

# Arky for Kidz Program™



Presented by the **Nautical Archaeology Group**  
and **South Suburban Archaeological Society**

Outline developed by Roger J. Barski  
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## **Illinois History**

Within the borders of the state of Illinois lie some of the richest archaeological sites found anywhere in the United States. Probably the best known site, Cahokia, is located downstate across the river from St. Louis, Missouri. Cahokia, as well as many of the other Native American sites located across the state, tells the story about the early inhabitants that moved into this area at the end of the last ice age and how they existed prior to the arrival of the Europeans. Because many of these sites still contain valuable research material, universities across the country send their archaeologists and students to the Midwest on field schools to help uncover and study these past cultures. In addition to these projects, thousands of people tour places like Cahokia each year during the summer months to study and walk the grounds of these ancient settlements.

Along the sixty-three miles of lakeshore that Illinois borders with Lake Michigan sits a large collection of shipwrecks and underwater sites that also carry a unique history of their own. Between the Indiana-Illinois border and the town of Evanston lay at least two dozen sunken vessels with a direct connection to the rapid development of cities like Milwaukee, Chicago, and Michigan City.

Sitting just off-shore from the beaches of Chicago are the wooden schooners, barges, tug boats, and iron-haul vessels that brought bulk cargo and people from the east to settle in the new territories in the 1800's. Before the railroads were developed, these ships were considered the 18-wheelers of their day and supplied the growing population of settlers with the materials needed to exist in the new land. If it were not for these vessels and the trade routes taken back and forth from Buffalo, New York, through Lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan, along with the inland canal systems developed shortly thereafter, the state of Illinois' growth would never have happened as it did—and Chicago would have never grown into the major city that it is today.

Together the archaeological sites such as Cahokia, Dixon Mounds, Hoxie, and Kincaid, along with the Lake Michigan shipwrecks contain the rich past history that led to the development of Illinois. As important as these locations and shipwrecks are to our understanding of the past, they are for some reason, rarely taught or even mentioned in the grades leading up to the high school level. One would have to take a fundamental course in Transportation or Archaeology at the college or university level to learn the most basic facts mentioned above—if at all.

## **The Arky for Kidz Program**

Both the Nautical Archaeology Group (NAG) and the South Suburban Archaeological Society (SSAS) believe that there is not enough classroom instruction in archaeology for young students between the ages of 9 and 15 years of age. By time a student learns or gains an interest in archaeology they may have already reached an age where they have decided upon a line of work for future employment. Chances are that archaeology will not be included. NAG and SSAS believe that by reaching students at a much earlier age with the *Arky for Kidz Program* that it may actually make the difference in having some of them choose a career in the field of anthropology, archaeology, or the related sciences.

### The Learning Concept

The *Arky for Kidz Program* is designed to introduce children and young adults to the basic methods and techniques used during the course of an archaeological project. Once a demonstration is completed by the staff, the students take over using a *hands-on approach* in solving the problems presented to them. The staff is always on stand-by to supervise the control the entire session and to answer any questions the students may have concerning a given problem.

### The Challenge

The main concept here is to teach the students how to work on an archaeological project as *individuals* and as *part of a team*. Not only do they learn *how* to measure and record and artifact the correct way, but they learn *why* it is done to a *standard*. Importantly, they learn to do the steps by *procedure*. Sometime during the program each Arky Team will be faced with one or more situations where there is no correct answer to the circumstance. They must discuss it amongst themselves and then come up with the most appropriate solution to the problem. This teamwork approach forces them to think as a group, rather than as individuals.

### Terrestrial Site Format

The program itself is designed around two, hand painted, finely detailed, 12' x 15' cotton-canvas tarps (Arky Site) that represents a land based, pre-historical archaeological location (see Fig. 1). The painted tarps suggests that it was once occupied by an extended family that lived and worked out of their dwelling. The remains of the perimeter of their home suggest where they cooked, worked, and slept. Drawn around the settlement are a variety of artifacts and features (see Glossary) that the family would have used in their everyday lives. The *Arky Site* is a generic representation of a time period and is not meant to be a facsimile reproduction of any actual location.

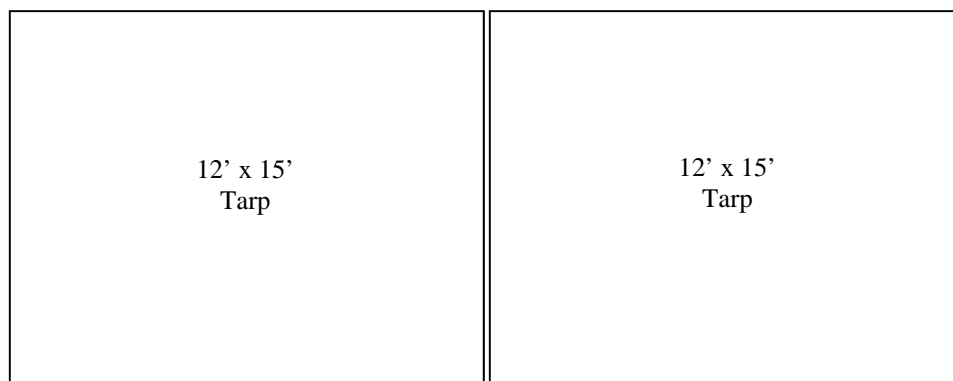


Fig. 1. Arky Site Layout

### Shipwreck Site Format

In addition to the terrestrial format mentioned above, a second Arky Site plan is being designed that centers around the remains of a generic shipwreck sitting on the bottom of the sea. This shipwreck will contain artifacts and features that can be mapped and surveyed as would a site on dry land. Either of the two programs would then be offered to survey and record. This choice can be made by the staff or by classroom vote.

### **Class Demonstration**

Before the exercise begins the students are given a short lecture on how and why archaeology is important to the understanding of our past. The group is then given a demonstration by the instructor and staff on how to measure and record an artifact or feature in the field.

### **Individual Arky Teams**

The students are broken down into groups of 3-4 individuals called *Arky Teams*.

Each team is assigned a team color; red, blue, green, etc.

Each team is issued a "Tool Kit" (measuring tape-reel, slate, clipboard, pencil, etc.)

Each item in the Tool Kit is color-coded and matches the team's color.

Each team follows directions on what to measure from a pre-printed instruction form.

These are the following positions for each Arky Team (based on four members)

- One individual holds the end of the measuring tape (dead-end).
- One individual determines the correct measurement.
- One individual records the answer to a pre-printed form.
- One individual oversees the operation.

When the Arky Team has finished reading each problem, measuring the distance, double-checking their work, they record their answer to a form. The team then rotates its job positions so that everyone gets a chance to work in each individual position.

The *Arky for Kidz Program* is designed to solve basic problems found during the course of an archaeological survey and is *not intended as a competition between Arky Teams*. The intention of the exercise is to have the students learn about the importance of archaeology and have fun doing it in the process.

### **Math and Logic**

Each team will be required to use basic math and common logic to solve specially designed questions for the Arky Site. Below is a list of some of the problems they will encounter.

- Measure length and width
- Divide length by width for a *ratio*
- Measure the *diameter* of circular artifacts
- Measure the *circumference* of an artifact and divide by *Pi* for the diameter
- Obtain an *average* from several measurements
- Why do you think the fire pit is located here?
- What direction is largest room of the house facing?
- Which room do you think was used for sleeping and why?

## Visual Aids

Since the two tarps represent an *aerial view* (birds-eye view) of the site, a poster-sized illustration showing the same location in a *three dimensional view* will be put on display for the students to compare with. A 3-D scale model of the site will also be available to study along with the illustration. If there is still any confusion as to what an Arky Team is looking at on the ground (canvas tarps), they can consult with the instructor or staff for additional help.

## Wrap-Up

Once all of the problems on the pre-printed forms are solved by each Arky Team, or the allotted time period has ended, the program is called and a critique is given by the instructor based on the performance of the entire class. A short question and answer period may follow if time allows.

At the conclusion of the program a colorful certificate is issued to each student with the following information:

- Junior Archaeologist, Arky for Kids Program (title)
- Student's Name
- Date of Class
- Appropriate credits

## Internet Presence

Both the NAG and SSAS websites will provide a special section containing all of the detailed instructions and pre-printed forms needed to run the *Arky for Kids Program*. These instructions will be available as HTML pages or for download by PDF format.

An *Arky Site Instructor Manual* and *PowerPoint Presentation* designed and written to help the instructors and staff successfully conduct the program will also be available for download from either website. To aid in the learning process, the PowerPoint presentation will show the instructors the step-by-step procedures of the entire program laid out from start to finish as a staged classroom event.

## Websites

Nautical Archaeology Group  
[www.NAGteam.Org](http://www.NAGteam.Org)

South Suburban Archaeological Society  
[www.ArkyFacts.Org](http://www.ArkyFacts.Org)

## Program Credits

This program was developed as a joint effort between the Nautical Archaeology Group and the South Suburban Archaeological Society for release to the public education system.

*Arky for Kidz Program* developed by Roger J. Barski, (NAG)

*Terrestrial Site Format* developed by Roger J. Barski and Bob Nale (SSAS)

*Shipwreck Site Format* developed by Roger J. Barski