

Peanut Butter & Jelly Stratigraphy

Supplies

- 3 slices of bread
- 3 tablespoons of jam or jelly
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (or nut-free butter ex: sunflower butter)
- 5 raisins
- Chocolate sprinkles
- Small colorful candy pieces (mini M&Ms, Nerds, sprinkles, etc.)
- 2 paper plates
- Plastic knife
- Plastic spoon
- 2 large clear straws
- Napkins



By creating an edible archaeological site, learn about the natural formation of stratigraphy, how it is affected by humans, and how archaeologists use it as a relative dating tool.

Have a parent follow along with the activity instruction sheet on the next page and guide you through the activity.

Have fun!

Share pictures of your completed project with us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram with the hashtag #AtHomeWithHoCoRec

Peanut Butter & Jelly Stratigraphy Instructions

By creating an edible archaeological site, students will understand the natural formation of stratigraphy, how it is affected by humans, and how archaeologists use it as a relative dating tool.

As you lead the participants through the creation of their site follow this narrative:

1. Thousands of years ago, there was once an empty field in Maryland near a river (**Lay down first slice of bread**).
2. One year the river flooded and left a thick layer of mud. (**Spread 2 tablespoons of peanut butter or nut free butter on the slice of bread**).
3. Later that year a group of Native Americans came to this spot and built a fire hearth which left behind a small circle of rocks that had been burnt and cracked by the fire. (**Cut raisins in half and arrange in a small circle somewhere on the peanut butter and fill the circle with chocolate sprinkles**).
4. These people moved away and over time a layer of dirt forms over top of the campsite (**Lay the second slice of bread**).
5. Eventually, a group of Piscataway Indians moved to the site. These people decided to stay for awhile and made many stone tools and pottery. When some of their pottery broke, they would place the broken pieces in a trash pile called a midden. (**Make a small pile of colored candies, leaving some for later, somewhere on the bread. These will be your artifacts**).
6. These people also liked to bury objects as offerings in hopes that they would bring good luck. (**Using the plastic knife or spoon, dig two small holes somewhere in the top layer of bread and place a few pieces of colored candies in each hole**).
7. The people decided to leave the site because the river was too close and may flood. Not long after the people left the river flooded again. (**Spread the jelly on top of the bread, this may push some of the candy artifacts around. This is a common occurrence at sites**).
8. As time passes, more dirt builds up and covers the site. (**Lay down the third slice of bread**).
9. Today, archaeologists know that people often lived near sources of water and think that Native Americans may once have lived at this site. They decide to conduct some test pits or cores to see if they can find evidence of habitation. This evidence would be things like artifacts or fire cracked rock. (**Use the large clear straws to make test pits by pushing the straw all the way through the sandwich. Make four test pits. Looking at the straw, you should be able to see the multiple layers that built up. You should also be able to see if you hit any artifacts. If you find a raisin or colored sprinkle you have found a habitation site!**).
10. Have the students cut the remainder of the sandwich in half and eat it if they wish.
11. To close this activity, ask the children which artifacts were older, the colored candies or the raisins and chocolate sprinkles. Ask them what action (digging the hole and burying candy artifacts) would have disturbed their natural stratigraphy. Ask them if they would have known which was older if the sandwich was put in a blender and all of the "artifacts" had been mixed together. Explain to them this is why archaeologists have to be very careful when they conduct test pits or excavations so they do not mix up which artifacts come from which stratigraphic layer.

Activity adapted from *Florida Public Archaeology Network's Beyond Artifacts: Teaching Archaeology in the Classroom*.



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