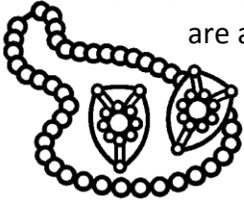




Investigating an Artifact

Artifacts are anything that people make or use. They can be used to illustrate history in exhibits. The Alabama Department of Archives and History has many artifacts in its exhibits that show visitors Alabama history. How many different kinds of artifacts can you find in the Archives? Here's a hint: arrowheads, pottery, cannons, guns, uniforms, jewelry, and even toys are all artifacts!



Think about it - artifacts know many secrets of the past! If they could talk, they could tell you what people used to do for a living, how much work it was to run a household, what people ate, what they did for fun, how they learned, how they looked, and much more.



Even though artifacts can't talk, you can still find out their secrets by "investigating" them. Learning about an artifact is like being a detective. You have to observe the artifact and ask questions to learn its secrets!

Follow these steps when investigating an artifact.

First, take a few minutes and look very closely at the artifact. Then ask yourself...

1. What is it made of?
2. How was it made? Who made it? When?
3. What was its purpose?
4. Is it practical or pretty?
5. Does it look like the artifact was used a lot?
6. How and why might the object have been invented? Is it likely to be used again for its original purpose? Why or why not?
7. Does it have a modern counterpart? If not, why not?



Think about the answers to these questions. What does the artifact tell you about the past and the people who used the object? Think about what life was like when this artifact was in use.

Next time you visit the Alabama Archives and History Department, visit the museum galleries and choose an artifact to investigate. You'll be surprised about what you find out!



Go to www.archives.alabama.gov for more fun!