



# Archeology Month Activities

## ? What is archeology?

It is the study of the way people lived in the past. Archeologists learn about the past by studying the things people leave behind, like buildings, pottery, tools and graves.

- + Think about your house, school, favorite restaurant, and favorite hangout. If archeologists were to come back in 300 years what kind of things might they find in each of these places? How would these artifacts help scientists and historians in the future learn about you and the time period that you live in?
- + Most artifacts that are found are made of stone, pottery, glass, or metal. Why do you think this is? What happens to wood and clothing? Why are these items the first things to disintegrate?

+ Archeologist work all around the world in all kinds of places. What tools or equipment do you think an archeologist would use to work in the following areas and what would they find?

- o In the mountains
- o Under the sea
- o In the desert
- o In your city or town

In the future do you think that archeologists will work in outer space and on other planets? If so, what tools and equipment might they use and what might they find?

## ? Why is it important to celebrate Archeology Month?

We celebrate archeology month to help educate people about the importance of archeology and how helpful it is when studying the past!

## ? Would you like to become an archeologist?

To be an archeologist you need to learn about history, math, and science. Archeologists work all over the world to help people to better understand what life used to be like!

+ Go to [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) and pick three (3) of the parks listed below that have used archeology to learn more about their site. What did scientists and historians learn about the site and the activities that went on there? What kinds of artifacts were found? From what time period do the artifacts date? Now go to [www.nps.gov/inde/Franklin\\_Court/Pages/archaeology.html](http://www.nps.gov/inde/Franklin_Court/Pages/archaeology.html) and compare what archeologists from Independence National Historical Park learned from artifacts they found with what was discovered at the other National Parks.

Dinosaur National Monument  
Fort Necessity National Battlefield  
Yellowstone National Park  
Mammoth Cave National Park  
Biscayne National Park

Fort Clatsop National Monument  
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore  
Big Bend National Park  
Wind Cave National Park  
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

+ Imagine you are one of the archeologists working on a dig at Independence National Historical Park. You have been working at a site that was once a well but now contains many artifacts like broken dishes, toys, and tools. Below is one object that you found. Cut out the pieces and try to put them together to figure out what the object was and then make some educated guesses as to who may have used it and what they might have used it for. Some of the pieces may be missing.



**A Note to Parents and Teachers:** This sheet is designed to teach children about archeology. Feel free to make as many copies as you need. You can also download this as a PDF from the education page at [www.nps.gov/inde](http://www.nps.gov/inde). As you teach your children about archeology, keep in mind that archeological sites are fragile and easily damaged. Proper study of sites requires painstaking work by carefully trained personnel. Careless excavation can destroy our heritage and may, in some cases, be illegal.

Look at the pictures below. They are all from a 2003 dig in Philadelphia. The site was once the house of James Dexter, a free African American. The National Constitution Center is now sitting where these artifacts were found. These artifacts and many others are now being processed at Independence National Historical Park. To learn more about James Dexter and the archeological dig go to [www.nps.gov/inde](http://www.nps.gov/inde).



This is part of a tea cup that was uncovered in a privy (outhouse) pit. It was imported from China and was more expensive than most cups made in America.



Do you recognize this? What was it a part of? Do you use something like this in your house? What do you use it for?

This picture was taken of a excavation unit (pit) at the Dexter site. Look at the picture. Can you recognize what any of the fragments are? The archeologists have to separate all of the artifacts from the soil. To do this they first record where the artifacts were found and then collect everything in a bucket. The bucket is then dumped onto a screen where the soil can go through the holes, but the artifacts are filtered out. The artifacts are then cleaned and labeled so that they can be carefully analyzed after the dig is completed. The archeologist must be very careful not to break any of the artifacts into smaller pieces or to miss any small artifacts that could prove to be very valuable clues.



This little bottle, called a Turlington's bottle, once held medicine. Why do you think it was made in such a funny shape? Would this shape help you remember this bottle and what was in it?



This jug is made out of a material called stoneware. The archeologists only found the top part of the bottle. On a separate piece of paper, draw what you think the rest might have looked like.



This is called a case bottle. Do you see how it has flat sides? This made it easy to pack tightly in a case with other bottles for safe travel over rough water and bumpy roads. This packing kept the bottles safe from breakage.



This bottle was called a junk bottle. It often held wine or beer. Just like today there were many different kinds of bottles that held many different things. Compare all the bottles above.

The dig is just one step of the archeological process. Can you help the archeologists get their work done in the correct order? Look at the steps below and see if you can figure out which order the steps should be performed. Write the correct number (1-9) on the line in front of each step.

- A \_\_\_ Find a site      B \_\_\_ Write a report      C \_\_\_ Clean the artifacts      D \_\_\_ Draw the features  
 E \_\_\_ Analyze the findings      F \_\_\_ Plan a dig      G \_\_\_ Catalog artifacts      H \_\_\_ Lay out a grid  
 I \_\_\_ Excavate by stratigraphy (layers)      J \_\_\_ Share your findings with the public

Answer Key: A, F, H, I, D, C, G, E, B, J



Independence Park Institute

The IPI offers hands-on interactive education programs for school groups, and for learners of all ages. Contact us for more information about program offerings, or to reserve a program for your group.

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