LOUISIANA ARCHAELOGY

Illustrated by: Laela Baham
Good morning children! Today we’re going to visit some of Louisiana’s archaeological sites.

- Watson Brake
- Poverty Point
- Marksville
  - Melrose Plantation
Watson Brake, 6,000 years old
This is Watson Brake, a mound grouping located in Ouachita Parish. It’s one of the oldest mound groups in the US!
The American Indians who lived at Watson Brake hunted local animals like deer, gathered wild plants, nuts, and seeds, and collected fish and snails from the bayou for food. Archaeologists discovered the remains of these plants and animals at the site. They learned these remains only appear at certain times of the year, which means the American Indians lived at Watson Brake during certain seasons.
Poverty Point, 3,000 years old
The Poverty Point World Heritage Site is a special place. It is an enormous site—roughly the size of 455 football fields! It has six mounds and six ridges built by people who hunted animals and gathered wild plants, seeds, and nuts for food. The people made tools and fish hooks from animal bones. They traded with American Indians who lived close by and others who lived as far away as the Great Lakes for items they did not have like stone for making spear points, gorgets (jewelry), and fishing weights for nets.
Marksville, 1,600 years old
Some of the designs on the pottery found at Marksville show triangles, lines, and serpents. Archaeologists are unsure of the designs’ meaning. Some of the designs on these pots were made using a rocker-stamp, or a curved piece of wood, bone, or shell that had teeth, like a saw. The designer would rock this stamp back and forth while the pottery was wet, producing tiny dents on the surface. Smooth lines were made by pressing and moving a piece of wood through the wet clay. They also used the smooth rounded ends of sticks to create round indentations in the wet clay. The American Indians at Marksville made containers such as bowls for eating by combining clay with grog. Grog is a type of temper made from ground up pieces of broken pottery or fired clay. It acts like glue and helps the pot hold its shape.
Design your own ceramic pot!
Use the space below to recreate designs like those seen at the Marksville site or create your own design!
Archaeologists also work with historic preservationists to preserve historic landmarks, like the Yucca House at Melrose Plantation. From the late 1700s until the mid-1800s, Marie Thérèse Coincoin and her children (all enslaved African-Americans who were freed) ran the plantation. The Yucca House, an African-style home built by enslaved Africans who worked at the plantation, still stands today. In addition to the preservation of the Yucca House, historic preservationists preserved the artworks of Clementine Hunter, an enslaved woman who taught herself to paint. Her paintings serve as records of daily life on the plantation from the perspective of an enslaved African-American.
Can you make it to the Yucca House?
Archaeologists bring artifacts back to the lab for analysis and curation. Here, archaeologists identify the artifacts, record them, and conserve them for future students to study. Can you find the following artifacts in the Conservation Lab?
Now let’s review what we learned!

LOUISIANA ARCHAEOLOGY
- WATSON BRAKE
- POVERTY POINT
- MARKSVILLE
  - MELROSE PLANTATION
Complete the crossword puzzle!

**Across**
1. A tool used by archaeologists to dig in the earth.
3. Human-made or modified items past peoples leave behind.
4. A tool archaeologists use to locate archaeological sites.
5. A piece of pottery.
7. Pieces of paper archaeologists use to find information about a site.
9. A stone tool made by ancient humans to hunt.

**Down**
2. Another word for 'dig'.
3. The study of past peoples through the objects they leave behind.
6. Containers made from fired earth or clay.
8. A rectangle or square in the earth dug by archaeologists in order to find information about past peoples.
Atlatl      Poverty Point Object      Spear Point      Owl Pendant
Gorget      Figurine      Adze      Beads      Plummet
OBJECT MATCHING

ANSWER KEY

Seasonal

Atlatl (spear-thrower)

Projectile point

Drill or knife

Beads (tubular)