

Description: As we saw in the culture history section, the first thing archaeologists do when they start doing research in a new region is to describe the material culture and organize it in time and space. In this exercise, you will have a chance to look at one type of material item and describe how it changes in time.

Goal: To learn how to describe material items.

To track changes in form in one artifact type over time.

To explain changes in the form.

Directions:

1) Choose an 'artifact type' to document and study. The type must show change over time.

2) Using sources such as the web, books, magazines, or experts on the artifact type, document how the artifact changes over time with pictures or drawings. You should have 5 different representations of the artifact type over time. Be sure to have dates associated with each variation in form. Also, reference your sources.

3) Describe the changes in form you see in the artifact. In your descriptions, do not assume that the terminology is common knowledge. You should have a picture of the artifact labeled with the relevant terminology.

4) Discuss why you think the artifacts change over time. Is it due to technological innovation? Is it purely stylistic? Is it a functional improvement?