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## Archaeology Lesson for Fourth Grade Social Studies

**Lesson Title:** How do Physical Characteristics of a Region Impact People Living There?

**Class/ Duration:** 55-60 minutes social studies class and a discussion/  
demonstration about Archaic and Woodland Indians, 2-3 hours the next day.

**MSDE Indicators and Standards:** Identify and locate physical and human characteristics of places and explain how those characteristics have affected people living there. (MLO 3.2)

Describe the relationship between physical characteristics of a place and the location of human activities. (MLO 3.3)

**Objective:** To use what you know about the regions of Maryland to predict how the physical characteristics of where Native Americans live impact their daily life.

**Vocabulary:** culture, Native American, region, natural resources, archaeology, excavation, grid, artifact, site, prehistoric

**Materials:** Archaeology Search for the Past Packet, map of the Eastern Woodlands of the United States, social studies journal, computer lab with Internet access, a worksheet to chart physical characteristics found during research, a chart to plot the landforms, water body, and vegetation of the simulated site at Cabin John Park and Tom Thoman.

**Teacher Background:** Teachers need to read through archaeology packet before lesson. Key points include that archaeology is the scientific study of the past. Evidence gathered is called artifacts. Archaeologists also learn about the past from written documentation. Archaeologists use scientific method to learn about the past from dig sites. First they research the area looking for artifacts and then drawing a map of the site. Then they go back to the lab and conduct an analysis of what they have found. Many different scientific techniques can help the archaeologists date objects. In addition,

the archaeologists study the different soil layers where objects are found. Usually, objects deeper in the soil are older. Archaeologists spend many hours in the laboratory washing, numbering, cataloguing and preserving objects they have found. The archaeologist uses analysis and interpretation to write a site report when they are done to share with others interested in the history of the site.

The teacher needs to be aware of the Early Woodland period and subsurface storage. There was an exploration of what was available around them to eat including nut-bearing species. In addition, site recovery shows grinding stones and an emphasis on exploring the local floral and plants.

**Lesson:** Tell the students that today they will be learning about the Native Americans in Maryland. They will use what they know about Montgomery County to predict where the Native Americans of this Woodland period would live, what their shelters would be like, what they would eat etc. They will write in their social studies journal what they think the Native Americans would be looking for when setting up a site to live. Give the students 5 minutes to answer this question and then have them share their responses with a peer for a minute or two. Now call on a few students to share with the group. Record the student responses on the board. Get at concepts of needing a water source, climate changes, vegetation for food supply and animals readily available, especially deer.

Now look at a geographically detailed map of Maryland. Have students predict where Native Americans would live and why. Spend 10 minutes on this task.

There were a number of native groups in what is now Maryland during the 1500's. Have students work with a partner in the computer lab and read about some of the Native American groups in Maryland. The Secretary of State's Kid's Page has some helpful links –

<http://www.sos.state.md.us/sos/kids/html/natamer.html>. Allow 20 minutes for the pairs to skim and scan about Native Americans in Maryland including food, shelter, and location. A worksheet will be provided for students to record any information on shelter, food and site location.

**Assessment:** Have the students record in their social studies journal what they discovered. Put this question on the board, “ How did the physical characteristics of a region impact the Native Americans daily life? What

were the Native Americans looking for when they chose a site?" Allow 10 minutes for this task. Walk around the class and use this as a quick assessment. See if the students are gaining knowledge as to location, food and water source information. Jot down your impressions so you know what to cover before lecture/ field trip.

**Closure and Extension:** Discuss with the students their responses about using the natural resources of the region and requirements for a water supply. Now share with the students that tomorrow we will be hearing an expert speak on Native Americans living in Maryland during the Archaic and Woodland period. The students will hear some information, view some Native American artifacts and visit a simulated park site to talk about what the land would be like when the Native Americans lived nearby. They will see the vegetation, water supply, and animal life first hand. A discussion regarding a woodland site will take place and students will be shown various points and learn about the materials they were made from, discuss how fires and cooking occurred and what animals were found for food, clothing or tools. The children will learn about findings from various archeological digs that have been conducted and are still occurring on various sites in Montgomery County, including pottery. The children will learn that the sites show evidence of tool construction or repair, female food preparation because scrapers and points were found too. A site will have a water source. After the trip students will use their chart and fill in the landform, water body, animal life, tools and vegetation using both the information they researched and what they viewed firsthand to record what they discovered about the Native Americans of Montgomery County.