Project Archaeology

Investigating

A Roman Villa

A Curriculum Guide for Grades 6-12
Project Archaeology: Investigating a Roman Villa


Author
Courtney L. Agenten

Contributing Authors
Allyson Braaksma, Whitney Gilbert, Patrick Hoffman, and Chauncey Mercado

Graphic Design
Wayne Rice (text)

For additional information contact:
BLM Project Archaeology
Montana State University
2-128 Wilson Hall, Bozeman, MT 59717
Voice (406) 994-7582
FAX (406) 994-3177
Web: www.projectarchaeology.org

Project Archaeology Staff
Jeanne M. Moe, BLM Project Archaeology Lead
Crystal B. Alegria, Program Coordinator
Courtney L. Agenten, Special Projects Coordinator
Bekah Schields, Public Education Coordinator
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................... 3
Illustration Credits ............................................................................................................. 5
Other Publications ............................................................................................................. 6

**Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 8
  Unit Overview ................................................................................................................... 11

**Background Information** ............................................................................................. 18

**Pre-Assessment:** What Is Archaeology? ................................................................... 23

**Lesson One:** Ethics of Studying Human Remains ....................................................... 24

**Lesson Two:** Knowing the Land-Knowing People ....................................................... 34

**Lesson Three:** Vesuvius Erupts .................................................................................... 44

**Lesson Four:** Romans Recline to Diene .................................................................... 57

**Lesson Five:** Mosaic Math .......................................................................................... 74

**Lesson Six:** Coins and Culture .................................................................................... 83

**Lesson Seven:** Mystery at a Roman Villa ................................................................. 106

**Lesson Eight:** Stewardship is Everyone’s Responsibility ........................................ 117

**Assessments** ............................................................................................................... 125
  Final Composition .......................................................................................................... 127
  Final Performance of Understanding ............................................................................ 128

**Appendices** ............................................................................................................... 129
  Appendix 1: The Six Facets of Understanding ............................................................. 130
  Appendix 2: Bloom’s Taxonomy .................................................................................... 131
  Appendix 3: Correlation to Montana Common Core Standards .............................. 132
  Appendix 4: Rules for Brainstorming ......................................................................... 139
  Appendix 5: References ............................................................................................... 140

**Resources** .................................................................................................................... 142
  Inclinium (Clue) Game Board ...................................................................................... 143
  Inclinium (Clue) Cards and Tokens ............................................................................. 145
  Maps of Oplontis .......................................................................................................... 148
List of Curriculum Advisors and Contributors

We are grateful for the time, effort, and ideas provided by our advisors and contributors and for their dedication to educating the nation’s citizens about the importance of our archaeological heritage.

Regina Gee—Content Contributor
Warren Esty—Content Contributor
Peter Jacoby—Curriculum Evaluator
Patrick Hoffman—Curriculum Evaluator
Rebecca Janke—Curriculum Evaluator
Elizabeth Wickland—Curriculum Evaluator
Paul Bardagji—Photographer
Preface

Project Archaeology is a national heritage education program for educators and their students. Project Archaeology uses archaeological and historical inquiry to foster understanding of past and present cultures; improve social studies, science, and literacy education; and enhance citizenship education to help preserve our archaeological legacy. We envision a world in which all people understand and appreciate their own culture and history and the culture and history of others.

Project Archaeology was developed in 1990 in Utah in response to widespread vandalism and looting of the state’s archaeological treasures. Agency officials from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Forest Service (FS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the State of Utah agreed that education was the best way to protect archaeological resources over the long term. These agencies partnered to develop and maintain a statewide education program known as the Intrigue of the Past Archaeology Education Program. In 1992, when the national Bureau of Land Management launched a comprehensive nationwide heritage education program, Intrigue of the Past was adopted as the classroom component and renamed Project Archaeology. In 2001, Project Archaeology transferred operations to Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana, to maintain and expand the program nationally.

Project Archaeology currently operates in thirty-six states and the District of Columbia and is developing in six additional states. Since its inception, more than 12,000 educators have participated in Project Archaeology workshops. These educators have used Project Archaeology materials to instruct an estimated 275,000 students of all ages annually.

A comprehensive archaeology and heritage education program, Project Archaeology is for anyone interested in learning and teaching about our nation’s rich cultural legacy and protecting it for future generations to learn from and enjoy. Designed to appeal to a wide variety of interested groups and individuals, Project Archaeology may be successfully used, for example, by:

- Upper elementary through secondary teachers and their students;
- Museum docents, youth group leaders, heritage site interpreters; and
- Parents and other citizens.

Project Archaeology includes publications, professional development for educators, networking opportunities, and continuing support for participants. Using an innovative hands-on approach to history education, Project Archaeology teaches scientific inquiry, the integration of knowledge across disciplines, citizenship, personal ethics and character, and cultural understanding.

For additional information about participating in Project Archaeology contact:

Project Archaeology
2-128 Wilson Hall
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717
Voice: (406) 994-7582, FAX: (406) 994-3177
Email: projectarchaeology@montana.edu
Web: www.projectarchaeology.org
Illustration Credits

The credit information below provides the reader with the source of the illustrations (and often the copyright holder) by page number of the text page on which the image appears. It may include information regarding the collection where the photographs or illustrations are located. The photographer mentioned in the photo credit below is the source of the print reproduced. “After” means that the *Investigating a Roman Villa* illustrators and design staff have redrawn, rearranged, or abstracted the illustration in the cited source for educational clarity. All maps and drawings not otherwise credited were created by *Investigating a Roman Villa* design staff. Page position codes used below are: All—entire page, R—right side of page, L—left side of page, T—top of page, and B—bottom of page.

Artists and Photographers

Paul Bardagjy

Lending Institutions

The Oplontis Project
Museum of the Rockies
Other Publications by Project Archaeology
available at www.projectarchaeology.org

Shelter investigation companion guides for Project Archaeology: Investigating Shelter

Coming Soon…

Project Archaeology: Changing Land, Changing People: Archaeology of the Absaalooka Homeland
Project Archaeology

Investigating
A Roman Villa

A Curriculum Guide for Grades 6-12
Introduction

Discover the Past—Shape the Future

To understand the present, we must know the past. The world is a complicated place—the sum of untold years of human sweat and toil, building and destroying, war and peace, laughter and tears. Unique cultures arose, flourished for a time, and then vanished. Other cultures endured, little changed for centuries, while others have adapted to accommodate changing climates, technologies, or social conditions. At the dawn of the 21st century, while we may seem to be forming a global society through technology and trade, vast cultural differences still exist. How did we get here? Why is the world like it is now? Why are cultures different? How are they similar? How can we learn from each other and share our complex world? How can we use lessons from the past to make the world a better place to live now and for children yet to come?

Archaeology is one way to learn about the past, both the past of thousands of years ago and more recent historic times. Archaeology is one of the few ways that we have to learn about people who left no written records. In North America this includes approximately 97 percent of human occupation and for the rest of the world, the percentage is even higher. While archaeology provides an engaging way to learn about the past, it also informs the present and the future.

Archaeology is everywhere. We marvel at the ancient pyramids of Egypt. How were they constructed without large machinery? Machu Picchu, the ancient city of the Inca, makes us wonder why people would build such a beautiful place so high in the Andes Mountains of South America. In the United States, the ancestors of today’s Puebloan peoples built “palaces” in alcoves of the sandstone cliffs. Were they for protection or to take advantage of the warming winter sunshine? Archaeological sites offer a way to travel in time: to imagine what it might have been like to hunt mammoths on the High Plains of North America at the close of the Pleistocene epoch; to abandon hunting and rely primarily on agriculture for food; to see the pyramids of Egypt under construction; or to live in a slave cabin in the United States before the Civil War. Archaeology is the record of the past and our database for learning about environments, cultures, and lifeways that came before us. In America we are fortunate—everyone has the opportunity to touch the past by visiting archaeological sites, but the archaeological record is also fragile, vulnerable, irreplaceable, and in need of protection so that everyone may benefit from it now and in the future.

How can investigating a Roman villa help us understand the Roman people and their culture? Pompeii and the nearby villas at Oplontis offer a glimpse into the daily life of Romans as well as Rome’s elite. Through archaeology we can explore the material remains of Roman culture in the first century to learn about environment, art, and lifeways.

While archaeology provides an engaging way to learn about the past, it also informs the present and the future. How, for example, do we deal with the risk of living in the shadow of a volcano and other natural disasters? By discovering the impact of the A.D. 79 Vesuvius eruption on the Roman people we can better understand the plight of people impacted by natural disasters today. Another example of discovering the past to shape the future is addressing the question, how does tourism of archaeological sites and national...
parks put pressure on our limited cultural, geological, and archaeological resources? Through education we can learn to be good stewards of our shared cultural heritage and natural resources.

This curriculum guide is an investigation aimed at 6th-12th grade students, organized into eight lessons. It models the process of archaeological inquiry. Students construct meaningful questions, collect archaeological data to answer a question, and analyze and interpret the data. Students rely primarily on archaeological evidence including site maps, artifacts, and frescoes and their relationships to each other (context) to reconstruct and interpret the past. When appropriate, students use primary source documents and modern experts to augment their investigation. Students have the opportunity to enrich their study by visiting the Museum of the Rockies and exploring an exhibit on Oplontis near Pompeii. Students end their study of a Roman villa by producing a report of their findings and interpretation and learning about the laws that protect archaeological resources. Then students will work collaboratively in teams to create a news broadcast on the natural disaster of the A.D. 79 Mount Vesuvius eruption.

The lessons will cover several disciplines, including geology, art history, archaeology, Latin, English Language Arts, math, and social studies. The investigation complements the Museum of the Rockies exhibit, Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis near Pompeii. Students can conduct the investigation in their classroom, then visit the museum to experience the artifacts, frescoes, statues, and reconstructed models for deeper understanding of Roman life. Teaching kits will also be available at libraries throughout Montana and they will contain materials for teaching the guide.

Knowing the Past: Archaeology and History

Archaeology and history share the same goal of seeking to reconstruct and understand the human past. The two disciplines differ in some important ways (Kosso 2001, 29-33). Of the two, history is the more familiar way to know about the past. History relies on written evidence such as diaries, letters, public documents like treaties or laws, legal documents, or literature. These documents can range from something as important as the Declaration of Independence or as humble as a grocery store ledger. For the most part, these documents were written intentionally to relay a particular piece of information, and for this reason they are inherently biased. Historical documents might record a special event or a narrative about a person’s experiences or provide information about individuals, their character, or experiences.

Archaeology uses material evidence such as artifacts, buildings, stone walls, fire hearths, foundations, butchered animal bones, charred seeds, or even altered landscapes to reconstruct the past. An archaeological site might comprise an entire city or a small scatter of stone artifacts on the surface of the ground. Archaeological data are rarely produced intentionally; rather they are the unintentional evidence of human activities. For example, people who killed and butchered Persian gazelles on the banks of the Euphrates River in what is now Syria were just getting something to eat and probably not trying to communicate anything to anyone. In this sense, archaeological remains do not carry the same bias as written records, which were produced intentionally. The archaeological record rarely records the lives of individuals, but is instead a result of collective activity. Similarly, with the exception of sites like Pompeii, which was buried in volcanic ash in A.D. 79, archaeologists rarely find evidence of a single event. Most archaeological sites are the accumulation of physical materials from many events over some period of time.

Historical evidence may seem the more direct, in light of the difficulties in making sense of the archaeological record. A written account of what happened, after all, is pretty close to just telling us the answer. Archaeologists may struggle, for example, with their inscrutable potsherds to figure out patterns of
Athenian colonization; but Thucydides plainly says that there was a colony at Mytilene, so that part of the case seems closed. Now we know. But, of course, the case of an Athenian colony at Mytilene is not closed any more than the testimony of eye witness is sufficient to make the courtroom case. The jury needs more than just the words of the testimony; they must also know some background on the credibility of the witness (Kosso 2001, 31-32).

Each discipline has both strengths and weaknesses. Despite the limitations of each, they both have a powerful role to play in knowing the past (Kosso 2001: 33). When used together, they can complement one another to give us a deeper, richer picture of the past.

**Archaeology in the Classroom**

Archaeology is usually not an academic subject in pre-collegiate classrooms, but teachers in most states are required to teach history beginning with prehistoric times—a period known largely through archaeology. Because of its interdisciplinary nature, many upper elementary and secondary educators find archaeology to be an engaging way to teach social studies, history, and science (Smardz and Smith 2000). Archaeology in the classroom requires many skills in language arts, mathematics, and visual arts. Teachers can also use archaeology to teach citizenship and character (Moe et al. 2002) and science inquiry and the Nature of Science (Moe 2011).

**Teaching Citizenship with Archaeology**

Although it may not be readily apparent, archaeology can be used to teach personal character and ethics. Most people do not associate archaeology with ethics, but the average archaeologist makes ethical decisions on a regular basis (Lynott and Wylie 1995). Archaeologists wrestle with a variety of issues including the needs of living descendants whose ancestors are the subject of research, the handling and disposition of human remains encountered during excavations, and the relevant laws when deciding the fate of archaeological resources on land slated for development. These ethical issues can be woven throughout the study of archaeology and help educators impart character and basic citizenship skills to students of all ages (Moe 2000; Moe et al. 2002).

Knowing and understanding the past is a prerequisite for participating effectively in a pluralistic democracy. Keith Barton and Linda Levstik (2004, 36-40) define three elements of history education for democratic participation: (1) promote reasoned judgment, (2) promote an expanded view of humanity, and (3) involve deliberation about the common good. The study of archaeology can contribute to all three elements.

Inquiry of any type provides some of the knowledge and skills necessary for discussions in a pluralistic democracy. Archaeology combines elements of both scientific and historical inquiry and requires rigorous adherence to the rules of evidence to build good interpretations of the past. Students can use the fundamentals of archaeological inquiry to study and evaluate the problems of a pluralistic democracy.

Archaeology provides an effective viewpoint for teaching cultural understanding because it allows students to step back in time and view cultural differences from a safe distance (Moe et al. 2002). By examining how other people meet basic human needs such as food and shelter in creative ways, students
realize that people are far more similar than they are different. Archaeology is one of the few ways we have to know about people who do not have much written history and it can help us see our own ancestors in a very human light.

The practice of archaeology in the United States almost always involves deliberation over the common good. Archaeologists must continually wrestle with many issues such as protecting archaeological sites from theft, looting, and destruction; conducting research on human remains; and ensuring the maintenance of museum collections over long periods of time for all to learn from and enjoy. Because of this, issues of historic preservation can serve as an introduction to American civic life.

**Unit Overview**

**Project Archaeology: Investigating a Roman Villa**

**Research and Design**

Project Archaeology is a comprehensive education program primarily for upper elementary through high school teachers and their students. The program as a whole teaches four overarching enduring understandings:

1. Understanding the past is essential for understanding the present and shaping the future.
2. Learning about cultures, past and present, is essential for living in a pluralistic society and world.
3. Archaeology is a systematic way to learn about past cultures.
4. Stewardship of archaeological sites and artifacts is everyone’s responsibility.

Project Archaeology used two well-researched learning models to develop this curriculum unit on the archaeological study of food and culture: Understanding by Design, a backwards design model by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (1998, 1999), and a concept-based model by H. Lynn Erickson (2001). Both models emphasize teaching for deep understanding of big ideas or broad concepts rather than acquisition of isolated facts. For Wiggins and McTighe (1998: 10) *enduring understandings* are, “. . . the big ideas, the important understandings, that we want students to ‘get inside of’ and retain after they’ve forgotten many of the details.” Similarly, Erickson (2001) emphasizes the selection of universal generalizations or enduring understandings to organize and facilitate student learning rather than memorizing facts or focusing on topics. This curriculum is designed to help the students master the enduring understandings.

This curriculum unit teaches seven enduring understandings specific to the theme of Roman villas. These enduring understandings are derived from and support the four overarching enduring understandings for Project Archaeology:

1. Human remains and objects associated with them provide a human connection to the past and reveal elements of culture. Studying ancient human remains has ethical implications.
2. Volcanoes play a significant role in shaping the human environment.
3. There are different types of volcanic eruptions.
4. Communication is important to every culture and art is a form of communication. Frescoes are a form of cultural expression.
5. Mosaic designs use symmetry, shapes, and angles to create patterns. Mosaics are a means of decoration and storytelling.
6. In addition to their value as instruments of economic exchange within Roman imperial society, coins served the Roman emperors as important propaganda tools.
7. Studying a Roman Villa can help us understand Roman people and their culture.
8. Stewardship of cultural and natural resources is everyone’s responsibility.

Essential questions facilitate thinking by engaging students in uncovering the enduring understandings at the heart of each lesson (Wiggins and McTighe 1998; Erickson 2001). Rather than simply covering content, students uncover big ideas through asking and investigating important questions—questions that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no” or with a single sentence. In this unit, essential questions guide each phase of learning.

Assessments are an integral part of each instructional event and the unit as a whole and are designed to determine if students have grasped the enduring understandings (Wiggins and McTighe1998: 63). All learning activities are designed to enable students to complete the assessment successfully. In most cases, assessments are authentic—simulations of problems, issues, or challenges that a professional archaeologist might face. They are usually performance based, allowing students to “. . . relate learning to real-life contexts and situations” (Erickson 2001: 160). Assessment in this unit is primarily formative, is to check and refine understanding as learning progresses, and is a summative assessment (the Final Performance of Understanding) that allows students to demonstrate their understanding of the entire unit.

True understanding is multi-dimensional. Wiggins and McTighe define six facets of understanding: explanation, application, interpretation, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge (1998, 44-45, in Appendix 1). To achieve a mature understanding, students need to master all six facets at some level. Lessons and learning activities in this guide address one or more of the six facets of understanding.

Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning; the classification system is now commonly known as “Bloom’s Taxonomy.” The taxonomy was revised in 2001 and is described in Appendix 2 (Anderson and Krathwohl 2001). Lessons in this curriculum address one or more of the levels.

Multiple Intelligences

The curriculum requires students to use most of the intelligences as defined by Howard Gardner (1983). Reading news reports, editorials, opinion pieces and writing reports help foster the linguistic intelligence. Partner and group work promote the interpersonal intelligence, and as students reflect on their newly acquired knowledge, they develop intrapersonal intelligence.

Common Core State Standards

Project Archaeology: Investigating a Roman Villa provides many opportunities for students to practice English Language Learning per the Common Core State Standards with social studies and science content.
Inherently interdisciplinary, archaeological inquiry allows students to seamlessly integrate knowledge across subjects: social studies, science, art, and literacy. The lessons engage students in discussion, collaborative work, and learning and using domain specific words in context. Students read non-fiction texts for content, perspective, and key ideas and employ the graphics provided to enhance their understanding of the text. Students are required to write routinely throughout the unit, to report their findings both orally and in writing, and to write arguments to support claims in an analysis of the ethical implications of studying human remains. Students use their knowledge to develop new products to communicate their understanding of archaeology to the class and to the larger world. The entire curriculum guide teaches a deep cultural understanding for the Romans.

**Next Generation Science Standards**

Archaeological inquiry provides young students with an engaging way to learn science practices and their underlying concepts. As a scientific endeavor, archaeologists ask questions, plan and conduct investigations based on those questions, collect and analyze data both quantitatively and qualitatively, and construct interpretations and explanations based on evidence. *Project Archaeology: Investigating a Roman Villa* is structured to provide scaffolding for the process of inquiry, but allows students to generate testable questions and answer them with the data provided. *Investigating a Roman Villa* supports the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts by providing non-fiction texts and authentic archaeological data to help teachers seamlessly integrate science with history and the humanities.

**The Learning Cycle**

Following constructivist theory (Brooks and Brooks 1993), lessons are designed using a learning cycle: Uncover Prior Knowledge, Discover New Knowledge, Reflect on New Knowledge, and Assessment (Figure 1). Not only is the cycle of learning important in and of itself for student learning, but students also need to understand where they are in the learning process and what each step means. Research shows that teaching students the purpose for each element of the cycle of learning helps them become independent learners who are more able to direct their own learning processes.

- When students UNCOVER PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, they understand that their teacher is checking in to see what they might already know about content of the lesson, and that they are not expected to know the answers. They understand that they are preparing to learn more.
- When students DISCOVER NEW KNOWLEDGE, they understand that they are learning new concepts and understandings.
- When students REFLECT ON NEW KNOWLEDGE, they understand that they are thinking about how and what they learned and how it connects to other things they know. They understand that this part of the learning cycle helps them more firmly grasp the enduring understanding and retain it.
- When students perform the ASSESSMENT, they understand that they are showing themselves and their teacher their mastery of the enduring understanding. In some lessons, Reflect on New Knowledge and the Assessment may be reversed if the Assessment advances instruction and contributes to uncovering the Enduring Understanding.
Misconceptions can impede learning and, therefore, must be identified and dispelled before more accurate perceptions can be acquired by the learner (Bransford et al. 2000). MISCONCEPTION ALERTS are embedded in the learning cycle and help teachers detect and change misconceptions about archaeology before moving on to new material.

**Unit Organization**

The Common Core State Standards (located in Appendix 3, page 132) shows how the unit fulfills standards in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies for grades 6 -8.

**WARM-UP LESSON:** What Is Archaeology? – Introduces archaeology and the archaeological site that the students will be studying and provides a way to identify misconceptions about archaeology.

**LESSON ONE:** Students watch a video on Oplontis and the human remains discovered there to inform a persuasive essay on the ethics of studying ancient human remains.

**LESSON TWO:** Students meet Pliny the Younger, their tour guide of a Roman villa, and analyze a wall painting to better understand the geographic location of the villa site the students will be studying.

**LESSON THREE:** Students chart different types of volcanic eruptions and compare the eruption of Vesuvius to the letter describing it written by Pliny the Younger through a close-read.

**LESSON FOUR:** Students observe a wall painting and use evidence to answer questions about the past.

**LESSON FIVE:** Students identify lines of symmetry in Roman mosaics, solve a real-world problem and create their own mosaic!

**LESSON SIX:** Students analyze United States coins, then identify ancient Roman coins discovered at Oplontis to create a timeline of Imperial Rome.
LESSON SEVEN: Students compare and contrast homes in Roman times to Modern homes, then play a board game to learn the Latin words for the rooms in a Roman villa.

LESSON EIGHT: Armed with archaeological concepts and analytical techniques, students explore issues of stewardship and protection of archaeological sites and artifacts. Students learn about United States laws and international conventions that protect archaeological sites and artifacts.

FINAL PERFORMANCE OF UNDERSTANDING: Students create a news broadcast on the natural disaster of the A.D. 79 Mount Vesuvius eruption.
Lesson Organization

Teacher Preparation

Each lesson is organized into two main parts: (1) information for the teacher to prepare and teach the lesson, and (2) the cycle of learning. Lessons contain some or all of the following key components.

Enduring Understanding – The key idea that students will acquire.

Essential Question(s) – The questions that guide the lesson.

What Students Will Learn – A list of concepts and skills that students will learn.

What Students Will Do – A list of activities students will engage in to learn the concepts and grasp the enduring understandings.

Assessment – Method for students to demonstrate their grasp of the concepts and enduring understandings. The assessment is described at the beginning of the lesson so teachers will know how the students will demonstrate their comprehension of the content and the enduring understanding.

Key Box – A brief description of the facets of understandings from Understanding by Design (Appendix 1), skills from Bloom’s Taxonomy (Appendix 2), strategies for instruction, approximate duration of the lesson, and appropriate class size.

Materials – Items needed to complete the lesson, divided into items needed for each student, for the class as a whole, and for teacher-led instruction. Most materials are provided in this book. Other materials are inexpensive and easy to find and prepare.

Background Information – Information on the direction of the lesson, how to plan for it, and content to be shared with students.

Misconception Alerts – Insets designed to help teachers detect and correct common misconceptions about archaeology. Guidelines for using the misconception alerts are imbedded in the cycle of learning.

Preparing to Teach – Step-by-step procedures to prepare to teach the lesson and coordinate all activities. In some cases, materials need to be prepared or student assignments made a few days in advance of actually teaching the lesson.

Word Bank – A place for students to collect vocabulary words for reference and use in writing assignments.

The Cycle of Learning

Uncover Prior Knowledge – A brief activity to discover what students already know about the concept(s) to be taught.

Discover New Knowledge – An activity or activities designed to teach new concepts and understandings.

Reflect on New Knowledge – Reflection on the content and concepts taught to reinforce the new knowledge.
**Assessment** – Method for students to demonstrate their grasp of the concepts and enduring understandings. The assessment is also part of the learning process because students are required to apply information to a new situation, synthesize information and concepts into a new whole, or use knowledge to solve new problems.

**Background Information**

In A.D. 79 Mount Vesuvius erupted entrapping a Roman villa as well as everything surrounding it in a time capsule.

![Tabula Peutingeriana](http://www.oplontisproject.org/index.php/the-villas/)

Identified from the Tabula Peutingeriana, a twelfth-century copy of a Roman map, ancient Oplontis was a seaside town, located less than three miles to the west of Pompeii. Today the site is occupied by the modern town of Torre Annunziata. To date, archaeologists have identified three different ancient sites: Oplontis A and B. Villa A is sometimes called the villa of Poppaea owing to its possible association with Nero’s second wife, Poppaea Sabina. The site of Villa B lies approximately 1000 feet to the east of Villa A, and like Villa A, it is a building of the Roman era that was destroyed by the A.D. 79 eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Though located very near the luxurious and sprawling Villa A, Villa B is strikingly different in what it preserves, and from its remains we can also surmise that it had a very different function from its opulent neighbor. Whereas Villa A is clearly a luxury villa designed for *otium*, or leisure, Villa B may not even be a villa in the traditional sense, but rather some type of emporium or distribution center. Its spaces are meant not for leisure but for *negotium*, or industry.

For more background information on the villas at Oplontis visit The Oplontis Project website: [www.oplontisproject.org](http://www.oplontisproject.org)
Archaeology of Pompeii

In 1711, men digging for limestone accidentally uncovered the ancient city of Pompeii. Since that first discovery, numerous archaeological excavations have revealed hundreds of objects that illuminate the inhabitants’ daily lives. This region continues to be excavated and new discoveries are still being made. As a result of 200 years of excavations, archaeologists are able to draw detailed conclusions about ancient Roman life through uncovered artifacts. Plaster casts of human remains show real people caught as they fled with their most prized possessions. The victims’ frescoes, mosaics, jewelry, sculpture and other personal objects found in the ruins attest to the affluence of these communities. Since the discovery of Pompeii, archaeologists have created systematic excavations of this region by recording the location and context in which artifacts are found. For more information and additional educational materials visit https://www.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/jsandy/2014/08/11/pompeii_eduguide.pdf
Museum of the Rockies Exhibit

More than 2,000 years ago, extremely wealthy Romans lived and played on the sunny shores of the Bay of Naples at Pompeii and in luxury villas nearby, unconcerned about Mount Vesuvius in the distance. One of the most luxurious of these retreats, Oplontis, located on a cliff 40 feet above the Mediterranean shoreline, was rumored to be the summer villa of Emperor Nero’s second wife, Poppaea.

For unknown reasons, the villa itself had been abandoned by the time of Vesuvius’ catastrophic eruption in A.D. 79, but a commercial wine distribution center next door was thriving. Falling ash and pyroclastic flows buried empty dining rooms that had seated more than a hundred people, an 80-meter swimming pool, private rooms adorned with spectacular frescos, and marble columns resting on mosaic floors ready for re-sale. Preserved next door were wine and oil-filled amphorae, a strong-box with coins, and people hiding in the barrel-vaulted storage rooms at the water’s edge, waiting for a rescue that never came.

The Villas at Oplontis, now a World Heritage Site at present-day Torre Annunziata, less than three miles from Pompeii, have been under archaeological excavation for many years and large parts of the villa and the wine center have been uncovered. Dr. Regina Gee, Associate Professor of Art History at Montana State University and Adjunct Curator of Art History at the Museum of the Rockies, is one of three researchers working on the villas and is an expert on frescos found there. Several years ago, she and her research colleagues from the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Michigan received permission from the Superintenza to organize an exhibit of artifacts from the site to travel to the United States – artifacts that have never left Italy before.

*Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis Near Pompeii* will appear at the Museum of the Rockies from June 18, 2016 to December 31, 2016. The Museum of the Rockies will be the only exhibit venue west of the Mississippi River.

This exhibition is organized and circulated by The University of Michigan Kelsey Museum of Archaeology in cooperation with the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attivitá Culturali e del Turismo and the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Pompei, Ercolano e Stabia.