

Get Smart with Art Lesson

Southwest Experiences

Lesson Created by the Virgin Valley Artists Association of Mesquite, NV

For Parents: In this lesson, students will learn about the work that archeologists do in Nevada to preserve historical items. Students will create their own art using found and repurposed items.

Supplies Needed: String or yarn, wire, and items that are found, for example, rocks, buttons, feathers, tree branches, etc. If your child resides in Mesquite, NV or the Virgin Valley area and needs supplies for this lesson, send email to lindaharrisvva@gmail.com.

For Students:



People who lived in Nevada long ago used natural sources to make everything they used. They made their dwellings from the earth around them. They made useful items like clothes and pouches from plants that grew here. Clay was used to make vases to hold liquids. Stone was used to make arrowheads and tools. Natives made art from items that were found and repurposed. We know this from the work done by archeologists. Archeologists study items from the past to try to understand people who lived in earlier times. They study things that people made and used. The objects that are found are called artifacts. The place in which artifacts are found is called a site. Some of the items on a site are found above ground, and some are found under the ground due to natural changes in the land. When finding and digging up artifacts, archeologists must be very careful so that none of the artifacts are damaged.

They use picks, knives, spoons and fine brushes to unearth the items. This work is called excavation or “a dig.” Many of the items found at a dig can be seen in museums throughout the state of Nevada. Why do you think it’s important to study how people in our state used to live? If you have visited a museum, what kinds of things did you see? What did you learn about the ancient people by looking at the artifacts?



Your turn: You can have fun making your own art from items found. Collect beads, buttons, feathers, branches and other items that you find in your house, your backyard, or even while you are on a walk. Then design your own piece of art using those items. The students in the Get Smart with Art classroom made mobiles using cleaned branches, beads, and rocks. Wire was used to Attach the beads and wrap around the rocks in order to hold them in place.



This lesson was designed and written by Norma Sachar and Linda Harris, VVAA members.