

# ARCHAEOLOGY HANDS ON

**DESCRIPTION:** Students will be involved in the ongoing excavation of a building foundation on camp property.

**OBJECTIVES:** Students will be able to  
Define an artifact, ecofact and feature.  
Carefully extract objects from the ground  
Classify their artifact according to what it is made of  
Accurately fill out a catalogue card for their artifact

**AREA OF ACTIVITY:** Behind the environmental center, walk toward the dining hall and around the paddock. You will see a picnic table, there is a path to the site just behind it.

**MATERIALS PROVIDED:** Gloves, trowels, brushes, rulers, plastic bags, permanent markers, bins at the site, pencils, artifact catalogue cards, a clipboard with the Archaeology Worksheet and a map of the site. The site has been sectioned off into 2 feet squares.

## **PROCEDURES: INTRODUCTION**

Have students take a seat at the picnic table.

Who can describe what an Archaeologist does? (dig stuff up) Is there a point to it? (treasure hunts, proof of cities, lost cultures, extinct species, and to validate historical stories and political decisions)

Archaeology = the study of human past through its material remains.

There are three words to describe material remains that can be found by archaeologists, can you think of one?

Artifact = portable objects whose form is modified or wholly created by human activity.

Ecofact = those portable objects not directly modified by humans, but providing information about their behavior (bones, floral and fauna remains)

Feature = Non portable artifacts (fire and storage pits, roads, burials, building remains)

**Pull out the example artifacts. What is each one made from? Is there a raw material that people would have gathered in order to make it? (Glass - sand, Ceramics clay, Metals ore, Plastics petroleum, Lithics stones of choice, Organics the plant or animal it comes from. Organics includes wooden objects, rubber, cloth, etc)**

**All of these artifacts were left here at one of these four stages**

**Acquisition - the gathering of raw materials**

**Manufacture - the modification of raw**

**Use - it was in the process of being used**

**Deposition - discarding the artifact because it is worn, broken or no longer of use**

**With the example artifacts would any of them be found in the acquisition stage (no), the manufacture stage (arrowhead), use stage and deposition can be argued for all of them. Does an artifact have to be broken to be thrown away? What sort of stuff do you throw away at home?**

### **CENTERED ACTIVITY:**

**Hand out a trowel, a brush, and a ruler to each student. If there is someone who would not like to dig, we do need the Archaeology worksheet filled out for each group. (See the worksheet for instructions)**

**Before you head to the site, take out the site map. Assign each student their own piece of the grid (A, B, C, D, etc. North is toward the environmental center.) Each square on the grid is 2 feet by 2 feet. That should be enough room to maneuver in, but if someone needs to drop the strings in order to function, that is fine once everyone is settled.**

**When an artifact is recovered, the student must grab an artifact catalogue card and fill it out. This can be a bit complicated. Make sure it is explained before students are "in the field".**

**NUMBER This is based on your school's initials, the period you are at the site (9:15 = 1, 10:30 = 2, 1:15 = 3, 2:30 = 4), the section of the grid**

**continued**

the object was found in (A, B, C ...) and finally if it is the first artifact you've found it is 1, the second 2, the third 3. So an example artifact number is FD2B1 (Frederick Douglas, Period 2, Grid square B, and 1st artifact found).

**ARTIFACT or ECOFACT (circle one)**

**OBJECT - What is it? Pottery shard**

**MATERIAL - What is it made from? Ceramics**

**POSITION IN THE SQUARE - Along the string grid measure it's distance from a corner. 6 inches down x 3 inches over from NE Corner.**

**DEPTH - Measure how far down it was found from the string grid  
Measure the depth at which it was recovered.**

**\*\*\*Bring yourself and the artifact to the picnic table to complete the Catalogue card.**

**MEASUREMENTS - Measure the artifact's length, width and depth.**

**DESCRIPTION - Write down anything and everything you notice about your artifact.**

**DRAWING - Be as precise as you can in keeping the dimensions relative. Draw a top view and a side view if needed.**

**Students can start digging. Be gentle!**

**CONCLUSION:**

**Once students have filled out their catalogue card and placed it in the recipe box, have them label a plastic bag with their artifact number, seal the artifact inside and place it into the bin where it belongs.**

**Based on your findings what was the most common material surviving at this site? (Lithic, Ceramic, Metal, Organic, Plastic, Glass or other)**

# FIELD NOTES WORKSHEET

**SCHOOL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PERIOD:** 1 2 3 4

**WEATHER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS DIGGING:**

**SITE DESCRIPTION: (Be as specific as possible... what is the foundation is made of? How big is it? Does the site extend beyond the foundation? Include a description of the matrix, the stuff people are digging through)**

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**WORKING HYPOTHESIS: (What happened here? Interview at least 3 of your classmates)**

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**NUMBER OF ARTIFACTS FOUND DURING THAT PERIOD:**

# **ARTIFACT CATALOGUE CARD**

**FOUND BY (NAME AND DATE):**

**NUMBER:ARTIFACT OR ECOFACT:**

**OBJECT:**

**MATERIAL(S):**

**POSITION IN THE SQUARE:**

**DEPTH:**

**DIMENSIONS OF OBJECT:**

**DESCRIPTION:**

**DRAWING:**