tried to understand how the Lenape used to live. A video question sheet is linked to the main "Lenape" page so you can assess the students. You can also teach them an old Lenape game called "Scattered Straws" as well as have them read through a version of the Lenape story of creation (assessment sheet linked as well).

[New Jersey History Kids Webquest](#)

References/Resources:

[A Teacher's Guide to the New Jersey History Kids Webquest](#)

[Penn Treaty Museum: Leni Lenape](#)

2. Stories from the Past

This website allows students to study how ancient Native American civilizations used symbols to communicate stories. If your students participated in our indoor version of Peek at the Past then they will be familiar with Lenape lore and symbolism; if they did the outdoor version then this is a nice follow-up.

[National Parks Service: Stories from the Past](#)