

Archaeology in Southern Illinois – Brownie level

Cahokia Mounds in southern Illinois was home to the largest prehistoric native civilization north of Mexico. Take a trip through time and discover what it was like to live in this ancient city. Along the way you will learn about archaeology, Native Americans and the great mounds that still stand today.



Steps:

1. Become an archaeologist
2. Travel back in time to Cahokia Mounds
3. Discover what is hidden underground
4. Life at the mounds
5. Sharing your history

Purpose:

When I've earned this badge I will have learned what it means to be an archaeologist. I will have visited a local archeological site (physically or virtually) and learned how to uncover the secrets in the soil.

Step 1: *Become an Archaeologist*

"Do you like to dig in the dirt? Find things that are lost? Put pieces together Figure out stories from clues? Learn about the ways people of the past lived? These are all things archeologists do – maybe you're one, too!" from website <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/public/kids/kidsFour.htm#>

CHOICES - DO ONE:

- With an adult's help, find a website (see above) and learn about archaeology.** What is archaeology? What is an archaeologist? What tools do they use? What do they study?
- Invite an archaeologist to your troop meeting.** Ask them about their job. Why did they pick this career? What do they like and dislike about their job? What is a dig and where have they been? What have they discovered?
- What is a dig site?** What do archaeologists learn from the soil? How is soil aged according to its layers or strata? For a fun snack, try making a ***Pudding Dig Site*** in a cup.
 - You will need: one box instant vanilla pudding, one box instant butterscotch pudding, one box instant chocolate pudding, 10 crushed chocolate or vanilla Oreo cookies, and gummi fruit snacks (in multiple shapes), spoons and a large 12-ounce cup.
 - Prepare puddings as directed on box recipe.

- Layer ingredients as follows: put a thin layer of crushed Oreos in the bottom of the cup, drop a few gummies (artifacts) followed by a 1"-2" layer of vanilla pudding, another thin layer of crushed Oreos, drop a few more gummies (artifacts) followed by a 1"-2" layer of butterscotch pudding, another thin layer of Oreo cookies, drop a few more gummies, top off with a 1"-2" layer of chocolate pudding.
- Have fun uncovering your edible artifacts as you enjoy this snack!

Step 2: *Travel back in time to Cahokia Mounds*

Visit the historical landmark called Cahokia Mounds in Collinsville Illinois. Archaeologists discovered this ancient city where Native Americans lived hundreds of years ago. On this trip you will learn about the Native Americans who once lived at Cahokia.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

- Visit the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center in Collinsville Illinois.** While there, ask about digs (excavations) that are taking place at the site today. What are their recent discoveries? What is Woodhenge? Take a picture in front of Woodhenge or one of the surrounding mounds.
- After visiting the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center, walk to the top of Monks Mound, the largest mound found in North America.** Count your steps on the way to the top. How many steps did you take? What do you see? What was the mound's purpose? How was this mound created? How many years did it take to build? Take a picture with your troop or family that made the journey to the top of the mound.
- Visit the Museum inside the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center.** Locate the Birdman Tablet artifact that is the symbol for this badge. Where and when was it discovered? What does it represent? Look for an atlatl. What is it and how was it used? Find an artifact that was used for playing a game. Is it similar to any game that you play today?

Step 3: *Discover what is hidden underground by looking for artifacts.* An artifact is anything that is made by or used by humans.

CHOICES: - DO ONE:

- Make you own artifact!** Decorate a small terra cotta pot. Then break your pot into a number of pieces. Set aside. Line a shoe box with plastic and add dirt and sand to the half full mark. Add the pieces of your pot into your box. Cover over all pieces with the dirt. Use toothbrushes to uncover the pot

pieces in the box. Try to put the pieces back together and glue to create your own artifact.

- **What tools are used in archaeology?** Make a list of tools that archaeologists use, many of which are everyday items in your home. Find out what each tool's use is in finding artifacts.
- **Not all clues to the past are artifacts underground.** The Pinney Creek Ravine State Natural Area in southern Illinois is home to the largest body of prehistoric rock art in Illinois. Almost 200 designs are found on the walls of the ravine left there by Native Americans thousands of years ago. Find out about the difference between a petroglyph and a pictograph design that are found there. If possible, visit the site.



Step 4: *Life at the mounds was similar in many ways to yours today.* The Native Americans played games, made crafts, told stories and enjoyed time with their families. Archaeologists found evidence of games, art, and ceremonies.

CHOICES - DO ONE:

- **Let's play Chunkey!** Chunkey was a popular game played by the Native Americans that lived at Cahokia Mounds. Find out how Chunkey was played and then create your own game using a rock and a stick. The object of the game is to see who can throw their "spear" (stick) closest to the "disk" or rock.
- **Try your hand at copper tooling.** The Cahokia Mounds was home to a copper workshop, the only known workshop from the Mississippian era! They used copper for many of their art pieces.

Make a copper picture.

- Buy thin copper metal foil sheets or rolls from your local art store.
- Use a worn-out stick-type ball point pen, a pencil eraser, or other dull-point objects to "draw" on the copper.
- Use household scissors to cut a shape around your drawing.
- Tip. To get better results and easier tooling, make a cushion to place under the copper sheet: Place two pieces of newspaper together, fold

evenly so that they fit neatly into a reusable plastic bag (like a Ziplock bag)— regular or freezer gallon size, about 10” or 11”. Seal the bag pressing out almost all the air. The resulting packet creates just enough cushion for a padded surface under your metal foil.

- Cut out and frame your cooper masterpiece!



<http://www.kidzartblog.com/2012/05/creative-kickstarts-copper-tooling/>

- **Make a vessel out of clay.** Clay was readily available on the banks of the streams that surrounded Cahokia Mounds. Make a pinch pot similar to those used by the Native Americans.

What You Will Need:

- Newspaper
- Old clothing – this will get messy!
- Tiny bowl of water
- Clay, pounded out in a chunk a bit larger than an adult fist
- Popsicle stick, spoon (anything that you can use to dig out the clay to make designs on the pot)
- A drying area

How to Make Clay Pinch Pots

- Cover the table with newspaper
- Pound out your clay to make it a bit softer
- Roll the clay into a ball using both hands on the table. (The ball should be smooth without cracks)
- Push your thumb right into the middle of the clay creating the “bowl”
- Try to keep at least ½ inch of clay for all the walls
- Smooth the surface of the clay pot as you mold it, you may need to dip your fingers in water to help smooth out the surfaces.
- Use the tools to draw in any designs your like (check out this design that was found on a cup from Cahokia Mounds)



- Allow to dry
- When dried, you can apply acrylic paint on your designs
- Tip: When using water only use a tiny amount or your clay will turn back into mud!

Step 5. *Sharing your History*

You have learned how we find the secrets of people from the past through archaeology. How will we share our history for future generations?

CHOICES - DO ONE:

- Pretend that you are putting together a time capsule that will be opened in 100 years. What would you include for archaeologists to find that you think will be of importance? What items do you think will no longer be around? Share your time capsule idea with your family or troop.
- Make a mural or poster about your discoveries of the Native Americans at Cahokia and share it with your family.
- Go on an expedition! Prepare your bedroom for a dig site. Make an artifact display with some of the items you discovered. Share what they tell about you with your family or troop.

Add the Badge to your Journey – A World of Girls

This leadership journey invites you to think about girls and people everywhere. Ask a Girl Scout adult to help you find out about past and present cultures in other parts of the world to help you with your take action project.

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- **Hanging my poster or mural in my classroom to show what I've learned about archaeology and Native Americans at Cahokia Mounds.**
- **Visiting a nursing home and talking with residents about their life when they were my age and how things have changed today. What toys did they have, what tools for working and how they had family fun?**
- **Teaching a Daisy troop Native American games and crafts.**