

Archaeology

Archaeology is a science that studies people in the past by examining the physical remains discovered. Archaeology relies on the physical evidence other people left behind. The word archaeology comes from two Greek words, which mean old or ancient and study. As a result, archaeology means “the study of old or ancient things.”

Archaeology is important since it tells us about the history and culture of the people that came before us. It tells us about the culture of the people in the past: the different languages and the forms of art and literature. It also tells us about everyday life, farming techniques, important ceremonies and rituals, and how people adapted and used their environment.

Archaeology can be divided into two categories:

- 1) Prehistoric Archaeology: study of man before history began to be written and recorded.
- 2) Historic Archaeology: study of man from historical writings and from what the archaeologist digs up from the ground.

A person who studies archaeology is an archaeologist. An archaeologist is like a detective that searches for clues in order to be able to put all the clues together and solve the mystery. Through excavation, which means digging up the ground, archaeologists try to understand the life of people in the past. By finding ‘artifacts,’ which means every kind of object from the most common to the most rare, archaeologists try to find out what kind of people lived in a certain place, what they ate, how they lived, their environment, and their culture. Even things like garbage are of interest to archaeologists because they can learn a lot about the everyday life of people in the past from their garbage.

Most of the artifacts and clues are underground, so excavation or digging up is necessary. There are many reasons why archaeologists have to dig to find artifacts and clues.

- 1) The remains of cities are usually always underground because when cities were destroyed, new cities were built on top of them burying the old ones underneath them.
- 2) Since there were no banks or safety deposit boxes, many people in the past buried their treasure for safekeeping.
- 3) People themselves were buried with lots of objects in the past, as it was part of their beliefs that they would need these objects in the after-life. These objects also showed the importance of the person being buried.
- 4) People in the past buried their garbage to get rid of waste. All the things they threw out now tell archaeologists a great deal about the society.
- 5) Natural disasters, like volcanoes or floods, buried cities or huge parts of them.

Archeologists use a number of tools on an excavation site. The types of tools used depend on the kind and location of the site, as well as the stage of the excavation. Examples of the tools used in an excavation site are: trowels, brushes, spades, etc.

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Archaeology

Tools range from simple garden implements to earthmovers. Sometimes, even vacuums are needed at the excavation site. The basic rule is to use small tools to uncover small objects and large-scale tools for larger artifacts.

There have been many important archaeological discoveries. Examples of some archaeological discoveries are:

- 1) The discovery of Herculaneum and the lost city of Pompeii, which were buried by the volcano Vesuvius that erupted in 79 AD.
- 2) The discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun, which was packed with many treasures.
- 3) The Rosetta Stone, which had three forms of writing on it: Egyptian hieroglyphs, a form of Arabic, and ancient Greek. The Rosetta Stone led to the ability to understand and decipher what Egyptian hieroglyphs meant.

Archaeology Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. Archaeology is a science that tells us about:
 - a. The culture of past people and civilizations
 - b. The languages used in ancient times
 - c. Farming techniques used in old times
 - d. All of the above

2. The importance of the discovery of the Rosetta Stone enabled people to:
 - a. Discover the lost city of Pompeii
 - b. Learn ancient Greek
 - c. Decipher what Egyptian hieroglyphs meant
 - d. Find a secret treasure map

List 3 reasons that archaeologists have to dig to find clues:

3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Matching:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ___ 6. Prehistoric Archaeology | a) digging up the ground to discover buried artifacts |
| ___ 7. Excavation | b) study of man before history began to be written and recorded. |
| ___ 8. Historic Archaeology | c) study of man from historical writings and from what the archaeologist digs up from the ground |

True or False:

- ___ 9. Archaeology is the study of old and ancient things.
- ___ 10. The tools used in archaeology are only simple garden tools.

Archaeology Answers

Multiple Choice:

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