

# Effigy Mound Activity

## Materials

All About Effigy Mounds and Mound Builders  
(one per student)

Mound Group maps by county: (Grant, Richland, Dane, Dodge, Milwaukee)  
(one county set per group)

County Mound Group Tally Sheets  
(one county sheet for each group)

County Mound Group Graphs  
(one county sheet for each group)

Five County Mound Group Composite Graph  
(one per student)

Map of Wisconsin with All Effigy Mound Sites with Grant, Richland, Dane, Dodge, and Milwaukee Counties Highlighted  
(one transparency and one copy per student)

Pie Charts of Effigy Mounds by Type and Place  
(one county sheet for each group)

Composite Pie Chart  
(one transparency and one copy per group)

If I Were an Effigy Mound Builder  
(one per student)

Effigy Mounds Comparative Timeline  
(transparencies for discussion and enlarged copies, cut apart by era and mounted on heavier chart paper or poster board)

## Overview

This unit will give students a chance to explore the relationship of effigy mounds to specific locations in southern Wisconsin. Students will investigate site maps, identify mound types in several counties, then graph the kind of animal shapes that occur in selected locations and discover how the types vary from east to west across the state. Students will learn that certain types of mounds appear more frequently in one area than in another. Students will gain familiarity with these unique earth-sculptures and their aesthetic and cultural imprint on the Wisconsin landscape.

## Skills, Strategies, and Standards

Identification, expository reading, creative writing, increased familiarity with Wisconsin geography, archaeology, and the history of Early Indians in Wisconsin, classification, analysis, graphing, synthesis.

### Social Studies

- A.4.2** Locate on a map both natural and human features.
- A.4.5** Use charts, graphs, and maps to gather information about the local community and Wisconsin.
- A.4.7** Identify connections between places in Wisconsin.
- B.4.1** Identify and examine various sources of information that are used for constructing an understanding of the past.
- B.4.10** Explain the history and culture of the American Indian tribes and bands in Wisconsin.

### Language Arts

- A.4.1** Use effective reading strategies to achieve their purposes in reading.
- A.4.3** Read and discuss nonliterary texts in order to understand human experience.
- B.4.1** Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- C.4.2** Listen to and comprehend oral communications.
- C.4.3** Participate effectively in discussion.

### Art

- B.4.3** Know that works of art and designed objects relate to specific cultures, times, and places.
- D.4.3** Know that the environment influences the look and use of art, architecture, and design.

### Math

- A.4.2** Communicate mathematical ideas in a variety of ways, including words, numbers, symbols, pictures, charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, and models.
- A.4.3** Connect mathematical learning with other subjects.

## Procedures

1. Place the transparency of the **Map of Wisconsin with All Effigy Mound Sites** on the overhead projector. Explain that each dot represents one place where mounds are found. Elicit from students responses to the following questions: Which counties have effigy mounds? Which county seems to have more of them? Are the mounds evenly distributed over the landscape, or do they clump together in certain places? Which places seem to contain the most mounds?
2. Elicit from students that effigy mounds in Wisconsin are more prevalent in the southern part of the state, and explain to students that they will be conducting an archaeological survey to find some information about effigy mounds that have already been mapped in different counties in Wisconsin.
3. Pass out the **All About Effigy Mounds and Mound Builders** sheets to students and review the **All About Effigy Mounds** material together. Tell students that they will be working in small groups (one group for each county) to determine the frequency of animal types (and other forms) of mounds in their county. Afterwards, the groups will be comparing and contrasting their results and analyzing the data that they have obtained.
4. Show the **Map of Wisconsin with All Effigy Mound Sites** again and explain that students will be working with real maps of real mound groups from each of these counties.
5. Divide students into groups and pass out the site maps for each group. Allow students to look at the maps of the effigy mound sites. Ask the following: Can you identify which animals are represented? (Some might be easy to identify. Others might be harder, and might be seen in different ways by different people.) The students should be able to identify a number of different kinds of birds and animals by looking at the site maps. Most of the species identified will be native to the Upper Midwest, but some mounds might look like elephants or horses or other non-native animals. Mound identification is subjective, but if it comes up, you might want to discuss why it is unlikely that the effigy mound builders made elephants, camels, or kangaroos, even if the mounds appear to look like them.
6. Pass out the **County Mound Group Tally Sheets** for each group, and have students see that the columns on the sheet correspond to the mound types. Tell students that they will be tallying the data by site, then totaling the numbers before graphing the findings. Monitor students as they work.
7. Pass out the **County Mound Group Graphs** to each group. Have students graph the tally mark totals, carefully entering them in the right columns that represent the different mound groups from the sites in the county they explored. Each graph should be different. Mount the graphs from west to east (Grant, Richland, Dane, Dodge, Milwaukee counties) on a bulletin board or chalkboard where students will be able to see them. Then ask students to concentrate on the *differences* in the graphs. Distribute the **Five County Mound Group Composite Graphs** to each student and have them enter the data that they see displayed.
8. Discuss the findings. Ask students to think about the differences in counties from east to west. Elicit from them that mounds in the western counties tend to have a lot of bears. Mounds in the eastern counties have lots of long-tailed turtles or panthers.

Both areas have lots of birds, though more birds are found in the west than in the east. Dodge County has a lot of geese, which makes it unique. As you go from west to east the frequency of bear mounds drops and the frequency of long-tailed turtles and panthers rises.

9. Pass out appropriate copies of **Pie Charts of Effigy Mounds by Type and Place** to each group, and allow students to fill in the appropriate information by comparing the pie chart to their county graph totals (coloring and labeling the different slices of the pie, and translating the graph data into pie chart format).
10. On the overhead, place the **Composite Pie Chart** transparency, and pass out one copy to each group. Ask groups to list similarities and differences in the total and their counties. Elicit opinions about which type of graph communicates more effectively. Collect group pie charts for assessment, if desired.
11. Discuss different theories about the mounds. Over the years many different people have given many different explanations about what the mounds were used for. Some explanations include (see answer key):
  - ◆ They were used as platforms to put houses on.
  - ◆ They were used to mark graves.
  - ◆ They represented powerful spirits that protected cornfields and villages.
  - ◆ They were used to hide hunters or soldiers while they fired arrows.
  - ◆ They were used as warehouses to store important objects.

Ask your students which theory they think is correct. Why? How would archaeologists test these theories? What kinds of things would they look for?

12. Ask students to read about Mound Builders on their **All About Effigy Mounds and Mound Builders** fact sheets and try to imagine what life would be like as an effigy mound builder. How would they find food? What would they eat? What kinds of places would they live? What would it be like to build an effigy mound? Pass out **If I Were an Effigy Mound Builder** sheets, and ask the students to write a short story about life as an effigy-builder, using the knowledge (and the categories) they have learned about and underlining ideas they think are particularly important to remember.

## Closure and Assessment

Collect the individual graphs and stories.

## Enhancement

In order to help students understand where mounds appeared in regard to other historical events, display the Effigy Mounds Comparative Timeline, and have enlarged copies of the timeline made, cutting apart and mounting the eras on heavier chart paper or poster board. Divide students into eight teams, one for each era. Assign teams to research the events taking place around the world during the time period that they were assigned. Have them decorate their timeline appropriately with facts and images. Have each team present theirs to the other class members, then mount all on a wall or bulletin board.

Some Excellent corollary activities can be found in the following:

- ◆ In the Teacher's Guide to *Learning from the Land: Wisconsin Land Use*, the effigy mounds activity, pages 20–26, gives students the experience of constructing a salt-dough topographical map model of the Arboretum effigy mound group in Madison.
- ◆ In *Mapping Wisconsin History*, pages 17–19, 25–27, you'll find additional effigy mounds activities that reinforce the geographical distribution of sites and an in-depth interactive exploration of the effigy mound group found on the northeastern shore of Lake Mendota near Madison.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## All About Effigy Mounds and Mound Builders

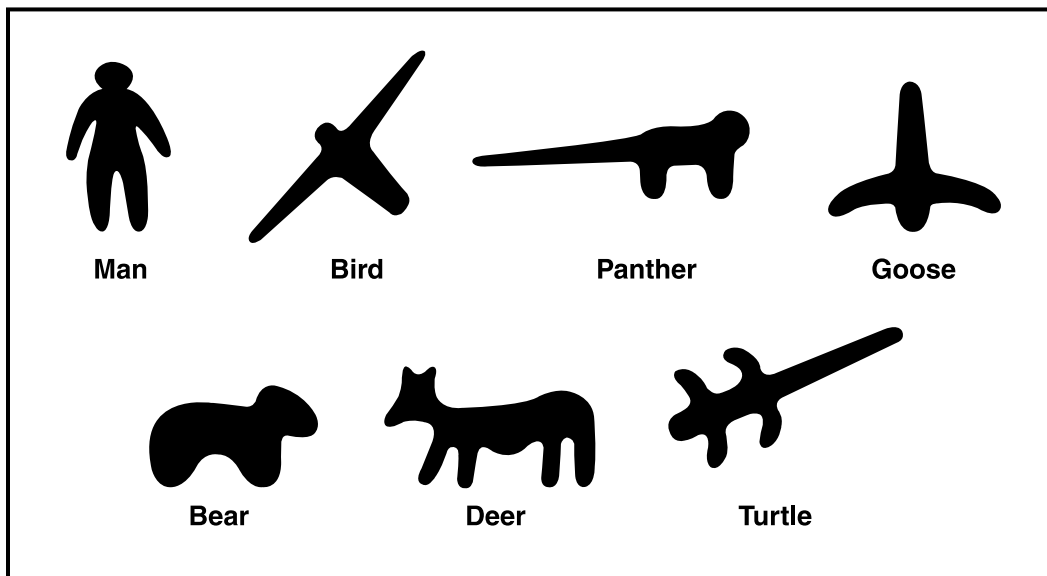
For many hundreds of years, the Native peoples of Wisconsin built mounds out of rock and dirt. Some were shaped like cones or domes, and some were long and lean, like bratwurst or a fat pencil. Just over one thousand years ago, people began to make effigy mounds shaped like animals and even people.

In the past, archaeologists dug into the mounds to find what was inside them. This is not done anymore, in order to respect the wishes of the American Indians who are descended from the effigy mound builders. We know from past excavations that most mounds contain human bones and some contain special deposits of charcoal, ashes, animal bone, shell, or rock. Some people buried in the mounds were buried with arrows, pottery, pipes, stone tools, or shell jewelry.

Most effigy mounds are gone now because they were destroyed to make room for roads, for cornfields, or for houses. Luckily, people made maps of places where effigy mounds were once located. Using these maps, we can learn about the people who built the mounds.

American Indians have many stories about the animals that the effigy mounds represent. The most common mound types are those that show birds, bears, and long-tailed creatures that some people identify as panthers. Most animal mounds are shown from the side. When they are shown from the top, with all four legs sticking out, people call them “turtles” (even though they don’t look very much like turtles at all).

Birds and animals symbolized by effigy mounds most likely refer to spirits as well as actual animals. Native Americans divided the universe into Upper and Lower worlds. Birds inhabited the Upper World, while animals and Water Panthers inhabited the Lower world. Clans with bird names and animal names in Native societies were divided the same way, and sometimes lived in separate parts of the same village. Ho-Chunk people have identified some mounds as Thunderbirds and Water Panthers.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

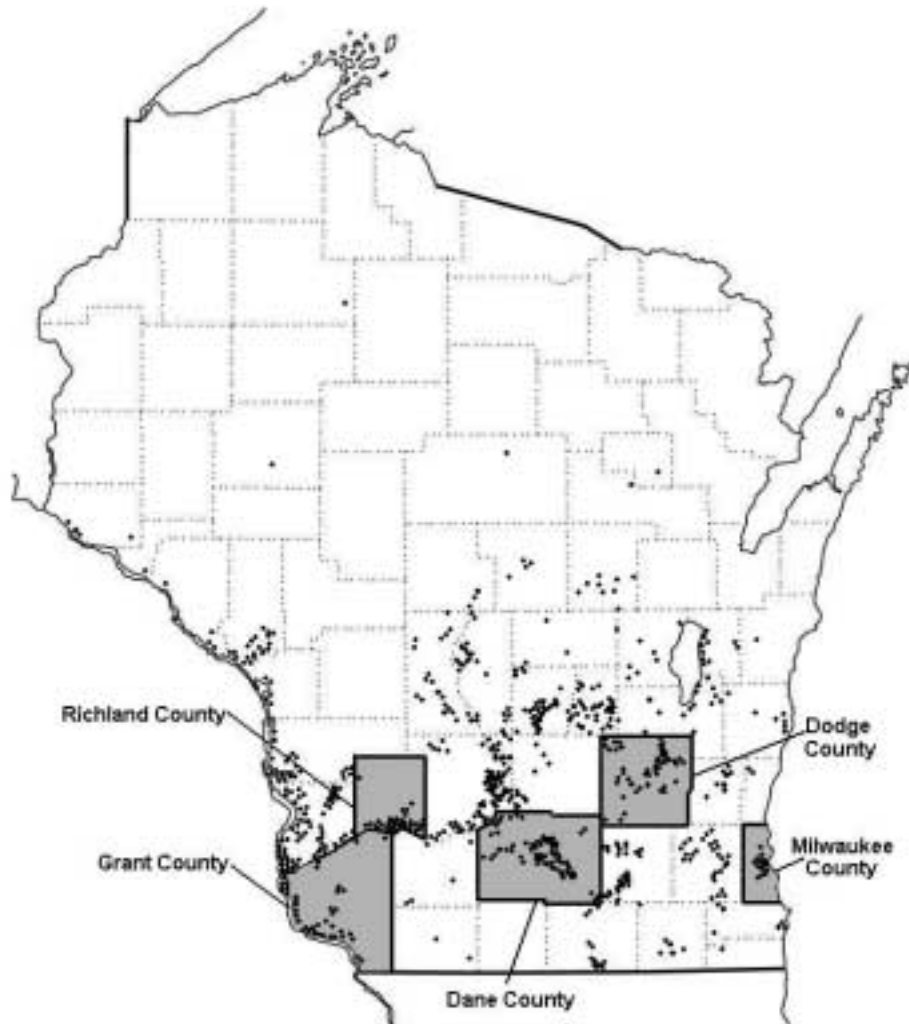
# County Mound Group Tally Sheet      County \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions

1. Write the name of the site on your tally sheet next to the number for that site. 2. Place tally marks in the appropriate column for each effigy mound type at that site. Not all effigy mound types will be represented. 3. Place totals for each column at the bottom of the page.

Site Name	Bird	Goose	Panther	Turtle	Bear	Animal	Mink	Conical	Linear	Other
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										
9.										
10.										
<b>TOTALS</b>										

## Effigy Mound Sites in Wisconsin



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Pie Chart for Effigy Mounds in Grant County**

List any mound types that **are not** represented in your county.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Translate your bar graph data into this pie chart format.

