

Learning from Artifacts

An ancient drawing on rocks, a basket woven from pine needles or grasses, a clay canteen for carrying water, old photographs and letters, and so much more—all can help us understand the past. These items are artifacts. Artifacts are objects, such as tools or pictures, made by people.

Artifacts are made at a particular time and place. When artifacts are studied, we learn more about what they are made of and why they were made. We may not get all the answers, but by asking questions, there's a lot to find out.

For an object:

- What is it made of?
- What can I find out about the materials used to make it?
- What was it used for?

For a picture or an art work:

- Who might have made it and when?
- What message or ideas are being shown?
- What was its purpose?



Cahuilla arrowheads

Many places in the state have displays or collections of artifacts on California Indian life—state parks, national parks, Indian museums, and local historical societies. Find the places near you, using your library, media center, or the Internet.