

## LESSON 7: ALL ABOUT ARTIFACTS

### **SUBJECTS**

Social Studies, History, Archaeology

### **DURATION**

45 minutes to 1 hour

### **CLASS SIZE**

10 to 30 students

### **OVERVIEW**

This lesson focuses on the artifacts recovered from the West Point Site. Students will examine, identify, and analyze the replica artifacts included in the kit in order to learn about different types of artifacts and materials.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To identify different types of artifacts
- To study different material types
- To examine and analyze the artifacts using skills such as drawing, measuring, and descriptive writing

### **MATERIALS**

Slide projector, slides, "West Point Slideshow" description of slides, photocopies of "Slideshow Worksheet", artifacts, pencils and rulers, photocopies of "Data Worksheet", "Date Your Artifact", and "Locate Your Artifact" to distribute to students, and book *Stone, Bone, Antler, and Shell*.

### **VOCABULARY**

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

**Artifact** - any object made or used by humans.

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

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

**Chisel** - a tool with a tapered or beveled end that was usually attached to a handle and used for woodcarving.

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

**Debitage** - pieces of stone that have been removed from a tool during manufacture, sharpening or repair.

**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.

**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.

**Labret** - also called a lip plug; an ornament worn between the lower lip and chin.

**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.

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

**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.

## **BACKGROUND**

The thousands of artifacts recovered at West Point are incredibly diverse, representing many different types of artifacts and types of materials. Most of the material excavated from the site consisted of stone artifacts and debris, also called debitage, associated with making, repairing, and using stone tools. Many different types of artifacts made from stone were found at West Point including cores, flakes, projectile points, knives, blades, scrapers, choppers, and hammerstones. Stone artifacts were made from many different types of stone. The most common type of stone used to make tools was basalt. Other types of stone used to make artifacts included andesite, chert, chalcedony, jasper, nephrite, obsidian, petrified wood, quartz, quartzite, rhyolite, sandstone, slate, and soapstone. Many of these types of stone were available locally along the beaches of West Point or in the nearby areas surrounding West Point. Some types of stone such as obsidian, petrified wood, and nephrite were brought to the site. Artifacts made from these types of stone provide evidence that the people of West Point had connections to areas far to the east, north, and south.

Other artifacts recovered from West Point were made from bone, antler, and shell. Artifacts made from bone included adzes, wedges, chisels, unipoints and bipoints, awls, needles, net gauges, and gravers. Bone tools were made from various types of animal bone including elk (wapiti), deer, beaver, and other small

mammals. Antler from both wapiti and deer was used to make wedges and other tools used for heavy tasks. Several decorative artifacts were made from bone such as pendants, bracelets, beads, and gaming pieces. These decorative pieces were often incised with fine lines using a tool like the beaver tooth graver, found in the kit. Shell was used primarily to make beads. Two wood beads were recovered from West Point. This is particularly exceptional because wood decomposes so rapidly in the Pacific Northwest.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. Distribute the "Slideshow Worksheet" to the class. Students can complete the "Slideshow Worksheet" while the slides are being shown.
2. Use the script "West Point Slideshow" to show the slideshow to the class and narrate the slides.
3. After the slideshow, review the answers to the worksheet with the class.
4. Discuss why it is important for archaeologists to record data about the artifacts that they find. For instance, archaeologists describe artifacts in order to maintain a detailed record of all of the artifacts found in the site, to compare artifacts, to analyze artifacts, and to draw conclusions about the site.
5. Distribute a "Data Worksheet" to each student along with a pencil, ruler, and copy of the "Date Your Artifact" and "Locate Your Artifact" handouts.
6. Then pass out one replica artifact to each student. If there are more than fifteen students in your class then students can work together in pairs. Students in each pair can share one artifact and each complete their own "Data Worksheet" about the artifact.
7. Have each student complete a "Data Worksheet" about an artifact. Students will need to use the handouts in order to answer the questions about where their artifact was found and how old their artifact is.
8. After everyone has completed a "Data Worksheet" about an artifact, then set the artifacts out on a table with the corresponding "Data Worksheet" so the class can see all of the artifacts and all the worksheets together.
9. Use the reference books to find illustrations about how the artifacts were used or worn.

## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

1. Write a creative story or poem about one of the artifacts in the kit.  
Students could write about who the artifact once belonged to, how the artifact was used, why it came to be left behind, and how it was found.
2. Do a research paper about a particular type of artifact or a particular type of material.

## **REFERENCES**

Larson, Lynn L. and Dennis E. Lewarch eds. The Archaeology of West Point.  
Seattle: Larson Anthropological/Archaeological Services, 1995.

Hilary. Stone, Bone, Antler, and Shell. Seattle: University of Washington Press,  
1996.

## WEST POINT SLIDE SHOW

Use this script to show the set of slides included in the kit. The slide show provides an overview of some of the artifacts found at the West Point Site. Some of the slides are pictures of the original artifacts that were replicated for the kit. These are marked with a (\*). The slide show will take approximately 20 to 25 minutes.



### **SLIDE 1: Sediment Sample**

During the excavation, archaeologists collected samples of sediment from throughout the West Point Site. Geologists and archaeologists who studied these sediment samples were able to learn more about an earthquake that shook West Point, a tsunami that hit the shore, mudslides and erosion that buried parts of the site, and sea levels that rose and fell. (E1-88.01)



**SLIDE 2: Basalt Hammerstone**

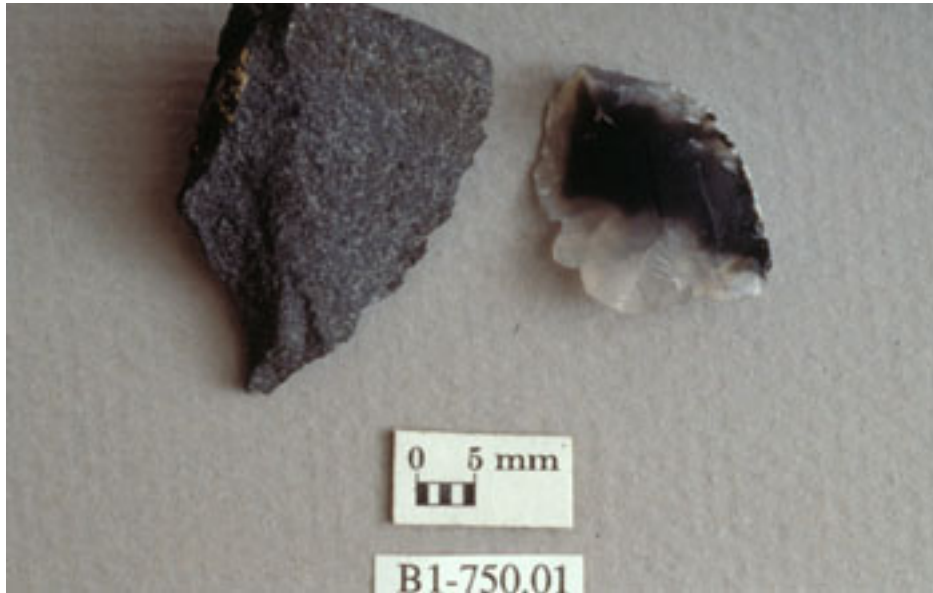
Archaeologists recovered massive quantities of modified stone from the West Point Site. Most of the stone tools from West Point were made from cobbles that were collected along the beach. The most common type of stone collected was basalt. Basalt is a strong stone that was used to make tools for heavy tasks. This tool is called a hammerstone. It was made from a basalt cobble and was probably used for making other stone tools or woodworking. (B1-2064.01)



**SLIDE 3: Core**

Archaeologists also found pieces of stone called cores, like this core made of basalt. A core is the center of a stone that remains after the outside of the stone

has been flaked away to make other tools. Sometimes flakes were removed from the whole surface of the core or just one part of the core. (B1-671.01)



#### **SLIDE 4: Flakes**

These are two examples of stone flakes also called debitage. These flakes were removed from cores like the one you saw in the previous slide. Archaeologists recovered over 3,800 flakes from the West Point Site. Although flakes are small and seemingly unimportant, they play an important role in helping archaeologists understand how the people at West Point made stone tools and what type of stones they used. The flake on the left is made from basalt, and the flake on the right is made from chalcedony. Sometimes flakes were used to make tools and sometimes flakes were simply thrown away. (B1-750.01)



**SLIDE 5: Jasper Projectile Point**

This is a projectile point. Projectile points are stone tools that were usually attached to an arrow or spear for hunting. Archaeologists recovered twenty-seven projectile points from West Point. The projectile points found at West Point have been classified into seven different categories that reflect differences in the shape of the points, particularly the shape of the shoulder, blade, and stem. This point has a squared shoulder, triangular blade, and contracting stem. Therefore, it is classified as a squared triangular contracting stem projectile point. This is one of the oldest projectile points in the collection. It is 3550 to 4250 years old. (PE-23.01)





### **SLIDE 6: Chalcedony Projectile Point\***

This projectile point has a prominent shoulder, triangular blade, and contracting stem. Archaeologists call it a shouldered triangular contracting stem projectile point. This type of point is also known as a Rabbit Island stemmed projectile point. Rabbit Island stemmed projectile points are most commonly found in eastern Washington. Four Rabbit Island stemmed projectile points were recovered at West Point. This projectile point is made from a type of stone called chalcedony. Chalcedony is usually clear to white in color. Chalcedony was probably obtained from areas near the West Point Site along the Cedar, Sammamish and Snoqualmie Rivers. (B1-0165.01)



### **SLIDE 7: Petrified Wood Projectile Point\***

This projectile point is similar in shape to the previous chalcedony point. It is also classified as a Rabbit Island stemmed projectile point. This projectile point is made from a material called petrified wood. Petrified wood is ancient wood that has been fossilized into stone. The people from West Point probably acquired petrified wood from sources in eastern Washington. Finding Rabbit Island stemmed projectile points and materials like petrified wood at the site provides evidence suggesting that the people from West Point might have exchanged materials and goods with people from eastern Washington thousands of years ago. (B1-1003.01)



**SLIDE 8: Basalt Projectile Point**

This is another projectile point with a triangular blade and a contracting stem. However, this point is larger and made from basalt. Basalt is the most abundant stone material found at the West Point Site. Basalt was probably collected along the beach at West Point. This point is between 3550 and 4250 years old. (PE-48.01)



**SLIDE 9: Jasper Projectile Point or Knife\***

This tool might have been used as a projectile point or a knife. Its shape is roughly like a triangle. Its blade is pointed at the top, its sides are relatively straight, it is wide at the bottom, and its base is rounded. This tool is made from a type of stone

called jasper. Jasper can range in color from dark brown to red. Like chalcedony, jasper was probably obtained from areas near West Point such as the Cedar, Sammamish and Snoqualmie River valleys. (B3-764.01)



**SLIDE 10: Basalt Projectile Point\***

This type of projectile point is called a barbed triangular contracting stem projectile point. A barb is the bottom corner of the projectile point blade that extends down. The blade is triangular and the stem contracts. This projectile point is made from basalt. It is 2700 to 3500 years old. Most of the projectile points found at West Point were approximately this old. (B1-0715.01)



**SLIDE 11: Slate Projectile Point\***

The blade of this projectile point is triangular, the stem is broken, and the edges of the blade have been ground. This projectile point is similar to slate points found in other archaeological sites in southern British Columbia and the Puget Sound region such as the Old Man House site, across the Puget Sound from West Point. This projectile point is made from slate that was probably obtained from the beaches at West Point or from other areas of the Puget Sound region. (B1-1378.01)



**SLIDE 12: Jasper Projectile Point**

This projectile point is called a lanceolate point because of its unique shape. It is pointed at both ends and the widest part of its blade is in the middle. This type of projectile point is particularly different because it has no distinct shoulder or stem. It is made from a beautiful red jasper. This projectile point is similar to other projectile points known as Cascade Points found throughout the Pacific Northwest region. (B3-571.01)





**SLIDE 13: Adze Blade\***

This is an adze blade also called a celt. Both sides of the blade have been ground and highly polished. Adze blades are important tools used for woodworking, tool making, or butchering. This is the only stone adze blade found at the West Point Site. This adze blade is made from a type of stone called nephrite. The nearest known sources of nephrite are north of West Point in Snohomish and Whatcom County. It is also possible that the adze blade was obtained through trade with people from northern Puget Sound or southern British Columbia. (NA-390.01)



**SLIDE 14: T-shaped Labret\***

This artifact is called a labret or lip plug. A labret is an ornament worn between the lower lip and chin. Historically, women from the northern coastal islands of British Columbia wore labrets. Two labrets were found in the West Point Site. This is a relatively small labret that might have been worn by a young woman. This style of labret is called T-shaped because it looks like the letter "T". It is made from a light gray colored stone that has been smoothed and polished. The stem of the labret is rounded and hollow but the plug of the labret is solid. This labret is 3550 to 4250 years old. (B2-1161.02)



**SLIDE 15: Button-style Labret\***

This is the other labret found at the West Point Site. This labret is called a button-style labret because of its round, button-like shape. The labret is made from a type of stone called nephrite or jadeite. The surface of the labret is very smooth and polished, probably from being worn for a long time. Fine scratches on the inside surface of the labret may have resulted from rubbing against the teeth of the wearer. This labret is 2700 to 3500 years old. (B1-1277.01)



**SLIDE 16: Stone Bead**

This is a slate bead. This type of bead is called a disc bead because it is round with two flat surfaces. Archaeologists recovered twenty-seven beads from the West Point Site. Seventeen of the beads were made from stone. Other stone beads found at the West Point Site were made from slate, mudstone, and nephrite. (B2-888.05)



**SLIDE 17: Fish Bones**

Archaeologists recovered over 11,500 fish bones from the West Point Site. These fish bones represent more than thirty-five different species of fish. The most abundant types of fish bones recovered from the site include salmon, sculpin,

flatfish, and perch. Fish were caught from saltwater environments at or near West Point and from nearby freshwater streams and lakes. The fish were probably butchered, cooked or dried, and eaten at West Point. (B1-1987.03)



**SLIDE 18: Bone Awl\***

This bone tool is called an awl. An awl is a tool with a pointed end used for sewing, punching holes in hides, and basket weaving. This awl is called a needle-pointed awl because the top of the awl has a hole like a needle. The awl was made from the leg bone of a deer. Seven bone awls were found at the West Point Site. Most of the awls were made from deer bone, but one awl was made from elk bone. (B2-2091.01)





**SLIDE 19: Beaver Tooth Graver\***

This tool is called a graver. A graver is a tool with a sharp blade or edge used for incising fine lines and carving thin grooves in shell, bone, and wood objects. This graver is made from the tooth of a beaver. Beaver tooth graters were usually attached to a handle. Two beaver tooth graters were found at West Point. Both were 3550 to 4250 years old. (B2-807.01)



**SLIDE 20: Bone Bipoint\***

This small bone tool is called a bipoint because both ends have been ground into a point. This bipoint was made from a small splinter of mammal bone. Bipoints were primarily used in tasks related to fishing. Bipoints were usually attached to a fishhook or a shaft to catch fish. (T-170.01)



**SLIDE 21: Bone Chisel**

This is a bone chisel. A chisel is a tool with a tapering or beveled blade. Most chisels were attached to handles to be used for carving wood. Twenty-one bone chisels made from the bone of mammals such as deer or elk were found at the West Point Site. This chisel is 3550 to 4250 years old. (E1-1158.01)



**SLIDE 22: Bone Gaming Piece\***

This is a gaming piece made from bone. The gaming piece was decorated on one side with a design of X's. Two gaming pieces were found at the West Point Site. Both gaming pieces are decorated with the same type of design. Although

archaeologists do not know what games were played, these pieces provide evidence that gaming took place at West Point for over 1500 years. (E1-1197.01)



**SLIDE 23: Bone Pendant\***

This is a pendant carved from a piece of bone. The pendant is decorated with a cross-hatch design of X's and has a small perforated hole at the top. This is one of the most elaborate pendants ever found in a southern Puget Sound archaeological site. The pendant might have been worn everyday or only on special occasions. The pendant is 750 to 1450 years old. (SB-123.01)



**SLIDE 24: Bone Blanket Pin**

This piece of carved and decorated bone has been identified as a possible blanket pin. Blanket pins were used to fasten garments that wrapped around the shoulders such as cedar bark capes. (E1-496.01)



**SLIDE 25: Bone Bracelet Fragment**

This decorated piece of bone might be a bracelet fragment. It could also be a fragment of another gaming piece. Decorated bone bracelets have been found in archaeological sites in the Prince Rupert area of British Columbia. Perhaps the people from West Point acquired bracelets through trade or maybe a person from West Point married someone from the Prince Rupert area. (B2-132.03)





**SLIDE 26: Antler Wedge\***

This tool is called an antler wedge. A wedge is a tool used with mauls and adzes for heavy woodworking tasks such as splitting trees, planks, and beams for longhouses and canoes. This wedge was made from the beam or main stem of an elk antler. The top end of the wedge shows signs of being impacted and crushed, probably by a heavy stone maul. This end also appears to be polished from being held in someone's hand. The bottom end of the wedge has been shaped or beveled into a 30° angle. (B1-2203.01)



**SLIDE 27: Antler Wedge**

This is also an antler wedge. This wedge was made from the tine or tip of an elk antler. It has a naturally tapering tip that was slightly beveled. Several other antler and bone wedges were found at the West Point Site. Antler wedges appear to be more common than bone wedges, perhaps because antler wedges are generally stronger than bone wedges and can endure more intense use and impact. (E1-1066.01)



**SLIDE 28: Shell Sample**

This is a sample of shell collected from the West Point Site. Archaeologists recovered twenty-four species of shellfish from the site. The most abundant types of shellfish were mussels, dogwinkles, clams, and cockles. Some shellfish were eaten fresh while other shellfish were harvested, dried, and stored for winter. (B1-297.03)



**SLIDE 29: Shell Bead\***

This disc bead is made from shell. It is probably a clam shell, although the species of shell cannot be determined from such a small artifact. A total of eight shell beads were found at the West Point Site. Beads were the only artifacts made of

shell that archaeologists found at the site. Beads were probably strung together and worn as jewelry. Also the people at West Point may have traded beads with people from northern Puget Sound and southern British Columbia. (B2-2008.05)



**SLIDE 30: Wood Bead**

This is a wood bead. Archaeologists recovered two wood beads from the West Point Site. No other wood artifacts were found during the excavations. This is because unlike stone, bone, antler, and shell, wood decays rapidly in acidic environments like West Point. It is actually quite amazing that this bead has survived for over 2000 years. (B1-1562.02)

## SLIDESHOW WORKSHEET

Answer these questions while you watch the slideshow.

1. Name ten types of artifacts shown in the slide show.
2. Name five types of stone used to make artifacts.
3. Name five artifacts made of bone.
4. What artifact was made of antler?



**5. What artifact was made of shell?**

**SLIDESHOW WORKSHEET ANSWERS  
(For Teacher)**

**1. Name ten types of artifacts shown in the slide show.**

Hammerstone, core, flake, projectile point, adze, labret, bead, awl, graver, bipoint, chisel, gaming piece, pendant, blanket pin, bracelet fragment, and wedge.

**2. Name five types of stone used to make artifacts.**

Basalt, jasper, chalcedony, petrified wood, slate, nephrite, and soapstone.

**3. Name 5 artifacts made of bone.**

An awl, bipoint, chisel, gaming piece, pendant, blanket pin, and bracelet fragment.

**4. What artifact was made of antler?**

Antler was used to make wedges.

**5. What artifact was made of shell?**

Shell was used to make beads.

# DATA WORKSHEET

Draw the artifact in the box below:



OBJECT NAME:

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MATERIAL TYPE (The material the artifact is made of):

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DATE (Age of the artifact):

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ B.P.

DESCRIPTION (Describe the color and shape of the artifact):

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LOCATION INFORMATION (Where the artifact was found):

Site Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Number: \_\_\_\_\_

SIZE (Measure the artifact):

Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Width: \_\_\_\_\_

USE (How this artifact was used):

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YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DATE YOUR ARTIFACT**

To date your artifact, find the name of the artifact that you are looking for under one of the five time periods, called Components, listed below.

### **COMPONENT 1 (4,250 - 3,550 B.P.)**

**T-shaped Labret**  
**Jasper Projectile Point**  
**Bone Awl**  
**Beaver Tooth Graver**

### **COMPONENT 2 (3,550 - 2,700 B.P.)**

**Button-style Labret**  
**Petrified Wood Projectile Point**  
**Basalt Projectile Point**  
**Slate Projectile Point**  
**Bone Bipoint**  
**Bone Gaming Piece**  
**Antler Wedge**  
**Shell Bead**

**COMPONENT 3 (2,700 - 2,350 B.P.)**

**Chalcedony Projectile Point**

**COMPONENT 4 (1,450 - 700 B.P.)**

**Adze Blade**

**Bone Pendant**

**COMPONENT 5 (700 - 200 B.P.)**

**None**

# LOCATE YOUR ARTIFACT

Use the list below to find the site area and unit where each artifact was found. Site areas with (\*) are outside the main excavation area in other locations at West Point.

## TEST UNIT

Bone Bipoint, Test Unit 8

## BLOCK 1

Petrified Wood Projectile Point, Unit 15

Button-style Labret, Unit 8

Slate Projectile Point, Unit 20

Basalt Projectile Point, Unit 2

Antler Wedge, Unit 28

Chalcedony Projectile Point, Unit 5

## BLOCK 2

T-shaped Labret, Unit 23

Bone Awl, Unit 28

Beaver Tooth Graver, Unit 15

Shell Bead, Unit 26

## BLOCK 3

Jasper Projectile Point, Unit 7

## SETTLING BUILDING\*

Bone Pendant, Unit 2

## NORTH AREA\*

Adze Blade, Unit 9

## EFFLUENT PUMPING STATION\*

Bone Gaming Piece, Unit 24

