

# Bottles, Pins, and Horseshoes: Analyzing Artifacts from the Ransom Williams Farmstead Using Bloom's Taxonomy



**Subject and Grade** Social Studies, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>

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**Time duration** One 45-minute class period

**Overview** In this lesson, students will analyze several of the more than 25,000 artifacts discovered by archeologists on the historic Ransom Williams farmstead in central Texas. These artifacts help document the story of an African American family's transition from slavery to freedom and give a cultural snapshot of life on their farm between about 1871 and 1905.

**Objective** Material objects found at historical sites can be both intriguing and informative, especially when examined carefully in the classroom with students. A thorough discussion of any given artifact can be based on Bloom's Taxonomy, a classifying device used to illustrate the hierarchy of thinking levels, from simple and concrete to complex and abstract. Analyzing artifacts from the Ransom Williams farmstead using Bloom's Taxonomy allows students on all levels to exercise the complete range of critical thinking skills while appreciating the cultural significance of historical objects.

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**TEKS** ***Social Studies, Grade 4***

(4A), describe the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Texas

(19A), differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as technology; interviews; biographies; oral, print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about Texas

(19B), analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions

(19C), organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps

***Social Studies, Grade 7***

(5C), explain the political, economic, and social effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Texas

(20A), differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas

(20B), analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions

(20C), organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps

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## Materials

- Access to the Ransom Williams Farmstead exhibit on Texas Beyond History:  
[www.texasbeyondhistory.net/ransom/](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/ransom/)
- Device for displaying documents (Interactive Whiteboard, document camera, overhead projector, etc.)
- Student Handout “Bottles, Pins, and Horseshoes: Analyzing Artifacts from the Ransom Williams Farmstead” (included)
- Answer Key to Student Handout (included)
- Printed images of Williams’ Farmstead artifacts (included)

## Activities and procedures

**Step 1:** Display the word *artifact* and ask student volunteers to offer definitions of it. Lead students to the following definition: “*anything made or altered by humans.*” Ask students to volunteer examples of artifacts.

**Step 2:** Display the image of the rusty key (the first image in the printed images of artifacts) and ask students if it would be considered an artifact. Explain that many questions can be asked about artifacts, some simple and some very complex. Explain that students will be working in small groups to answer questions about artifacts from the Ransom Williams farmstead, discovered by archeologists in central Texas.

**Step 3:** Display the Ransom Williams website [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/ransom/index.html](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/ransom/index.html) and briefly describe the William’s farmstead history.

**Step 4:** Explain that students will use Bloom’s Taxonomy to help analyze artifacts from the Williams farmstead. Share with students that in 1956, Dr. Benjamin Bloom devised a way to measure the steps by which we learn. The steps begin with simple learning (knowledge) and move up to complex learning (evaluation). To illustrate the different levels of

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thinking, ask for two student volunteers. Ask one student what his name is (simple knowledge). Ask the other student whether he would rather ride the school bus home or ride home with his best friend (complex evaluation). Ask students which question was simple and which was complex and have them explain their answers.

**Step 5:** Have students get into small groups. Distribute copies of the student handout, “Bottles, Pins, and Horseshoes: Analyzing Artifacts from the Ransom Williams Farmstead” to each group and display the handout for the class.

**Step 6:** Model the lesson: Using the rusty key image as an example, go through the chart’s six *Thinking Levels* and corresponding *Cue Words* with the class. Ask students to volunteer answers to the Artifact Questions for each thinking level on the handout, using the rusty key as their artifact.

**Step 7:** Distribute artifact images to students, one per group. Explain that they are to analyze their artifact using Bloom’s Taxonomy, just as the class did with the rusty key artifact. Direct students to work in their groups and write their answers on the student handout.

**Step 8:** Collect completed student handouts.

**Step 9:** Display the webpage:

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/ransom/ransomkids/kids-peekinsidethecabin.html>

Have a student volunteer to search for and click on the stone dart point hidden on the fireplace hearth. Read about the dart point aloud with students, pointing out that this artifact had two applications at different times: first as a weapon, later as a talisman, or good luck charm. Explain that most cultures

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have examples of such “magic” objects. For instance, the Irish consider the four-leaf clover a lucky charm.

**Step 10:** For closure, ask students the following: What do the artifacts we analyzed today tell us about the life and times of Ransom Williams? Did using Bloom’s Taxonomy help you understand more about each artifact?

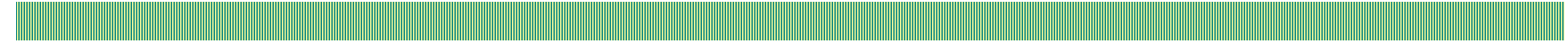
**Extension  
Activities**

1. Explain that artifacts can have both personal and cultural significance. Have students bring personal artifacts from home and share them with the class, explaining what personal and cultural significance each artifact has.

2. Display the word *metacognition*. Explain that it means thinking about one’s own thought processes, an activity we engage in every day. Activities such as analyzing an artifact or planning how to study for a test are examples of metacognition. Ask students to name more examples.

**Assessment** Correct completion of Student Handouts.

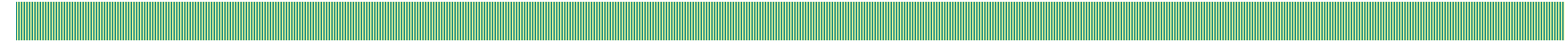
# Bottles, Pins, and Horseshoes: Analyzing Artifacts Using Bloom's Taxonomy



Thinking Level	Cue Words	Artifact Question
KNOWLEDGE	define, recall, list, memorize	What is an artifact? What is <u>this</u> artifact?
COMPREHENSION	recognize, generalize	What is (was) this artifact generally used for?
APPLICATION	illustrate, apply, show	What else could this artifact be used for?
ANALYSIS	relate, differentiate	Name one thing that could be substituted for this artifact?
SYNTHESIS	invent, imagine, formulate	What might be used in the future in place of this artifact?
EVALUATION	compare, rate, justify, value	Which artifact is better, this one or the one you named as its substitute? Explain.

Answer Key

**Stones, Bones, & Telephones: Analyzing Artifacts Using Bloom's Taxonomy**



Thinking Level	Cue Words	Artifact Question
knowledge	define, recall, list, memorize	What is an artifact? Anything made or altered by man What is <u>this</u> artifact? A rusty key
comprehension	recognize, generalize	What is (was) this artifact generally used for? Opening things that are locked
application	illustrate, apply, show	What else could this artifact be used for? Answers will vary, e.g., a scraper, a bottle opener, a decorative antique object, etc.
analysis	relate, differentiate	Name one thing that could be substituted for this artifact. Answers will vary, e.g., a lock pick, a pry bar, etc.
synthesis	invent, imagine, formulate	What might be used in the future in place of this artifact? Answers will vary, e.g., electronic security system, touchpad, etc.
evaluation	compare, rate, justify, value	Which artifact is better, this one or the one you named as its substitute? Explain. Arguments can be made for either. Have students defend their choices.

Bottles, Pins, and Horseshoes:  
Analyzing Artifacts Using Bloom's Taxonomy

**Artifact #1**

**What is this artifact?**





## Artifact #2

What is this artifact?



## Artifact #3

What is this artifact?



## Artifact #4

What is this artifact?



## Artifact #5

What is this artifact?



## Artifact #6

What is this artifact?



## Artifact # 7

What is this artifact?



## **Bottles, Pins, and Horseshoes: Analyzing Artifacts Using Bloom's Taxonomy**

**What is this artifact?**

### **Answer Key**

Artifact #1 - key

Artifact #2 - medicine bottle

Artifact #3 - horseshoes

Artifact #4 - safety pins

Artifact #5 - commemorative spoon

Artifact #6 - spurs

Artifact #7 - hex wrench