



Junior Ranger Activity Book Grades 4—8

Let's Learn About:
Archeology,
Artifacts,
Prehistory,
Culture,
&
Context



Be a Junior Archeologist



Russell Cave National Monument is an archeological site that protects a prehistoric cave shelter. In the 1950's, local archeologists began excavating the shelter and found evidence of human occupation. Eventually, archeologists from the Smithsonian Institution joined the dig and additional funding for the project was provided by the National Geographic Society. The findings from the excavations pieced together the day to day lives of ancient people, supporting that the cave shelter was used for over 10,000 years. After thousands of artifacts were discovered beneath the surface by archeologists, Russell Cave was established as part of the National Park Service in 1961. Today, over 10 different tribes and their members can trace their ancestry to those who lived in the shelter and surrounding area.

Throughout this book you will learn to think like an archeologist and find ways you can help protect special places like Russell Cave. Once you have learned the skills needed, you will be recognized as an official Junior Archeologist.

There are many career paths that specialize in different areas of archeology. Here are just a few. Can you draw a line to match the archeologist to what they study?

Historical archeologist

I scuba dive to excavate sites and study shipwrecks in lakes and oceans.

Zooarcheologist

I learn how people in the past used the stars and planets to determine seasons and holidays.

Underwater archeologist

I combine studies of earth sciences and traces of human interactions in the environment over time.

Archeoastronomist

I use historic documents in my research and study cultures with written records.

Geoarcheologist

I study how people in the past interacted with animals, such as how they hunted and fished.

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The Order of Things



How do archeologists find out information about the past? By coming up with research questions, digging for artifacts, studying artifacts and their relations to one another, and sharing that information with others!

DIRECTIONS: Archeological excavations must be done in a specific order and includes much more than just digging. An archeologist's "To Do" list below needs to be ordered correctly 1-9.

TO DO

- ___ Write a site report based on information from artifacts
- ___ Catalog, wash, photograph, and describe artifacts found during excavations
- ___ Survey the selected site and make an accurate map
- ___ Use surveys and maps to choose places within the site for excavation
- ___ Start by developing a research question
- ___ Design a research plan to answer the research question; select site, equipment, team members, and set budget
- ___ Share information in the report through books, magazines, and museum exhibits
- ___ Begin excavating scientifically and carefully, recording the location of each artifact
- ___ Move artifacts, field notes, and maps to the lab when the excavation is complete



The Right Thing



Archeologists often have to think about ethics, or the difference between doing what is right and what is wrong. Sometimes doing the right thing is hard, but archeologists have a responsibility to do what is right for everyone. Doing the right thing is a sign of respect to other archeologists as well as cultures of the past and present.

DIRECTIONS: Consider the decisions made by the archeologists below. Decide if you think they did the right or the wrong thing. Place a check mark in the correct box.

RIGHT

WRONG

DECISION

An archeologist shares research with others through books, articles, and museums.

An archeologist sees a volunteer place an artifact into their pocket. The archeologist doesn't say anything and lets the volunteer take the artifact home.

An archeologist notices a site has been disturbed. They contact the authorities, document the damage, and do their best to ensure that the site is protected throughout the rest of the dig.

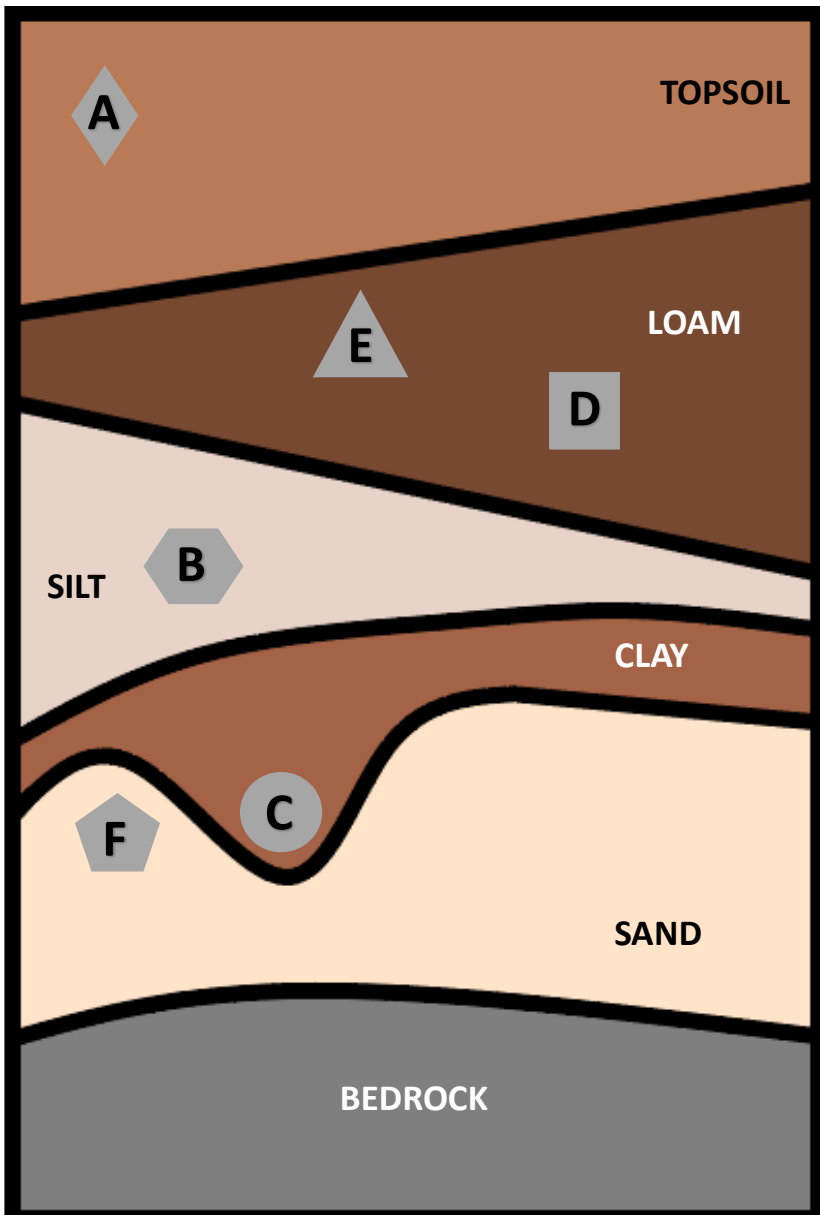
An archeologist sells several artifacts found during an excavation to increase funding for further research.

Stories in the Soil



An archeological site has many layers, known as stratigraphy, that can be analyzed and used to tell the story of the artifacts. Depending on where artifacts are found in these various layers, archeologists are able to determine how old an artifact is in comparison to what is around it.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions about artifacts A-F from this archeological site.



Which artifact is the oldest? _____

Which artifact is the most recent? _____

Which artifact is in silt? _____

Which artifact is older, C or F? _____

If each layer takes about 150 years to build up, estimate how old artifact F might be. _____

Why do you think it is important to know the age of an artifact?

Preserving the Past



Archeologists study people who lived in the past. This information is being threatened as sites are destroyed by weather, animals, and humans. Archeologists need to be aware of such threats and make sure that these sites are protected.

DIRECTIONS: Unscramble the words to identify the threats to your archeological site. Think about how you could protect archeological sites from these threats.

IUHRNRCAE

CIOOTRUNSCTN

GLTIOON

EFRI

TERE RTOOS

DRONETS

It Belongs in a Museum



DIRECTIONS: Choose an object from your classroom to help a museum curator create an exhibit. Pretend you have never seen this item before, and consider it an artifact. Create a descriptive label with a sketch of the object. Your label should:

- 1) Include descriptive information about the object and its time period
- 2) Share why this object may be important
- 3) Share with museum visitors why this object is interesting

Object name:

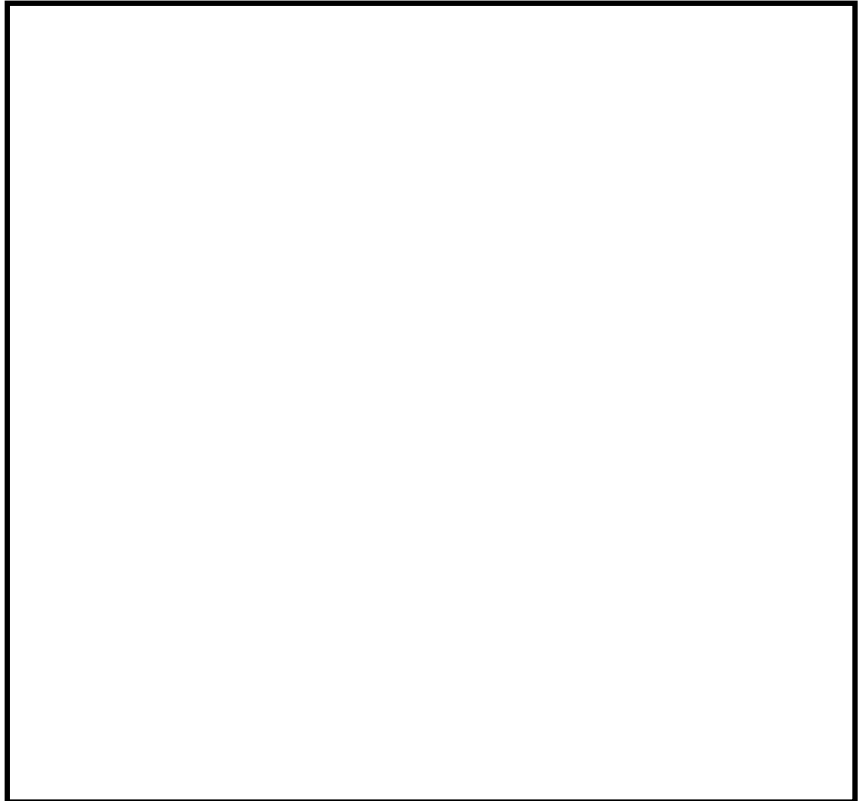
Estimated era of use:

Location found: _____

Item was probably used for:

Material(s) from which the object is made: _____

Other important information:



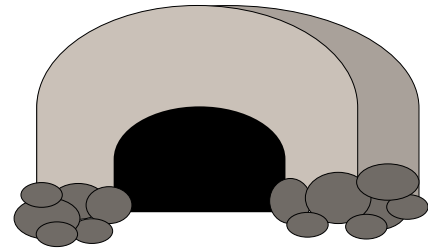
Home Sweet Home



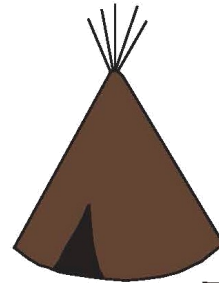
Some archeologists study homes from the past. People have lived in many different types of homes. What could an archeologist learn about you from studying where you live?

DIRECTIONS: Match the home descriptions on the left to the corresponding shelters on the right.

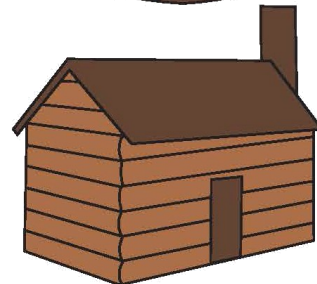
I am built from wood. I have a brick fireplace for warmth and cooking.



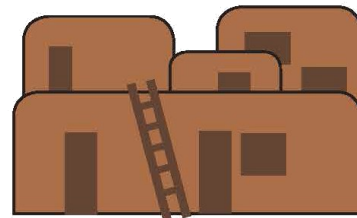
I am carved into a mountain from millions of years of water eroding the rock. Fire pits are used for warmth and cooking.



I am built from soil and clay that is shaped into walls. Residents can work and play on my roof.



I am built from animal skins. I move around a lot, so I am easy to pull down and take to new locations.



What could an archeologist learn about you from studying your home?

Puzzle Pieces



An artifact needs context, where and with what the artifact was found, within the excavation site for an archeologist to learn how it was made and used. When an artifact is removed from its context, or place of discovery, archeologists lose key information about that artifact that we cannot get back.

DIRECTIONS: Observe the artifacts below. Answer the following questions.



What do you think happened at this site? (Think about how the artifacts might have been used). _____

What can you infer about the people who used these items? (Think about who might have used them).

How would the story change if the doll wasn't found at the site? The horseshoe?

Fill in the Pieces



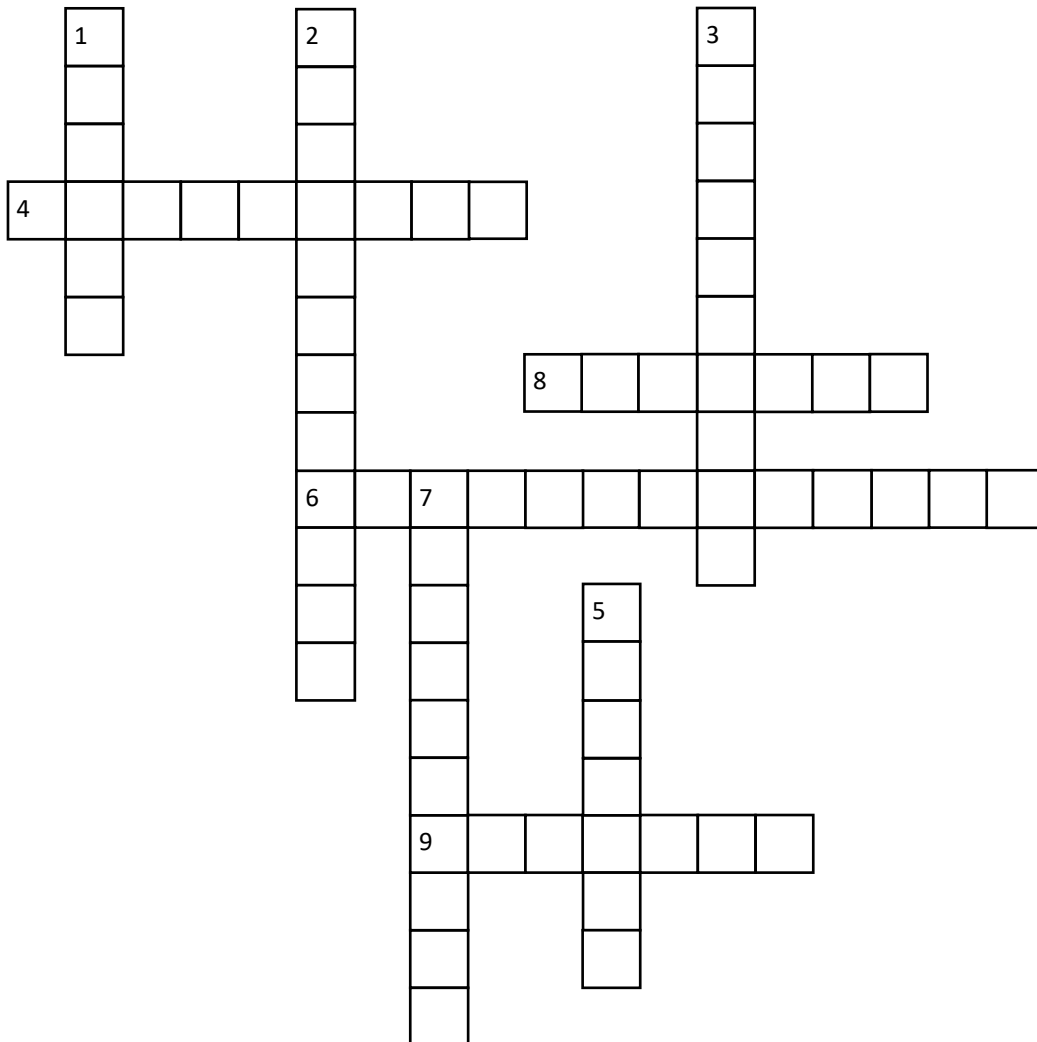
DIRECTIONS: Test your knowledge of what you've learned as a junior archeologist by filling in the crossword puzzle below. Use the word bank at the bottom of the page to help you.

Across:

4. Objects archeologists find
6. Those who study people and artifacts from the past
8. The relationship artifacts have to each other and the place in which they are found
9. A destructive, illegal behavior

Down:

1. Small pieces of broken pottery
2. Studying different layers in a site
3. Scientific digging
5. A keeper or custodian of a museum or other collection
7. A list of events in the order they happened



Word Bank

Artifacts Archeologists Chronology Context Curator
Excavation Looting Sherds Stratigraphy

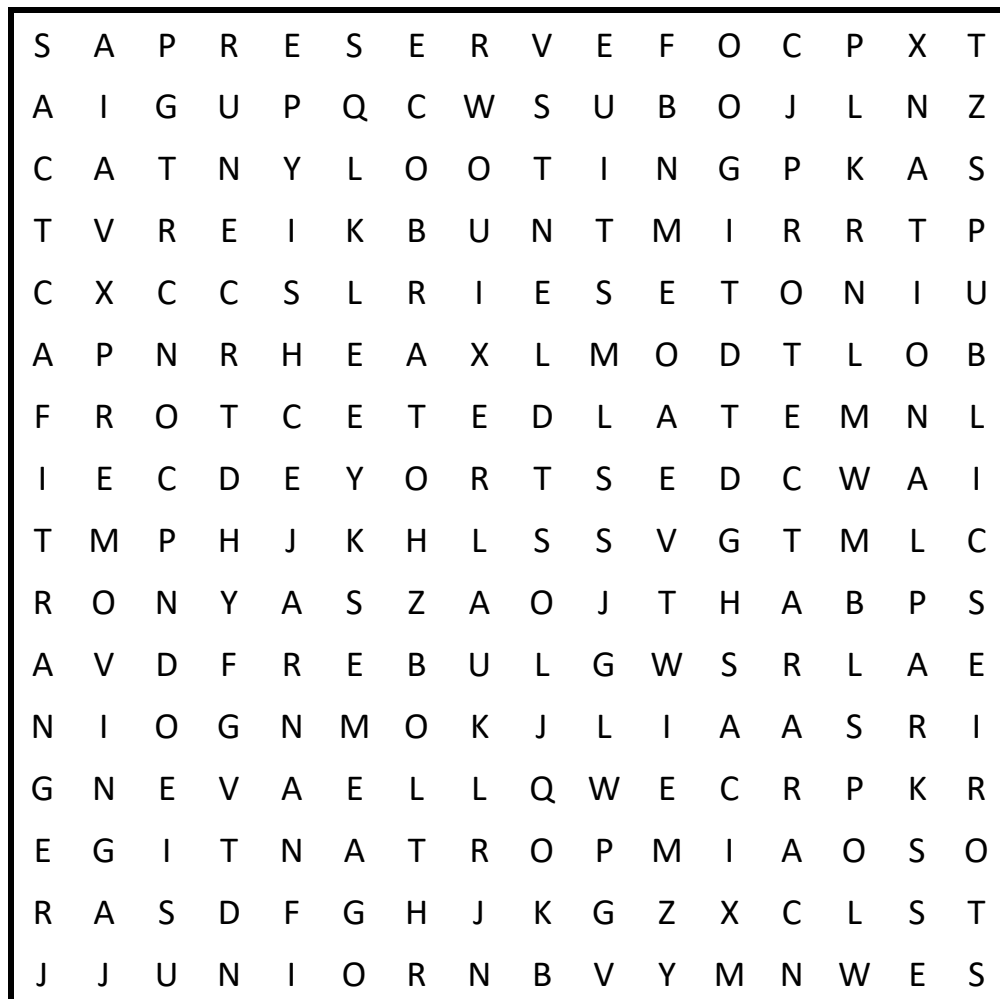
How You Can Help



DIRECTIONS: Read how you can help protect archeological sites. Then find all the underlined words in the puzzle.

Archeological sites are being destroyed at an alarming rate. Once these sites are gone, they are lost forever. If people like you stand up for archeology, that might change. You can help by setting a good example for others and sharing what you have learned as a Junior Archeologist.

Archeology tells important stories, and each artifact is part of that story. If you find artifacts in a national park, leave them where you found them and tell a ranger. Remember, removing artifacts from their context erases crucial information about that artifact.



If you see other people removing artifacts, tell a ranger. Looting or using a metal detector is illegal in national parks. People who take artifacts from public lands are stealing from our shared past.

Act as an archeological ambassador. Speak up! Share what you know about the stories of the past told through archeology. If more people understand why archeology is important, we can protect and preserve our past for our future.

Certificate of Completion



AS A JUNIOR ARCHEOLOGIST,

I, _____, PLEDGE TO:

- ♦ **EXPLORE ARCHEOLOGY IN MY COMMUNITY AND LEAVE DIGGING TO THE PROFESSIONALS**
- ♦ **LEARN MORE ABOUT ARCHEOLOGY**
- ♦ **PROTECT OUR NATIONAL PARKS AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES**
- ♦ **SHARE WHAT I KNOW ABOUT ARCHEOLOGY WITH OTHERS**

RANGER SIGNATURE: _____

OFFICIAL PARK STAMP

