

ARTIFACTS

MODULE

Artifacts

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Vocabulary:

Continued

Adze:

A stone blade that is ground, shaped, polished, and usually hafted to a handle to be used for woodcarving.

Applique:

Involves adding low-relief clay forms to a pre-formed vessel

Archaeological material:

Remains found in archaeological sites such as artifacts, plant and animal remains, and features.

Artifact:

An object made or used by people.

Assemblage:

An archaeologist's grouping of artifacts (such as pottery) from a site by form and function

Awl:

A tool usually made from animal bone with a pointed end used for sewing, punching holes in hides, or basket weaving.

Base:

The underside of a vessel, or that part of a vessel in contact with the surface it rests on during normal use

Bipoint:

A small piece of bone pointed at both ends; a bipoint was usually attached to a fishhook or shaft for catching fish.

Body:

Portion of the vessel between the orifice and the base, also sometimes called the belly

Chisel:

A tool with a tapered, beveled end that was usually attached to a handle and used for woodcarving.

Coiling:

The method of hand building an object of clay by successive additions of ropes, or coil, of clay

Cord-marked:

Refers to the process of impressing cord into the surface (either exterior or interior) of an object, often used in reference to the cord impressions found on ceramics

Core:

The inner piece of stone that remains after outer sections of the stone have been chipped and flaked away to make tools.

Cortex:

The outer layer of rock formed on the exterior of raw materials by chemical and mechanical weathering processes

Debitage:

Pieces of stone that have been removed from a tool during manufacture, sharpening or repair.

Drilling:

A method to create a perforation, hole, or hollowed area.

Vocabulary:

Continued

Fabric:

The composition of the fired ceramic, including clay, inclusions and pores; excluding surface treatment; often synonymous with body, paste or ware.

Flake:

A piece of stone that has been chipped away from a core or a larger flake; flakes were either used, shaped into other tools, or discarded.

Flintknapping:

The process of making stone tools by shaping a piece of stone with various flaking methods.

Graver:

A tool with a sharp point or edge usually hafted to a handle and used for incising fine lines or carving thin grooves in wood or bone artifacts.

Grinding:

A method of rubbing an abrading stone against the surface of an artifact to achieve a smooth finish.

Hammerstone:

A hard Cobblestone used to strike off lithic flakes from a lump of tool stone during the process of lithic reduction.

Harpoon:

A spear-like weapon with a barbed head used for hunting marine animals such as whales, sea mammals, or large fish.

Incised:

Figures or letters carved by hand or impressed by machine into the surface of an object; often used in reference to marks on pottery and ceramics.

Incising:

A method of cutting a fine line into the surface of an object, to engrave.

Inclusion:

Particulate matter, usually mineral in nature, present in a clay or fabric either natural or added by the potter

Indirect percussion:

A method of flaking stone; the hammer does not directly hit the artifact, but strikes an intermediary blunt-pointed tool.

Neck:

The part of the vessel between the shoulder and the rim, typically characterized by a marked constriction of the maximum body diameter.

Pecking:

A stone-working technique; shaping a stone by sharply and repeatedly hitting it with a stone of greater hardness.

Percussion Flaking:

A method used in making stone tools in which a percussion tool such as a striker or hammerstone removes flakes to shape the artifact.

Vocabulary:

Continued

Pressure Flaking:

A method used in making stone tools to remove small flakes from the edges of an artifact and refine precise details on the artifact using a bone or antler tool.

Procure:

To get by special effort; obtain or acquire; such as procuring resources by hunting, gathering and fishing.

Projectile point:

A particular kind of chipped stone tool that is pointed on one end and usually attached to a shaft such as an arrow or spear to be used for hunting or fishing.

Rim:

The area between the lip and the side wall or neck of the vessel

Scraper:

A chipped stone tool that was used somewhat like a knife for tasks such as scraping fish scales or hides.

Sherd:

A term archaeologists use to refer to a broken fragment of pottery

Subsistence:

The activities required to meet the basic needs, usually referring to the quest for food.

Unipoint:

A bone tool pointed on one end.

Wedge:

A tool usually made of bone or antler and used with mauls and adzes for heavy woodworking tasks such as splitting wood planks for houses and canoes with mauls and adzes.

Background Information

The thousands of artifacts recovered from the Kuril Islands are incredibly diverse, representing many different types of artifacts and materials. Most of the material from the Kuril Islands consisted of stone artifacts, ceramics and bone artifacts. The stone artifacts represent numerous types of stone tools including cores, flakes, projectile points, blades, scrapers and hammerstones. These stone tools were made from a wide variety of raw materials including basalt, chert, and obsidian. Some of these stones like basalt and chert were available locally on the islands but some raw materials such as obsidian are only found naturally the island of Hokkaido or the Kamchatka peninsula.

Other artifacts found in the Kuril Islands include ceramics and bone artifacts. The ceramic artifacts are typically pieces of broken pots called sherds. Ceramic artifacts were most likely made locally on islands using a combination of clay and sand and hardened through firing the ceramics in open-air fires. Ceramic artifacts from the Kuril Islands also often have decorations with the most common being cord-marked pottery formed by impressing a cord onto the surface of the unfired vessel. Bone artifacts are also found throughout archaeological sites in the Kuril Islands. Bone artifacts are extremely versatile and were used for a wide variety of tasks including hunting, sewing and possibly even as pieces of jewelry. The bone tools were made from a variety of different animals but most commonly from sea lion, seals and even the occasional bird bone.

Name: _____

Analysis of Artifacts:

Describing Stone Artifacts

Introduction:

Stone artifacts are some of the most common artifacts found by archaeologists. Stone tools can be used for a wide variety of tasks, and they are durable and last a long time in the archaeological record. Using the collection of stone tools in your site, analyze the artifacts to help answer questions about how past humans lived.

Step 1:

Look at the whole collection of stone artifacts and divide the artifacts into two smaller groups based upon their size. Record the number of artifacts in each group.

Small Group: _____

Large Group: _____

Step 2:

Choose one artifact from each group and describe the artifact.

Small Stone Artifact

Length: _____cm

Width: _____cm

Color: _____

Texture: _____

Type (Circle on below):

Scraper

Flake

Point

Adze

Types of Tools:



Scraper



Point



Flake



Adze

Large Stone Artifact

Length: _____cm

Width: _____cm

Color: _____

Texture: _____

Type (Circle on below):

Scraper

Flake

Point

Adze

Name: _____

Analysis of Artifacts:

Describing Stone Artifacts - Continued

Step 3:

Instead of sorting the stone artifacts based upon their size, try sorting the tools by their tool type. Once again, record the number of artifacts in each tool type.

Scrapers: _____

Points: _____

Flakes: _____

Adze: _____

Step 4:

Answer the following questions based on the tools from this site.

1. Looking at the variety of stone tools from the Kuril Islands, what activities were Kuril inhabitants likely engaging in?

2. The various rocks Kuril inhabitants used to make stone artifacts are quite diverse. What can this diversity in stone resources tell you about the mobility of people who lived in the Kuril Islands? What additional information might be useful in answering this question?

Name: _____

Analysis of Artifacts:

Describing Ceramic Artifacts

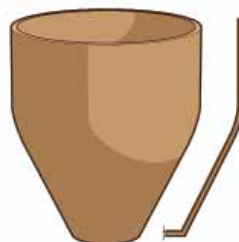
Introduction:

Ceramic artifacts are found throughout the Kuril Islands in many different shapes and with many different designs associated with them. Using the collection of ceramic artifacts from this site analyze the pottery to help understand why and how ancient people used these artifacts.

Step 1:

Using the assemblage of pottery sherds, attempt to refit the pottery vessel back together. Which of the vessel shapes do you think best represents the shape of your vessel? (Circle one)

Hint: Focus on fitting the rims and the bases back together and don't worry too much about the body sherds.



What sort of activities do you think ancient people might have used this vessel for?

Name: _____

Analysis of Artifacts:

Describing Ceramic Artifacts - Continued

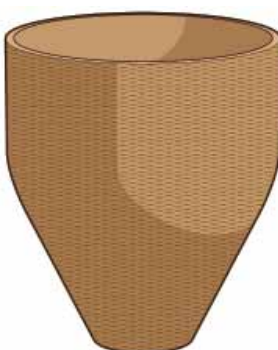
Step 2:

Looking at your ceramic vessel, study the decorative patterns and draw a sample of the decoration in the box provided below:



Given the sample examples below, how would you best describe the pattern on your vessel?

Cord-Marked



Incised



Applique



The decoration on my ceramic vessel is _____

Name: _____

Analysis of Artifacts:

Describing Ceramic Artifacts - Continued

Step 3:

Now compare the ceramic vessel pieces that you have with the other two ceramic vessel sherds.

What are some of the similarities between them?

What are some of the differences?

Similarities

Vessel 1 and Vessel 2: _____

Vessel 2 and Vessel 3: _____

Vessel 1 and Vessel 3: _____

Differences

Vessel 1 and Vessel 2: _____

Vessel 2 and Vessel 3: _____

Vessel 1 and Vessel 3: _____

Thinking critically, what might be some of the reasons why two pieces of pottery might look similar?

Name: _____

Analysis of Artifacts:

Describing Bone Artifacts

Introduction:

Bone artifacts are extremely useful for living in the cold, maritime environment of the Kuril Islands. Using the collection of bone artifacts from this site, analyze the various ways ancient people used these artifacts to survive in the harsh environment.

Step 1:

Using the collection of finished bone tools, sort the tools into groups that relate to their function. Please give your group a name that relates to its function and briefly describe the artifacts in that group. (Depending upon your classification you may have 3 or 4 possible groups).

Group 1: _____

Description:

Group 2: _____

Description:

Group 3: _____

Description:

Group __: _____

Description:

Name: _____

Analysis of Artifacts:

Describing Bone Artifacts - continued

Step 2:

Using the collection of finished and unfinished bone tools, further investigate the function of bone tools and try to identify the process of making bone tools by matching the finished product with their earlier forms.

Bone Artifact KBP Burke 0175

1. What do you think the function of this artifact was?

2. Which of the unfinished tools would have likely been turned into this type of artifact? (Please provide the artifact numbers?)

3. Do the bones most likely used in the manufacture of this artifact come from a mammal or a bird? How can you tell?

Name: _____

Bone Artifact KBP Burke 0185 or 0186

1. What do you think the function of this artifact was?

2. Which of the unfinished tools would have likely been turned into this type of artifact? (Please provide the artifact numbers?)

3. Do the bones most likely used in the manufacture of this artifact come from a mammal or a bird? How can you tell?

Bone Artifact KBP Burke 0183 or 0184

1. What do you think the function of this artifact was?

2. Which of the unfinished tools would have likely been turned into this type of artifact? (Please provide the artifact numbers?)

3. Do the bones most likely used in the manufacture of this artifact come from a mammal or a bird? How can you tell?

Name: _____

Bone Artifact KBP Burke 0206/0207/0208/0209

1. What do you think the function of this artifact was?

2. Which of the unfinished tools would have likely been turned into this type of artifact? (Please provide the artifact numbers?)

3. Do the bones most likely used in the manufacture of this artifact come from a mammal or a bird? How can you tell?

Bone Artifact KBP Burke 0182/0193/0194/0195

1. What do you think the function of this artifact was?

2. Which of the unfinished tools would have likely been turned into this type of artifact? (Please provide the artifact numbers?)

3. Do the bones most likely used in the manufacture of this artifact come from a mammal or a bird? How can you tell?
