

## Hands-On!

### Reconstructing & Drawing Artifacts

*(Social Studies, Fine Arts, Math, Language Arts, Cooperative Learning)*

#### Background Information for Teachers

Because archaeologists cannot take home all the objects they unearth, they must make detailed, accurate drawings of their finds, so that these artifacts can be studied in the future. The most common and informative material found at Mesopotamian sites is pottery—water jugs, storage and drinking vessels, dishes—usually found in broken pieces, or sherds. If enough pieces of a pot are found, it can be rebuilt so that archaeologists can speculate on how and when the pot was used. But even a few pieces of a pot—especially from the rim or base—can provide clues about when it was made. Just as today's automobiles or clothing styles change, so did ancient pottery styles and decorations. If a pot or pot sherd turns out to be a known type or style, it can be used to date other objects found with it.



#### Objective

- Reconstruct and make drawings of vessels in the same manner as an archaeologist

#### Materials Needed

One paper bag and one broken plate or flower pot for each team of three or four students  
Tape measures  
Paper and pencils  
Masking tape, strong glue, or rubber cement like Duco™ brand

#### Suggested Time Needed

One class period

#### Suggested Procedure

1. Collect several old plates or flower pots. Be sure each one is different from the others in shape, size, or color.
2. Put each pot in a paper bag, and then break the pot (tap through the bag with a hammer, or bang the bag lightly against a hard floor)
3. Remove one or more pieces from each bag. You may even put some of the pieces you have removed into a bag with a different plate.
4. Distribute the bags to teams of students. Have them remove pieces and tape or glue them together as best they can. Encourage them to check with other teams to find missing pieces. (Using tape for reconstruction allows pots to be taken apart and reused with other classes)
5. After the pot or plate is reconstructed, have some team members write an accurate and complete description of the item (color, texture, special markings, etc.). Description should include students' best hypotheses on the use of the item.
6. Have other team members measure the pot and draw the item at a one-to-one scale. Use the tape measure's metric scale, the measuring system used by all archaeologists.

# Lesson Plan

*Archaeology*