

## Using Social Studies Terms Correctly

These archaeological terms are grouped for easier learning.

**Archaeology:** (May be spelled with or without the second “a”) Systematic recovery and examination of material evidence, such as graves, buildings, tools, and pottery, remaining from past human life and culture.

**Archaeological dig:** An archaeological site currently being studied by systematic scientific excavation.

**Archaeological site:** A place where human activity resulted in features or deposits of artifacts, such as hunting camps, villages, burial sites, battlefields, mills, farmsteads, and buildings.

**Midden:** Any place where people heaped trash, food remains, or other discarded items.

**Excavation:** The uncovering of artifacts, features, and associations by slow and careful digging and recording.

**Grid:** A set of evenly spaced north-south string lines that cross a set of evenly spaced east-west string lines.

**Stratigraphy:** The layers, or levels, of soil and discarded material, built up over time. Unless the site has been disturbed, the lower layers contain the oldest artifacts. The layers are numbered from top to bottom; the higher the number, the deeper the level. (Imagine newspapers stacked as the reader finishes them; the ones on top are the newest.)

**Provenience:** (Same as “provenance”) The location of an artifact identifying the grid position and strata in which it was found.

**Artifact:** Any movable item made, modified, or used by humans.

**Material culture:** The buildings, tools, decorative items, clothing, and other artifacts of a society.

**Features:** Material evidence that cannot be transported, such as wall foundations or fire pits.

**Associations:** Two or more artifacts or features that occur together, for example, pottery sherds found together or flint chips found in a midden.

**Projectile point:** The term used to include arrowheads, dart points, and spear points.

**Sherd** (Or shard): A broken piece of pottery.

**Looter:** One who steals from an archaeological site for personal gain.

### These two scientific disciplines are closely associated with Archaeology:

**Anthropology:** The scientific study of the origin and the physical, social, and cultural development and behavior of humans. Much anthropological information is learned from archaeological studies.

**Paleontology:** The study of animal life through fossilized remains such as bones and shells. Paleontologists work in much the same way as archaeologists, but their subject of study is biology, not how humans lived.