

Clues Need Questions

Use evidence to ask and test historical questions.

S.USI.c “developing questions, enhancing curiosity, and engaging in critical thinking and analysis;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each clue archaeologists can study. Circle the sentence that asks an unanswered question, then write 1 and 2 beside the two possible explanations for the pottery pieces.

Investigating Cahokia

- ① In the 1000s, Cahokia was a large city near the Mississippi River, across from present-day St. Louis. Thousands of people lived there. They built earthen mounds, including Monks Mound, a huge raised platform. Archaeologists study soil, tools, pottery, and building remains because no written records from Cahokia explain every part of daily life with certainty.
- ② At Cahokia, researchers found shell beads made from marine shells. The nearest ocean is far away, so the beads suggest that people exchanged goods with distant communities. Still, the beads do not prove who traveled or how the shells arrived. Archaeologists ask, “Did Cahokia residents travel, or did traders bring shells to the city many years ago?”
- ③ Researchers also found many broken pottery pieces in different places. Pieces near cooking areas may have come from everyday meals. Pieces near a large gathering place may have been used during community events. To test an idea, archaeologists compare where objects were found, what they are made of, and whether other evidence supports the same explanation. Good questions lead to evidence, not quick guesses.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What clue suggests that Cahokia people exchanged goods with distant communities?

2 What two possibilities do archaeologists ask about how the shells reached Cahokia?

3 How could the location of broken pottery lead archaeologists to two different ideas?

4 Why do archaeologists compare an object's location, material, and other evidence?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that you find 12 matching stone tools beside a stream, away from homes in an old settlement. Write two questions you would investigate, and name evidence you would look for to help answer each question.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each clue archaeologists can study. Circle the sentence that asks an unanswered question, then write 1 and 2 beside the two possible explanations for the pottery pieces. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What clue suggests that Cahokia people exchanged goods with distant communities?	Shell beads were made from marine shells, even though the nearest ocean was far away.
2	What two possibilities do archaeologists ask about how the shells reached Cahokia?	Cahokia residents may have traveled for the shells, or traders may have brought the shells to the city.
3	How could the location of broken pottery lead archaeologists to two different ideas?	Pottery near cooking areas may be from everyday meals. Pottery near a large gathering place may have been used during community events.
4	Why do archaeologists compare an object's location, material, and other evidence?	They compare evidence to test whether an explanation is supported instead of making a quick guess.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Were the tools made beside the stream? I would look for stone flakes or unfinished tools there. Did people use the stream area for fishing? I would look for fish bones, net weights, or wear on the tools.

Accept two relevant, investigable questions and a reasonable type of evidence for each. Students may offer different questions if their evidence could help test the ideas.