

# Material Possessions

How much can you tell about people by what they own, wear, and use in their daily lives? Archaeologists make conclusions about people from past cultures by studying artifacts from the time period. Try it yourself by interpreting the list of possessions owned by a real seventeenth-century household. What do you think their life was like?



## Materials

- copy of **Godbertson Household Inventory**

- 1 Examine the list of possessions belonging to a seventeenth-century household. As you identify and analyze the possessions, try to:
  - determine how many people were in the household, what their education level might have been, and what their primary profession was.
  - categorize and group items based on what you think they are or how they are used. For example, you might have a category for clothing.
  - compare the value of the items.
- 2 What can you infer about the people who owned the possessions? Use the chart to record your interpretations.
- 3 Compare and discuss your findings with other groups. Describe any interpretations you disagree with and why.

Evidence	Interpretation	Other possible interpretations from the same evidence	Additional evidence needed to help prove or disprove interpretation
Example: • a pistol • an other pistol	used to defend their home; may have been uneasy relations with local Native Americans	used to kill animals for food	Were there threats from local Native American nations or political battles for territory? What did they eat? How else might animals have been killed for food?