

The Archaeologist

Headings		Notes and Key Facts
WHAT IS ARCHAEOLOGY?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeology is the study of the remains left by people in the past. • Excavation is when archaeologists dig up the ground to find evidence left by people in the past. • Archaeologists excavate sites for many reasons, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an aerial photograph (photography taken from a helicopter or a drone) might show up lines of a structure in the ground. • an old document or map might reveal that a building or structure once existed on a site - this is research archaeology. • before anything is built on a site you need to make sure there is no evidence that will be lost - this is rescue archaeology. • Certain conditions help in the preservation of archaeological evidence, such as the extreme and dryness of deserts or the airlessness and the acidity of peat bogs.
THE JOB OF THE ARCHAEOLOGIST		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeologists complete several steps when excavating a site such as surveying, careful removal of soil with tools, recording location of artefacts, transporting artefacts to museums.
SKILLS AND METHODS USED IN ARCHAEOLOGY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radiocarbon (carbon-14) dating: all living things contain carbon 14. After death, the carbon-14 reduces at a steady rate; the less carbon-14 a thing contains, the older it is. • Dendrochronology: A method of dating where each ring of a tree is a year of growth. • Stratigraphy: A method used to date artefacts where the deeper they are, the older they are. • Pollen analysis: The study of pollen remains to find out what was growing at a site during a time period. Records exist of pollen times that were common at particular times in history. • Geophysical survey: Analysis of the ground to locate artefacts and underground structures. • DNA testing can tell us about the origins and ethnicity of a person. • 3D reconstruction: Computer modelling is used to reconstruct a face based on the skull to see what a person looked like. • Examining bones can teach archaeologists a lot about a person's sex, age, height and diet. • Conservation is when historical objects or structures are protected and preserved so that they do not decay. Objects can be displayed in safe conditions in museums and heritage sites, helping us to learn about and engage with our history.
Keywords		Summary
Archaeology	Rescue Archaeology	<p>Archaeology helps the study of history by discovering and examining artefacts that have been left by people in the past. Excavations are sometimes needed to uncover artefacts which can be found through aerial photographs, research archaeology, rescue archaeology or accidental.</p> <p>Some artefacts have been preserved through specific conditions. Archaeologists use various methods to examine artefacts such as carbon dating, dendrochronology, stratigraphy, pollen analysis, geophysical survey, DNA testing, 3D reconstruction and examining bones. It is important to place artefacts under conservation to keep them safe.</p>
Excavation	3D Reconstruction	
Aerial photograph	Preservation	
Conservation	Carbon Dating	
Research archaeology	Stratigraphy	
Geophysical survey	Dendrochronology	
DNA Testing	Pollen Analysis	

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Keywords	Definition
Aerial photograph	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A photograph taken of the ground from an elevated position eg helicopter
Archaeologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Someone who investigates places and objects left by people in the past, including the time before written records were kept.
Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The study of the past, based on material remains.
Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When historic objects are protected and preserved so that they do not decay
Dendrochronology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dating objects by examining three rings on pieces of wood.
Excavation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A site where archaeologists dig the ground in search of objects.
Geophysical Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A survey of what's underneath the ground, like an x-ray of the ground
Pollen Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The studying of pollen remains to tell archaeologists what was growing during the time period
Prehistory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The story of the past before written sources
Radio-Carbon Dating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dating plant and animal remains by measuring the amount of carbon-14 they contain.