INTRODUCTION
This lesson focuses on how archaeologists use discarded remains to understand the lives of people from the past more fully. People of all cultures and all social classes produce garbage. By studying groups of related artifacts, archaeologists draw conclusions about the people who used them, the dates when they were manufactured, and how they became associated with a site. Students will be introduced to basic concepts of archaeology and will analyze a bag of trash.

OBJECTIVES
As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Define what an archaeologist does.
2. Describe what an artifact is.
3. Explain basic concepts of archaeology.

MATERIALS
Garbage Analysis Chart
Trash bag from home containing the following materials, all rinsed or cleaned:
• Empty soda can
• Plastic bottle with a lid
• Juice box or bottle, coffee can, or tea bag
• Pits or seeds from a vegetable or fruit
• Packaging from preserved food such as a box or a label from canned goods
• Something with a due date on it. (Black out an address or other personal data to preserve privacy.)
• Something from a celebration, such as a holiday decoration or birthday candle
• Something from each member of the family that indicates their presence in the household

STRATEGY
1. Dump the trash on a table where all the students can see it.

2. Ask a student to identify an item. Ask for suggestions regarding how it was used and why it was discarded. Ask students what the trash says about the people who used and discarded it.

3. Ask the students to identify the rest of the trash and discuss how and why it was used and discarded.

4. Ask the students to fill in the Garbage Analysis Chart. (For the When Used/Discarded, students should made educated guesses based on dates visible on the items, or from context clues, like birthday candles being used on or around the date of a birthday.)

5. Ask students to form a hypothesis about the family who discarded the trash. Students should consider the following questions:
• How many people do you think were in this family?
• Were there children?
• What kinds of food did they eat?
• Can you tell anything about their hobbies or activities?
**Garbage Analysis Chart**

List trash in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, list why you think it was thrown away and what it says about the person who threw it away. What do you think the thrown away trash tells about the lifestyle of the entire family? Write your answer in the box at the bottom of the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Thrown Away</th>
<th>When Used/Discarded (approximate)</th>
<th>Why Was the Item Thrown Away? What Does It Say about the Person Who Threw It Away?</th>
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What the Trash Says about the Entire Family

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We at Colonial Williamsburg would very much enjoy receiving copies of some of your students’ work from any of the lesson plans in this packet. If you would care to share examples of their work, please send them to:

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