

Go on an Artifact Hunt

Learn how archaeologists study the past by observing tools and artifacts!

Archaeologists answer questions about a culture by studying objects people used and left behind. Sometimes these items were intentionally thrown out and are found in trash pits or dumps. At other times, objects were simply lost.

Materials Needed: Pencil, paper, ruler.



Go on a walk searching for signs of humans.

Pretend you are an archaeologist looking for artifacts.

When you find an item, don't touch it right away!

Remember to wear gloves if you touch trash, and ask permission before touching any items.



First, **examine** where you found the item. Make a sketch of the area. What can you tell about the object from its surroundings?

Measure the object with a ruler. How big is it? Is it a piece of a larger object?

Think about **categories** you could put the object in. For example:

Material: plastic, paper, metal, wood

Color: red, white, multi-colored

Type: tools, sports equipment, toys

Theme: food, art, animals

Come up with your own categories!

Ask questions about the object. For example:

Who made or used this object?

How many people used it?

What were they doing?

What time of year was it?

Come up with questions of your own!

Think and Discuss:



- Which questions can you answer? Which ones remain unanswered?
- Do you have any new questions?
- How does studying an object help you understand the people who made or used it?

Observations (what we can see) are different from **inferences** (conclusion we reach). Inferences may be incorrect because they are based on our assumptions. What inferences could you make about the object you found?