

Lesson 1

“The only way to discover the unwritten past...”

Before There Was a Georgia

Enduring Understanding

Cultures change and develop over time as they are impacted by natural forces and encounter other cultures.

Lesson Essential Question

How did various developments in the culture of the prehistoric indigenous Americans mark their evolution from the Paleo Period through the Mississippian Period?

Introduction

The land on which today’s Georgians live has been inhabited by people for over 12,000 years, yet settlers from Europe and Africa arrived only a little more than 250 years ago. Who were the people who preceded us? How did they use their productive resources to meet their need for food, clothing, and shelter?

GPS Standards –

SS8E1 The student will give examples of the kinds of goods and services produced in Georgia during historical periods.

SS8H1 The student will evaluate the development of Native American cultures and the impact of European exploration and settlement on Native American cultures in Georgia.

- a. Describe the evolution of Native American cultures (Paleo, Archaic, Woodland and Mississippian) prior to European contact.

Economic Concepts

scarcity, factors of production, productivity, specialization

Knowledge

The student will know that:

- archaeology gives us a window to the past.
- many groups of people have lived in the region which is today Georgia.
- Georgia’s prehistoric people made decisions about the use of their productive resources.

Core Skills

The student will be able to:

- draw conclusions and make generalizations.
- read for main idea, detail, sequence of events, and cause and effect relationships in a social studies context.
- interpret a chart.
- compare similarities and differences.

Georgia Economic History
GEORGIA'S BEGINNINGS

<p>Materials Needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>19th and 20th Century Georgia Artifacts</i> Transparency▪ <i>Prehistoric Georgia Artifacts</i> Transparency▪ <i>United States Coins</i> Transparency▪ <i>Georgia's Early People</i> Handout▪ <i>What is Economics</i> Transparency▪ <i>The Impact of Changes in Technology</i> Worksheet	<p>Time Required</p> <p>1-2 class periods</p>
<p>Procedures</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Begin the lesson by explaining to students that many different groups of people have lived in the region which is today Georgia. When the European explorers and settlers arrived, they encountered the Creek and Cherokee, but these were not the first people to live here. Even to these people, a mystery surrounded the question of who had built the mounds at Etowah and Kolomoki. Ask students to hypothesize how people today can learn about the people who came before us. If students do not raise the point, explain that archaeologists have uncovered artifacts such as pottery and tools which give clues to the culture of the earliest humans in what are now Georgia and the Southeast.2. Explain to students that archaeology is the study of things that people long ago made and did in their lives. From long-deserted camps, villages and cities, the archaeologist salvages materials left behind by earlier people, including bones of animals killed and eaten, and occasionally, bones of humans. From these bits of evidence, the archaeologist strives to create a picture of the lives of people from long ago. It is not an easy task. The science of archaeology is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle when most of the parts are missing. Even the few objects the archaeologist might find represent only a fragment of what was originally there. Look around your home and estimate how many of your possessions will last for hundreds or thousands of years. Most likely items made of cloth and wood would be gone. About all that would be left would be fragments of ceramic dishes, plastic items, some pots and pans made of non-rusting metals, and perhaps the collapsed remains of a brick wall. From what is left, the archaeologist of the future would make deductions.3. Project a copy of the <i>19th and 20th Century Georgia Artifacts</i> Transparency and ask students to identify the items from 19th and 20th century Georgia. Summarize student comments by asking "How might an archaeologist in the future explain the parts of Georgia culture represented by these artifacts?"	

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4. Have students examine "contemporary artifacts" such as a set of U.S. coins. Ask students to make a list of attributes the culture that produced the coins might have possessed. Based on the use of metals, the writing, the numbers, the people and buildings depicted, etc., ask students to hypothesize as to what an archaeologist in the distant future might conclude about the society. This activity may be conducted using the *United States Coins* Transparency, or placing students into groups and giving each group a set of actual coins to examine. Conclude this activity by asking "Are conclusions drawn from only one artifact totally accurate?"
5. Project a copy of the *Prehistoric Georgia Artifacts* Transparency and ask students to identify the items from Prehistoric Georgia. Conclude the activity by asking students "How might an archaeologist today explain the parts of Georgia culture represented by these artifacts?" How complete of a picture do these artifacts provide? What type of artifact discoveries would shed more light on a particular culture?
6. Explain to students that all societies make decisions about the use of their productive resources/factors of production, (natural/land, human/labor, capital, entrepreneurship). Have students read the *Georgia's Early People* Handout. In teams, have students use this information to complete *The Impact of Changes in Technology* Worksheet and analyze the information recorded in the table by answering the questions. The teacher should use the *What Is Economics* Transparency to guide a discussion centered on what productive resources Georgia's first people had available.
7. Debrief the workshop by asking students to give specific examples of how societies made these economic decisions; introduce the concepts of scarcity, specialization, trade, voluntary exchange, productivity, and technological advances (*scarcity*- when there are unlimited wants but limited resources; *specialization*- focusing on a narrow skill or task in order to become more efficient; *productivity*- measures of output from productive resources based on improvements in technology).
8. Conclude lesson by asking students how archeology gives us a window into the past and how Georgia archeologists worked to uncover our past.

Georgia Economic History
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The New Georgia Encyclopedia

For more background information to support this lesson, read these entries:

Archaic Period

[Archaic Period: Overview](#)

[Coastal Shell Rings](#)

[Indian Pottery](#)

[Stallings Island Site](#)

Mississippian Period

[Mississippian Period: Overview](#)

[Etowah Mounds](#)

[Irene Mounds](#)

[King Site](#)

[Lamar Period](#)

[Nacoochee Mound](#)

[Ocmulgee Mounds](#)

[Spanish Exploration](#)

Paleo Period

[Paleoindian Period: Overview](#)

Woodland Period

[Woodland Period: Overview](#)

[Cane Island Site](#)

[Kolomoki Mounds](#)

[Rock Mounds and Structures](#)

[Swift Creek Culture](#)

[Weeden Island Culture](#)

EconEdLink Online Lessons

For more student activities on economic history in a U.S. context, use these lessons:

✓ no additional lessons for this topic

Georgia Economic History
GEORGIA'S BEGINNINGS

Assessment

1. Which activity increased productivity for the Archaic hunter?
 - A. stone tools
 - B. animal skins
 - C. nuts and berries
 - D. invention of the atlatl*

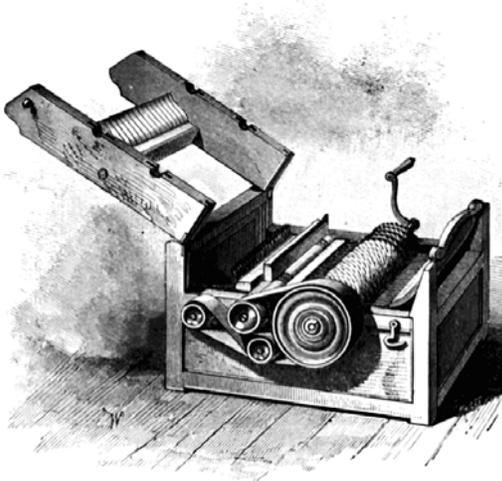
2. Which culture is credited with the development of the bow and arrow?
 - A. Paleo
 - B. Archaic
 - C. Woodland *
 - D. Mississippian

3. Which early culture created an extensive trade network with other Indian communities?
 - A. Paleo
 - B. Archaic
 - C. Woodland
 - D. Mississippian *

19th and 20th Century Georgia Artifacts

Transparency

Directions: Identify these items from 19th and 20th century Georgia. How might an archaeologist in the future explain the parts of Georgia culture represented by these artifacts?



1¢



Abraham Lincoln



Lincoln Memorial

5¢



Thomas Jefferson



Monticello

10¢



Franklin D. Roosevelt



Torch

25¢



George Washington



50 States Design

50¢



John F. Kennedy



Presidential Coat of Arms

\$1



Sacagawea

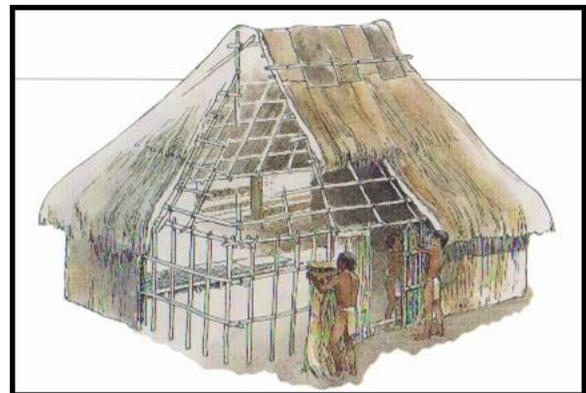
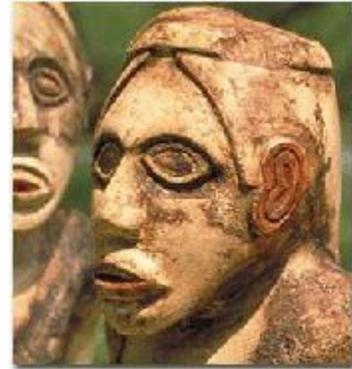
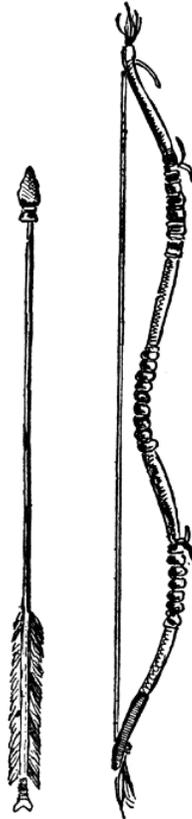


Bald Eagle

Prehistoric Georgia Artifacts

Transparency

Directions: Identify these items from Prehistoric Georgia. How might an archaeologist today explain the parts of Georgia culture represented by these artifacts?



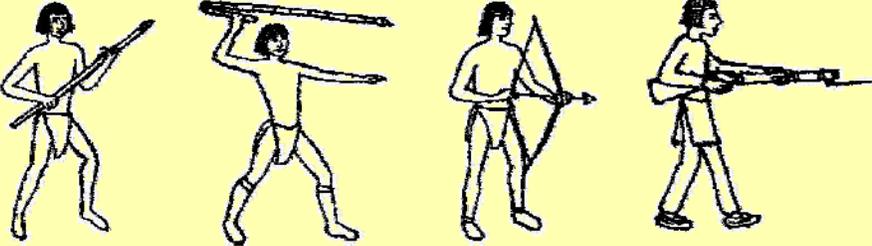
Georgia's first people were the **Paleo** who moved from the Great Plains about 12,000 years ago into what is today Georgia. For the first 2,000 years, the Paleo roamed the Mountain, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain regions of Georgia hunting large animals such as mastodons and giant bison. When the big animals disappeared about 10,000 years ago, the Paleo had to change the way they lived. They learned to hunt small game such as deer and turkey. The Paleo people made spears with flint or stone points attached called Clovis points. They also gathered berries, nuts, and other plant food. Their homes were made of animal skins which could be easily moved from place to place as they traveled to gather food.

With the passing of time, the larger animals disappeared, and the new generations of Indians had to learn new ways of doing things. They cleared parts of the forest to attract game. They made a new kind of spear which could be thrown rather than jabbed, called an atlatl. They developed stone tools such as the axe. They also discovered how to make pottery from clay. These generations of people were known as the **Archaic**.

About 3,000 years ago, the people living in what is now Georgia learned to hunt with bows and arrows rather than jabbing or throwing spears. They also learned simple farming techniques. They saved seeds and planted crops in forest clearings and along rivers. They also continued hunting, fishing, and gathering, but farming let them live in one place for longer periods of time. Because they did not have to move frequently, they made houses out of wood, leaves, and bark. Bands joined together to form tribes and these **Woodland** people lived in small villages.

About 1,000 years ago, a new people moved into the area that is now Georgia. Because the ancestors of these people came from the valley of the Mississippi River, they are called the **Mississippians**. They brought a new culture with them, including a new way of farming. They grew many kinds of foods and then saved their harvest in storehouses. They were able to stay in one place without having to move, so they built large villages close to rivers. They also formed chiefdoms, or nations, in which multiple villages were ruled by a priest-chief. In their villages they built large, flat-topped mounds of earth for religious and social activities, graves and platforms for buildings. The Mississippians are also called the "mound builders". The Mississippians lived in peace with the Woodland Indians for hundreds of years.

When the first Europeans came to **Modern** Georgia, the Mississippians disappeared. It is thought they died of diseases brought by the Europeans. The Woodland people survived and they eventually learned many of the cultural ways of the Europeans such as how to make metal tools and how to use guns. Over time, two nations were formed: The Cherokees and the Creeks. The Cherokees lived in the mountains while the Creeks lived in the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain regions.

				
People Who Used This Weapon				
Approximate Time Period				
Type of Weapon				
Type of Tools				
Type of Food Eaten				
Type of Shelter				

Directions: Use the table to answer the questions below.

1. Over time, how did early people adapt to solve the problem of a *scarcity* of food?
2. How the changes in technology from spear, to atlatl, to bow and arrow improve *productivity*?

Did these changes come slowly or quickly? [Hint: Compute the length of each cultural time period.]

3. What evidence is there of early people being able to *specialize* in doing activities which made life better for the whole society?
4. Across time, what types of *natural resources* did early people use to provide shelter?
5. What was the impact of the early people of Georgia engaging in *trade* with Europeans?

The Impact of Changes in Technology

KEY

People Who Used This Weapon	<i>Paleo</i>	<i>Archaic</i>	<i>Woodland</i>	<i>Mississippian</i>
Approximate Time Period	<i>12,000 – 8,000 BCE</i>	<i>8,000 – 1,000 BCE</i>	<i>1,000 BCE – 750 CE</i>	<i>750 CE – 1500 CE</i>
Type of Weapon	<i>spear</i>	<i>atlatl</i>	<i>bow and arrow</i>	<i>European guns</i>
Type of Tools	<i>stone</i>	<i>axe, hooks, nets for fishing</i>	<i>pottery for storage</i>	<i>storehouses</i>
Type of Food Eaten	<i>Large and small animals, berries, nuts, and plants</i>	<i>Small animals, berries, nuts, and plants</i>	<i>Farming begins along with hunting and gathering</i>	<i>Larger scale farming; trade with other communities</i>
Type of Shelter	<i>Animal skins</i>	<i>Shallow, oval-pit houses</i>	<i>Houses of wood, leaves and bark</i>	<i>Mound builders with permanent buildings</i>

Directions: Use the table to answer the questions below.

1. Over time, how did early people adapt to solve the problem of a scarcity of food?

Small groups of families traveled from place to place in a nomadic lifestyle “gathering” berries and nuts; as they learned to use weapons, they began hunting animals; as the weapons improved, people were able to access more food.

2. How the changes in technology from spear, to atlatl, to bow and arrow improve productivity?

With each culture the capital tools improved. The spear was a simple stick with a sharpened point; the atlatl contained a hook, handle, and other improvements over the spear; the bow and arrow was reusable and was applied from a safer distance. These improvements in capital tools enabled people to reduce the scarcity of food and the population grew because there was enough food for more people.

Did these changes come slowly or quickly? [Hint: Compute the length of each cultural time period.]

These changes occurred slowly over time:

Paleo era – 4,000 years

Archaic era – 7,000 years

Woodland era – 1,750 years

Mississippian era – 750 years

3. What evidence is there of early people being able to specialize in doing activities which made life better for the whole society?

While many people were engaged in farming, others were able to focus on making better weapons, better tools, and better places to live. There were people who made and decorated pottery while others focused on building earthen mounds and permanent buildings. People were able to develop their human capital with specialized skills which improved society.

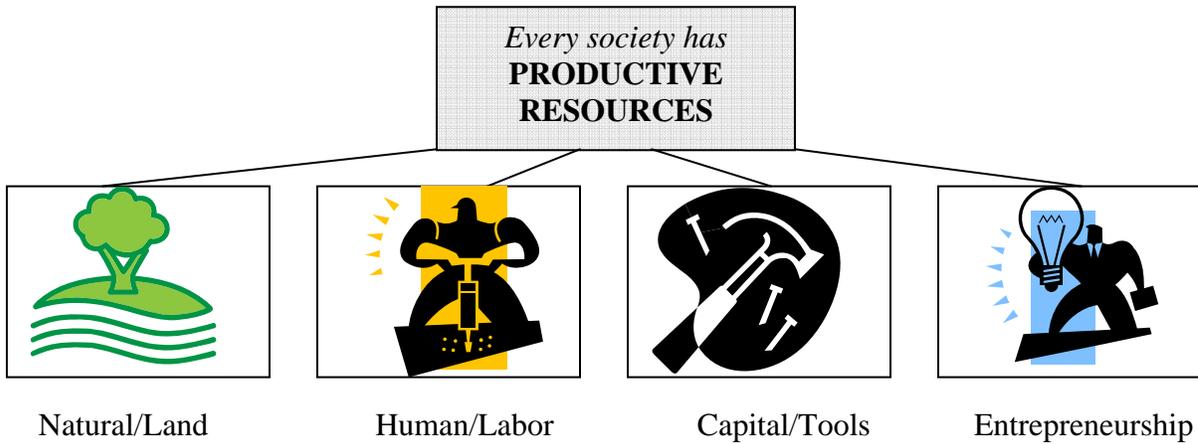
4. Across time, what types of natural resources did early people use to provide shelter?

Animal skins which were easily transported by nomads were used initially; these gave way to wood structures when agricultural tools allowed people to live in the same place.

5. What was the impact of the early people of Georgia engaging in trade with Europeans?

The initial contact led to the spread of disease and many Native Americans; later, trade between the two groups gave them access to improved weapons and other goods.

Economics is making decisions about how to allocate limited resources to acquire out unlimited wants.



which are used to produce...



However, because of

Scarcity
Choices

must be made to answer the questions

- ✓ What goods and services will be produced?
- ✓ How will the goods and services be produced?
- ✓ Who will consume the goods and services?

This creates the need for an



The Basic Economic Problem

Every society must decide how to make the best use of its limited productive resources. Scarcity, with the resulting need to choose among competing alternatives, is the basic economic problem.