

**Guiding Question:** How can archaeological evidence help us learn about how North American indigenous groups retained their identity and adapted their culture in response to European colonization?

## Artifact Analysis

**Task:** Imagine that you are an archaeologist looking for evidence that helps people to understand the extent to which the Apalachee maintained their identity and culture after Spanish settlement in the region. Analyze the artifacts and answer the questions that follow.

## Writing

Once you have completed the artifact analysis, choose one of the two artifacts and write a short museum plaque (two paragraphs):

- **Paragraph #1: About the Artifact** - Explain what the artifact is, where it was found, and what it tells us about Apalachee life before and during the Spanish mission era.
- **Paragraph #2: Artifact Importance** - Explain why this artifact is important. Explain how this could be used as evidence to show that the Apalachee kept their identity and culture during the era of Spanish colonization.

## Artifact 1: See-Think-Wonder

**Directions:** Look closely at the artifact and then follow the See-Think-Wonder prompts below.



**SEE:** Look closely at the artifact in the photo. What do you notice about it? Write down as many details as possible.

**THINK:** For what purpose do you think the Apalachee might have used this object?

**WONDER:** What do you not understand about what you see? What questions do you have about the artifact?

## Artifact 2: See-Think-Wonder

**Directions:** Look closely at the image and then follow the See-Think-Wonder prompts below.



**Time:** At least 75 minutes

## Instructions:

**Goal/Intent:** Students practice a close-viewing strategy with two artifacts depicting aspects of Apalachee culture and traditions during the Spanish Mission period.

Building on their game knowledge and their artifact analysis, students then will brainstorm creating a museum plaque that relates to the key historical question: ***Since most Indigenous communities did not leave a written record of their lives in the 16th and 17th centuries, what sources can be used to understand their experiences?***

## Artifact Analysis (20 mins)

Students will have the opportunity to analyze and learn about the two artifacts.

First, put students into groups of 2-4 and provide each group copies of the "See-Think-Wonder" handout for one of the sources. After they have had about 5 minutes to complete the page together, then provide them copies of their artifact's "Background and Analysis Questions" pages.

**Note:** We recommend passing out the "Background and Analysis Questions" only after students have completed the See-Think-Wonder activity so that they have the opportunity to practice close viewing of an image without jumping too quickly into interpretations and context.

If the artifact images are too small, you may wish to show students enlargements of them linked here:

- [Chunky Stone](#)
- [Quartz Cross](#)

## Extension Activity:

To facilitate further investigation, the teacher may use the image of this second chunky stone, found 3 miles from Mission San Luis, for a compare and contrast activity with students. *It should be noted that archaeologists have yet to uncover why the stones are different shapes and sizes.*

- [Smooth Chunky Stone](#)

Students may notice that the two chunky stones look quite different from each other. Additional questions to support this analysis include:

- What differences do you notice between the two chunky stones?
- Why do you think one stone is more polished than the other?
- Why might the stone on the left be more rough?
- What additional information might you need to

**SEE:** Look closely at the artifact in the photo. What do you notice about it? Write down as many details as possible

**THINK:** For what purpose do you think the Apalachee might have used this object?

**WONDER:** What do you not understand about what you see? What questions do you have about the artifact?

### **APALACHEE AND SPANISH TIMELINE**

**~1000 CE** – Apalachee settle in North Florida during the Mississippian period. Powerful Native groups like the Timucua, Calusa, Tocobaga, and Apalachee form distinct chiefdoms across the Southeast.

**1513** – Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León arrives in Florida, beginning European interest in the region.

**1565** – Spain establishes St. Augustine, the first permanent European settlement in what is now the U.S.

**1600s (early)** – Spanish friars begin spreading Christianity through missions across the Southeast, including Apalachee territory.

**1633** – First Spanish mission in Apalachee territory (San Luis de Talimali) is established near present-day Tallahassee.

**1647** –

- Port at San Marcos de Apalache is built, giving Spain more control over trade and mission supply lines.
- Apalachee Revolt: Some Apalachee in Bacuqua revolt, killing the Spanish deputy governor and burning 7 of 8 missions. Others in Anhaica protect the friars.

**Late 1600s** – Spanish regain control with help from Indigenous allies; tensions and resistance continue. Cultural blending, control, and conflict deepen.

**1704** – English invasion leads to the destruction of most Spanish missions and widespread Apalachee relocation across the Southeast.

#### **Artifact 1: Chunkey Stone (Found at Mission San Luis, 1612)**

##### **About:**

The chunky stone, dated to around 1612, was discovered beneath a friar's home at Mission San Luis, a major Apalachee-Spanish settlement in present-day Tallahassee, Florida. Chunkey stones are smooth, disc-shaped objects made from polished rock, used in a

understand the differences between the stones?

#### **Optional Prompt for Question #1 of Artifact Analysis:**

- "I used to think \_\_\_\_\_, but now I think/know \_\_\_\_\_"

#### **Discussion (15 min)**

Bring the whole group back together and lead a discussion about the "Background and Analysis" questions.

#### **Additional Discussion Questions:**

- What evidence within the quartz cross shows that the Apalachee may have adopted Spanish cultural practices?
- How would the questions you asked give more insight into the Apalachee experience during the Spanish mission era?

#### **Timeline Extension Activity:**

Goal: Contextualize the artifacts within the historical circumstances of the Apalachee during the artifact's creation and use.

Have students identify the estimated dates for each of the artifacts and then incorporate the artifacts into the Apalachee and Spanish Timeline by writing the date and artifact to the timeline. Option to scaffold and simplify by having the teacher add in the dates and artifacts to the timeline. Lead a discussion on key events and circumstances that happened at the same time that the artifacts were in use. Optional discussion questions include:

- How does the timeline help you to understand the historical circumstances surrounding the use of the artifact?
- What might life have been like for the Apalachee at the point in time when the artifact was created/in use?
- What questions do you still have about what life was like for the Apalachee during the time period when the artifact was created/in use?

#### **Writing (40 min)**

Have students use their notes to fill in the graphic organizer and then write a museum plaque in their own words for the artifact of their choice.

#### **Additional Scaffolding**

To scaffold the writing task, you might provide students with sentence starters or model paragraphs. Consider adapting the following series of sentence starters that make up a paragraph:

- "This artifact is a..."
- "This artifact was found at/in "
- "This artifact is made of",
- "The Apalachee may have used this artifact"
- "This artifact helps us understand..."
- "This object shows how..."
- "Today, it reminds us..."

traditional Native American game called *chunkey*. In this game, one player rolled the stone across the ground while others threw spears or sticks, trying to predict where it would stop.

For the Apalachee, this game was more than entertainment—it was a cultural tradition. Chunkey was tied to values like skill, strength, courage, and social honor. It played a role in spiritual ceremonies and was often part of community gatherings. Winning could bring respect and even leadership opportunities within Apalachee communities.

**1. What do you now know about the artifact based on this information? What does this artifact tell us about Apalachee identity and culture?**

**2. Does this artifact help you to understand the ways in which the Apalachee maintained their culture after Spanish settlement in the region? Why or why not?**

**3. What questions do you still need answers to in order to better understand why this artifact is important to Apalachee?**

#### **Artifact 2: Quartz Cross (Found at Mission San Luis)**

##### **About:**

This quartz cross was found in 1991 at Mission San Luis, a large Spanish mission and Apalachee village located in what is now Tallahassee, Florida. This quartz cross was likely made sometime between 1675 and 1704, during the time when the Spanish and Apalachee lived together at Mission San Luis. The cross is carved from a single piece of clear crystal quartz.

Quartz was a material that had special meaning to both the Apalachee and the Spanish. Wealthy Spaniards often used quartz in jewelry because it looked beautiful and valuable. At the same time, the Apalachee and other Southeastern Native groups believed that quartz had sacred powers. They thought it could help protect people from illness and bring good luck.

For many years, people believed the cross had been made by the Spanish. But after studying it closely, archaeologists realized it was actually carved using traditional Apalachee methods and then smoothed with a metal file, a tool the Apalachee likely got from the Spanish.

**1. What do you now know about the artifact based on this information? What does this artifact tell us about Apalachee identity and culture?**

**2. Does this artifact help you to understand the ways in which the Apalachee maintained their culture after Spanish settlement in the region? Why or why not?**

#### **Additional Discussion Questions After Writing Task:**

The following discussion questions are designed to deepen student understanding of the ways in which archaeologists use evidence to construct history of the past.

- Do you feel as if the artifacts proved useful as you completed the research prompt for your second paragraph? Why or why not?
- What else might we need to know to understand how the Apalachee maintained their identity and culture after Spanish settlement in the region?
- What other artifacts might be useful in this inquiry?

#### **Optional Extension Activity:**

Choose one of the artifacts that Nikki collected and have students complete an artifact analysis using the same see-think-wonder chart prompts and artifact analysis questions to incorporate the gameplay into this activity.

**3. What questions do you still need answers to in order to better understand why this artifact is important to Apalachee?**

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**Writing:**

Task: Imagine you're working as a curator at a museum that's putting together a new exhibit on Apalachee artifacts. Your job is to brainstorm a museum plaque to go next to either the chunky stone or the quartz cross. Use the information from the artifact analysis (above) to help you fill in the chart below.

Museum Plaque Information	Your Notes (Brainstorm and plan your paragraph)
Name of Artifact (Circle one)	Chunky Stone / Quartz Cross
Where was it found?	
What is the artifact made of?	
What can this artifact tell us about the Apalachee?	
How does this artifact show that the Apalachee maintained their culture and traditions after the Spanish arrival?	
What message do you want museum visitors to remember about the Apalachee from this artifact?	