


TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



LEARNING GUIDE

History in Your Hands

Grade 7



Over the course of human history, pottery has been used for both everyday tasks and as artistic representations of culture. Broken pieces of pottery, called *sherds*, are often important evidence in helping archeologists identify the inhabitants and their activities at a site. In these activities, learners are introduced to the field of archeology, experience the process of making a clay pinch pot, and create and analyze artifacts.

Objectives

- Recognize the purposes and types of work in the field of archeology
- Understand the purposes of pottery
- Demonstrate the ability to create a clay **pinch pot** through a process; Create original decorative designs
- Extend learning in archeological content through activities

Social Studies TEKS

7.1A, 18A, 18B, 20B, 22A-C, 23

Additional Discipline TEKS

Fine Arts: FA.A.MS1.1A, FA.A.1.1B, FA.A.1.2, FA.A.1.3, FA.A.MS2.1, FA.A.MS2.2, FA.A.MS2.3

ELAR: 7.1A, 7.6E, 7.10

Materials

- THC pinch pot activity kit. (Go to thc.texas.gov/tam to find out how to order an activity kit).
- History in Your Hands Learning Guide activities and resources

Vocabulary

- **archeologist** (ar kee AH luh jist) noun: a scientist who studies the past by examining the objects people made, used, and left behind
- **artifact** (AR tih fakt) noun: any item made, modified, or used by humans
- **clay** (klay) noun: a natural material made of tiny pieces of rocks and minerals
- **excavate** (EK skuh vayt) verb: to find or remove something by digging
- **pattern** (PAA turn) noun: a design (shape, line, color) that repeats in a specific way
- **pinch** (pinch) verb: to squeeze between the fingers
- **pottery** (PAH tuh ree) noun: containers and other objects made of clay
- **sequence** (SEE kwens) noun: a pattern or process where one thing follows another
- **sherd** (shurd) noun: a piece of broken pottery often used by archeologists to help them date a site and determine who lived there
- **specification** (speh sih fih KAY shun) noun; detailed description of the design and materials used to make something

Historical Context

Making pottery has been identified as one of the earliest activities of human cultures. The materials for making objects— clay, water, plant fibers, sand, shells, wood— were abundant and available in nature. Some historians believe that the first pottery made by Native Americans can be dated to about 3,500 B.C.E. These pieces were primarily functional containers for storing food or water. As the craft evolved, more elaborate and decorative pieces were created for ceremonial purposes.



Some cultures, like the Caddo, developed their own very recognizable styles of making and decorating pottery. The Caddo lived in the East Texas piney woods from around A.D. 800-1800. They built homes and communities, hunted and gathered food, farmed, and traded with other communities in the region. In 1859, the Caddo were removed to what is now western Oklahoma. The Caddo Nation is currently headquartered in the same area, near Binger, Oklahoma. *Image: Painting of Caddo grass house by George Nelson; texashbeyondhistory.net*

The Caddo had a strong tradition of making pottery. The craft was likely passed along the female line, from mother to daughter, aunt to niece. They created many different styles and forms of pottery over the course of about 1,000 years. Early Caddo pottery, mostly used for everyday needs, was not decorated. Over time, circular or rectangular decorative patterns were often added to ceremonial pots. Later pottery included detailed decorations including symbols important to the Caddo culture such as sky, earth, water, sun, moon, gods, goddesses, and animals. Their pottery was fired in an open fire and varied in color from grays and blacks to oranges and reds. *Image: Caddo pottery, THC Caddo Mounds State Historic Site*



Activity: Introduction to Archeology

15 minutes

This activity introduces learners to the field of archeology.

- Share or display the resource image **What Is Happening?**
- Ask learners to describe the people they see in the picture. Then ask them to describe the objects they see in the picture.
- Ask them to look closely at the woman in the center of the picture. Talk about what she is doing. Suggested guided questions:
 - What object has been **excavated** (dug up)?
 - What are objects from the past that were made by humans called? (artifacts)
 - What is she doing with that paintbrush? Why might she have picked that tool to use?
 - What is the name for a scientist who studies the past by examining **artifacts**?

A summary activity could include sharing the video, **What Is Archaeology?**

▶ <https://youtu.be/gRdvaik-dJI?si=EazO8KVDi-sPOZ3z>

Activity: Introduction to Making a Pinch Pot

15 minutes

This activity introduces learners to the process of making a pinch pot.

- Display a collection of bowls, pots, glasses, vases, etc. Allow learners to look at each one. Suggested guided questions:
 - What words can you use to describe these objects?
 - How are they alike? How are they different?
 - Why do you think someone created objects like this?
 - How do you think these objects might be used?
- Share or display the resource image **From This...To This.**
- Ask learners to describe the two objects in the images.

- Ask how they are alike and how they are different.
- Share or display again the **What is Happening?** resource image. Point out the pots in that image and describe how those pots began as lumps of clay until a human shaped them into pots. Pots like these, and the objects they looked at earlier, were created by humans to address a need for storing food and water. Pots were also eventually made to use as decorations or as special containers in ceremonial events.
- Explain that they will use a specific method to make a pot out of a lump of clay.
- Share the **video** of a Texas Historical Commission archeologist explaining the process of making a pinch pot.
 - ▶ <https://youtu.be/vRGxJLv7cgY>
- Explore the components of the **Pinch Pot Activity Kit** as a show-and-tell with learners. Share each component of the kit and explain how each will be used.

Activity: Pinch Pot Designs

flexible

In this activity, learners draw original designs to decorate their pinch pots. It is suggested this activity be done before learners begin making their pinch pots. This ensures that the design can be carved into the pot while the clay is still wet.

- Share or display the image resource **Decorated Caddo Pottery**.
- Ask learners to look closely at each image.
- Guided discussion questions could include:
 - What shapes, colors, and patterns do you see on the pots?
 - Why do you think the potter used those elements on the pot?
 - How does adding those design elements change the pot?
- Share or display the activity resource **Pinch Pot Designs** and explain the activity before distributing the resource sheets and art materials.
- Share or display the image resources **Types of Lines** and **Caddo Pottery Tradition** to spark design ideas.
- Distribute the Pinch Pot Designs resource and art materials.
- Share learners' design ideas when the activity is completed.

Activity: Make a Pinch Pot

flexible

In this activity, learners follow the instructions in the **Pinch Pot Activity Kit** to make a pinch pot.

Activity: Pinch Pot Thoughts

flexible

This activity allows learners to reflect on the process of making a pinch pot.

Extension Activity: Artifact #92307

flexible

In this extension activity, learners create and analyze an originally created artifact then compare results with an originally created report.

- Display or share an object that learners would most likely be unfamiliar with (i.e. car part, utensil, tool, etc.).
- Ask learners to give examples of how an archeologist would go about studying this unknown object.
- As a group, brainstorm about the object's
 - appearance (use adjectives for size, weight, color, texture, age, etc.)
 - possible functionality (what might it be used for?)
 - origin (where might it have been made)
 - role in a culture (what might this artifact tell you about the culture that uses it?)
 - additional attributes/characteristics.
- After brainstorming, explain what the object is and how it is/was used by a culture.
- Preview the **Artifact #92307** resources: **Artifact Sketch**, **Artifact Specification Report**, **Artifact Analysis Notes**
- Have learners brainstorm objects that are important today in their lives and communities. Have them select and circle one object from that list.
- Explain that in this activity, they will imagine what that object might be like in 100 years. How will it have evolved and changed for new uses by their communities? This new version of their present-day artifact will be what future archeologists find in 100 years.
- Learners will draw the new version of that artifact (Artifact Sketch) and will write details about its appearance, origin, and function (Specification Report).
- After all drawings and specification reports are completed, have learners exchange the drawings only. Each learner will keep his/her specification report to be used later in the activity.
- Preview the Artifact Analysis Notes resource. Remind learners that archeologists must observe artifacts closely to gather as much information as they can.
- Learners will use the Artifact Analysis resource to study the artifact drawing they received and make observations.
- After all analyses are complete, have “archeologist” learners present their notes analysis of the artifact drawing in pairs or small groups. Then have the artifact creator share their specification report, including the Need-to-Know Only data.
- Discuss any discrepancies between the artifact interpretations and how and why those might have occurred. Does the Need-to-Know Only data change the interpretation of the object. If so, how? If not, why not?
- Create a gallery walk of the completed activity resources.

Additional Activity Resources

Making Cordmarked Pottery

flexible

In this activity from Texas Beyond History, learners about a distinctive style of earthenware pottery that archeologists call Borger Cordmarked. The exterior surface of a cordmarked pot has hundreds of parallel indentations—cord impressions—left by the use of a cord-wrapped paddle in concert with an anvil stone. The website provides a step-by-step guide for making the tools and the pottery.

Find the activity here: <https://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/villagers/cordmarked/>

Piecing History Together

flexible

Sometimes when excavating a site, archeologists discover broken fragments of artifacts. These sherds can help the scientists understand how the people of that place might have lived and worked. To understand how the artifact might have been used in that culture, it is often reconstructed. In this activity, learners will decorate their own artifact, write its history and purpose, and then break and reconstruct the object to experience an archeological process.

Note: This activity involves breaking clay/ceramics into pieces, so make sure safety procedures are followed. This activity may be done as an individual or group learning experience.

Download the activity here:

https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/publications/Education/Artifact%20Reconstruction%20Activity_THC.pdf

Shoe Box Mini Dig

flexible

This activity from the Archaeological Institute of America provides an opportunity for students to experience a simulated dig through stratified layers in a shoebox.

Download the activity here:

<https://www.archaeological.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Mini-Dig.pdf>

Additional Learning Resources

Video: Career spotlight on archeologists for older learners. This link also includes an archeology playlist on related topics.

- <https://youtu.be/4BXkL5nba40>

Website: THC Pinch Pot Activity page

- <https://www.thc.texas.gov/pinch-pot-activity-kits>

Website: THC Virtual Learning Portal Caddo Voices online experience

- <https://learning.thc.texas.gov/online-experiences/caddo-voices-exhibit/>

Website: THC website page focusing on archeology

- <https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/archeology/what-does-archeologist-do>

Website: THC Learning Resources. This site features K-12 lesson plans categorized by content area and historic site location

- <https://www.thc.texas.gov/education/learning-resources>

Brochure: This brochure from the Society for American Archeology discusses the requirements and opportunities in archeology as a career.

- https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-aboutarchaeology/careers_brochure.pdf?sfvrsn=9178ebb1_4&_gl=1*1r3ytne*_ga*MTE3NTU4Njg1MC4xNjk0MTk0MzU3*_ga_6SSR7BY1NJ*MTY5NDIwNjk3Ni40LjEuMTY5NDIwNzMwMS4wLjAuMA..

What's Happening?



Image Harvard Gazette

From This... To This!



Images: Wikimedia Creative Commons

Decorated Caddo Pottery



Images: Chase Kahwinhut Earles Caddo Pottery



Pinch Pot Designs



Draw three different design ideas to decorate your pot. Write an explanation of how each design represents something meaningful to you and/or your communities.

This design represents _____

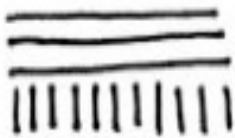
This design represents _____

This design represents _____



Types of Lines

STRAIGHT



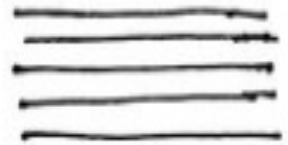
VERTICAL



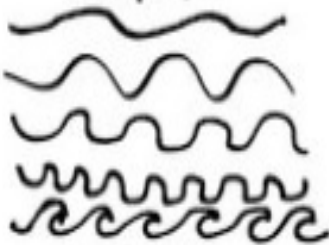
DIAGONAL



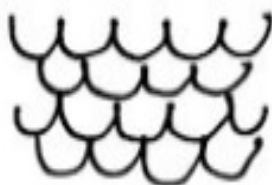
HORIZONTAL



WAVY



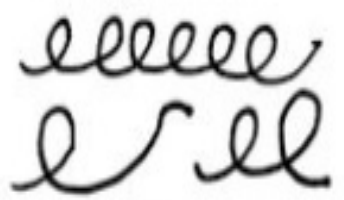
SCALLOP



ZIG ZAG



CURLY



DABBED



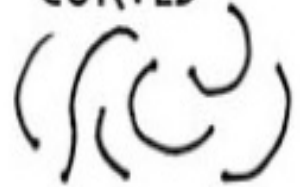
GRADUATED



ZIG ZAG



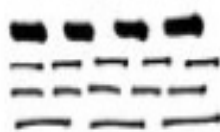
CURVED



DOTTED



DASH



CHEVRON



SPIRAL



BROKEN



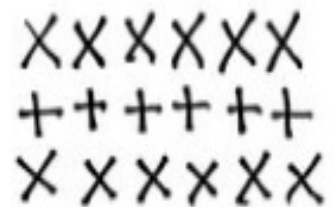
THIN



THICK



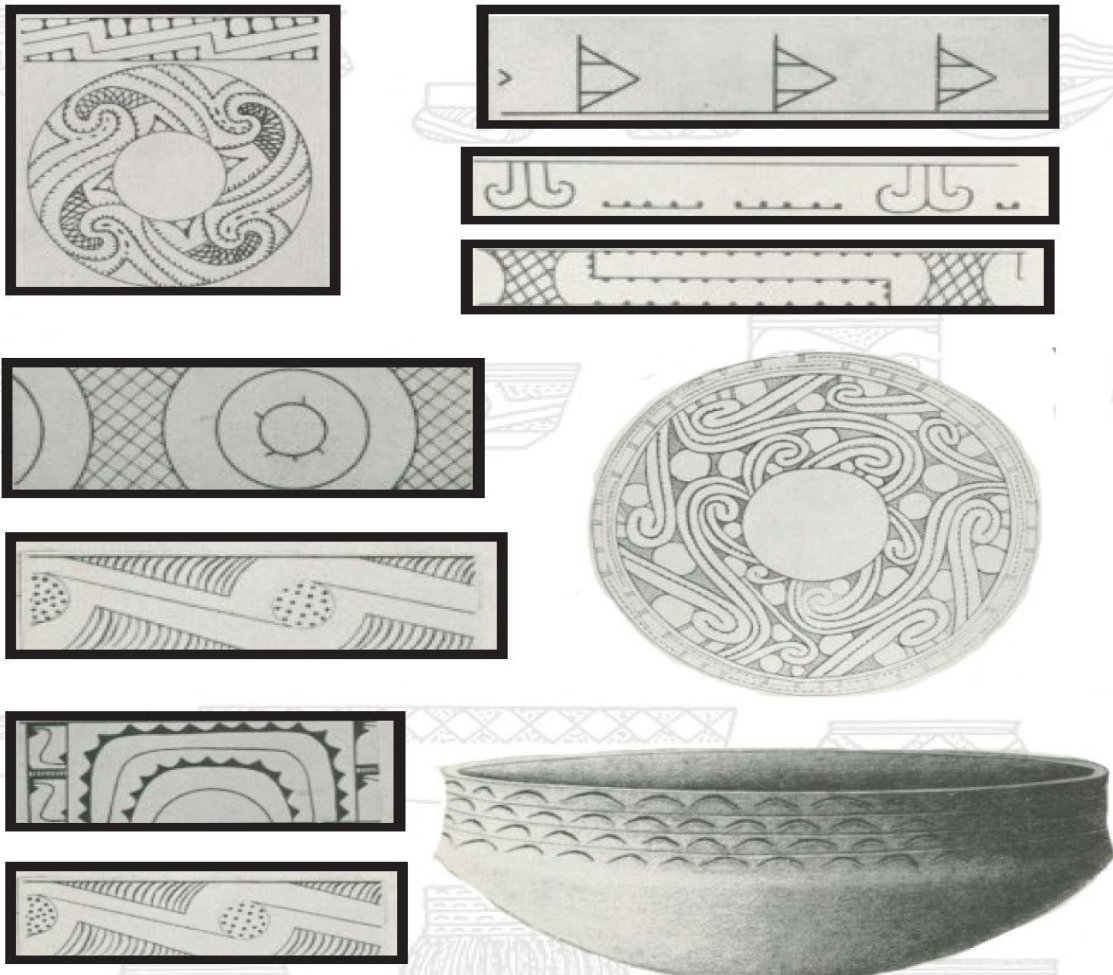
CRISS CROSS



THE CADDO POTTERY TRADITION

Archeologists have been amassing and studying ancient Caddo pottery for almost a century and now know quite a bit about the Caddo pottery tradition and how it changed over time.

About 1200 years ago (ca. A.D. 800), ancestral Caddo potters began making pottery that is unmistakably Caddo because of the particular combinations of material, design, and execution. Many of the decorations found on Caddo pottery were created by scratching or marking designs into wet clay. Some of these distinct designs are show below.



Images from *Handbook of Texas Archeology: Type Descriptions* published by the Texas Archeological Society and the Texas Memorial Museum, 1962



Pinch Pot Thoughts

Project Reflections



- One thing I already knew about pottery before this activity was

- Two new things I learned about pottery after doing this activity are

- Making a pinch pot made me curious to learn more about

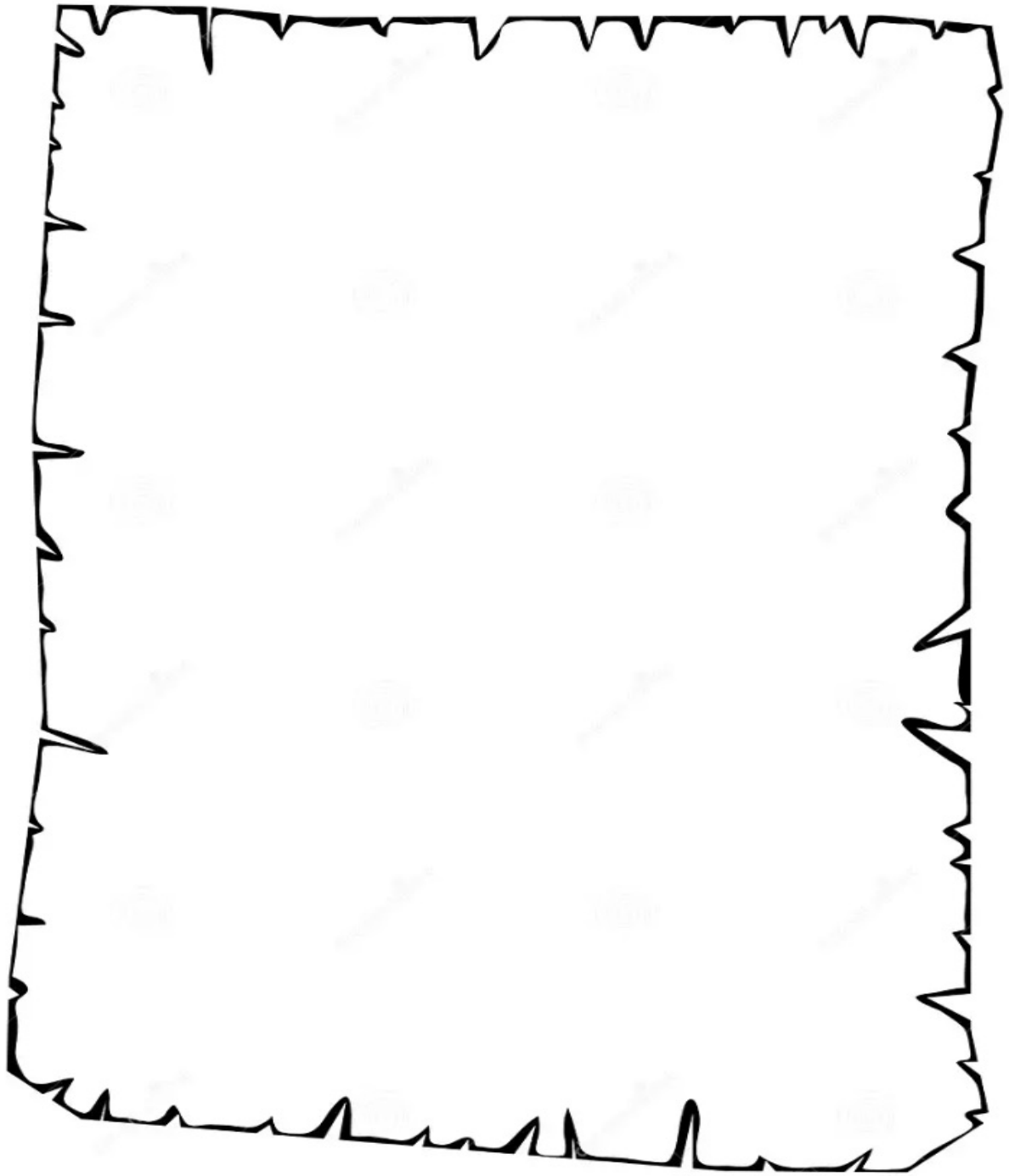
- The most challenging thing for me about the process of making a pinch pot was

- Two characteristics of my pinch pot that I really like are

- At least one way I can improve on the next pinch pot I make is

- If I were giving a grade on this activity and how effectively I worked on it, I would give myself a _____ because

Artifact #92307: Sketch



Artifact #92307: Specification Report

Filed by Technician Level XII: _____

APPEARANCE

Materials (Check all that apply):

bone leather plastic fabric	pottery glass metal cardboard	paper wood stone plant material	other (specify)
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Height (inches, feet)

Width (inches, feet)

Depth (inches, feet)

Weight (pounds lb, ounces)

Age (days, months, years)

Condition (check one)	broken	average	excellent
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Colors

Descriptions/drawings of markings/words/decorations on the artifact

PRODUCTION

Date(s) of production

Location(s) where produced

Cost to produce

Technology needed to create/use/repair it

Is it still being used/produced?	Yes because	No because	Unsure because
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Artifact #92307: Specification Report page 2

FUNCTION			
Purpose(s) for use			
Alternate purpose(s) for use			
Directions for use			
People who use it			
Most common time for use			
Value of the artifact to the users/community	High because	Medium because	Low because
SECURE ADDITIONAL DATA: NEED-TO-KNOW ONLY			
Unpublished information about the artifact			
Plan(s) for upgrade/expansion			

Signed:

Date:



Artifact #92307: Analysis Notes

Filed by Archeologist: _____

APPEARANCE

Materials (Check all that apply):

bone leather plastic fabric	pottery glass metal cardboard	paper wood stone plant material	other (specify)
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Height (inches, feet)

Width (inches, feet)

Depth (inches, feet)

Weight (pounds lb, ounces)

Age (days, months, years)

Condition (check one)	broken	average	excellent
-----------------------	--------	---------	-----------

Colors

Descriptions/drawings of markings/words/decorations on the artifact

PRODUCTION

Date(s) of production

Location(s) where produced

Cost to produce

Technology needed to create/use/repair it

Is it still being used/produced?	Yes because	No because	Unsure because
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Artifact #92307: Analysis Notes page 2

FUNCTION			
Purpose(s) for use			
Alternate purpose(s) for use			
Directions for use			
People who use it			
Most common time for use			
Value of the artifact to the users/community	High because	Medium because	Low because

Signed:

Date:

