

Lesson Plan: Teaching Archaeology and Anthropology Through Stefan Milo

Course: Grow Your Own Educator Preparation Program

Grade Level: 9-12 (Future Educators)

Duration: 35-40 minutes

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Date Prepared: December 16, 2025

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define archaeology, anthropology, prehistory, and hominin in their own words
2. Explain Milo's approach to making ancient people feel real to students
3. Apply Milo's "3 golden rules" (academic sources, cite sources, mark opinions) to lesson design

Standards Alignment

Texas TEKS - Instructional Practices (Education and Training Career Cluster):

TEKS	Standard
4	The student understands the learner and the learning process. Demonstrate techniques for development of effective relationships with students that foster mutual respect and rapport and result in effective instruction.
5	The student understands instructional planning and delivery. Present subject matter effectively, including selecting and using a variety of instructional strategies to promote student success.
7	The student creates an effective learning environment. Describe and implement a safe and effective learning environment; demonstrate teacher characteristics that promote effective learning.

Connection to Educator Preparation:

- Models precise definition of terms as a first-principles teaching practice
- Demonstrates how to make abstract content (distant past) emotionally accessible

- Shows the importance of intellectual honesty (sources, opinions vs. facts)
- Connects historical/scientific content to human experience

Source: TEKS from `teks/practices/generated/` (Instructional Practices course materials)

Materials Needed

- ■ Presentation slides (slides.yaml) - displayed via projector/screen
- ■ Reading passage (reading.md) - displayed for students to follow along
- ■ Group discussion worksheet (worksheet.md) - students access on their devices
- ■ Paper and pencils for group note-taking
- ■ Google Classroom quiz (created from quiz.md via Automagical Forms)
- ■ Optional: Images of stone tools, Neanderthal reconstructions, cave art

Lesson Sequence

Opening (5 minutes)

0:00 - 0:05

- Begin with precise definitions: "Before we talk about the past, let's be exact about what we mean."
- Define archaeology, anthropology, prehistory, hominin
- Ask: "Why does it matter to define these terms clearly before we teach them?"
- Present learning objectives
- Introduce Stefan Milo: Sheffield-trained, YouTube, "No Atlantis, No Aliens, No Nonsense"

Direct Instruction (10 minutes)

0:05 - 0:15

- Present slides covering:
 - Who Stefan Milo is and his background
 - His 3 golden rules for teaching this content
 - His signature move: making ancient people feel real
 - What ancient DNA has revealed about human origins
- Read aloud the reading passage while students follow along on screen
- Key check: "What's the difference between knowing facts about Neanderthals and imagining what it was like to BE a Neanderthal?"

Guided Practice - Group Discussion (15 minutes)

0:15 - 0:30

- Organize students into groups of 3-4
- Direct students to access the worksheet on their devices
- Explain instructions: discuss prompts verbally, summarize key points on paper

- Circulate among groups to:
 - Ask: "What specific details would help students imagine being there?"
 - Push for sensory details: "What did they see? Smell? Hear?"
 - Connect to rigor: "How would you handle a student who brings up aliens or Atlantis?"
- At 0:28, give a 2-minute warning to wrap up discussions

Closure (5 minutes)

0:30 - 0:35

- Bring class back together
- Invite 2-3 groups to share one vivid detail that would make prehistory real for students
- Summarize main takeaways:
 - Define terms precisely before teaching
 - Use only credible sources and cite them
 - Facts matter, but connection makes facts live
 - Help students imagine being there, not just knowing about it
- Transition to assessment

Assessment (5-8 minutes)

0:35 - 0:40

- Direct students to Google Classroom to complete the quiz individually
- Remind students: questions are randomized, no retakes, answers not shown at end
- Remain available for technical questions

Differentiation Strategies

For students needing additional support:

- Pair with supportive peer during group discussion
- Provide images of artifacts and reconstructions during discussion
- Focus discussion on Prompts 2 and 5 (most concrete)
- Offer sentence starters: "If I were a Neanderthal, I would see..."

For advanced students:

- Assign discussion facilitator role within their group
- Pose extension: "How does ancient DNA research challenge older ways of teaching human evolution?"
- Challenge them to design a 5-minute mini-lesson on one prehistoric topic
- Explore Prompt 4 (what DNA tells us) in depth

Assessment

Formative Assessment:

- Observation during group discussions (use of precise definitions)
- Quality of sensory details students generate for making prehistory real
- Understanding of the difference between credible and non-credible sources

Summative Assessment:

- Google Classroom quiz: 8 multiple choice and true/false questions
- Includes definition checks and understanding of Milo's approach
- Quiz data informs whether concepts need reinforcement in future lessons

Reflection (Post-Lesson)

To be completed after teaching:

What worked well:

What needs adjustment:

Student engagement observations:

Notes for next time:

Appendix

Key Vocabulary:

- **Archaeology:** The study of the human past through physical remains (bones, tools, artifacts)
- **Anthropology:** The study of humans and human societies, past and present
- **Prehistory:** The time before written records exist; most of human history
- **Hominin:** A member of the human family tree, including modern humans and our extinct relatives

About Stefan Milo:

Stefan Milosavljevich is an English YouTuber with a BA in Archaeology and Anthropology from the University of Sheffield. His channel focuses on prehistory, human evolution, and ancient DNA research. He is the first full-time anthropology YouTuber and author of *Tales of Ancient Worlds: Adventures in Archaeology* (2022). His approach emphasizes academic rigor ("No Atlantis, No Aliens, No Nonsense") while making ancient people feel real and relatable.

Additional Resources:

- Stefan Milo YouTube channel
- "Life & Death in Prehistory" video series
- Smithsonian Human Origins Initiative
- Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology