# Archeology at Fort Frederica Answer Key

# Part I: Introduction

After watching the trailer, list the kinds of artifacts you think archeologists found at Fort Frederica. What could these objects reveal about life within the fort and town?

*Answer:*Answers will vary and may include:

* Fort walls: where the fort was, how it was constructed
* House foundations: size of houses, town layout
* Palisade posts: how large the fort and town were
* Military items such as cannon shot: defense mechanisms
* Personal items such as buttons and buckles: what people wore, where they lived
* Broken ceramic dishes: what people ate from, where they discarded waste

# Part II: Fort Frederica, Then and Now

**Question 1:** When and why was Fort Frederica built?

*Answer:* Fort Frederica was built in 1736 on St. Simons Island, Georgia. It defended Georgia from the Spanish.

**Question 2:** Historical archeologists use both excavation and written documents to piece together what life was like in the past. Review the information above. Make a list of the types of documents archeologists might have used while researching the fort.

*Answer:* Answers will vary. Archeologists may have used historic maps, diaries and letters from fort and town occupants, wills and deeds, military records, and ship records among other documents.

# Part III: Artifact Analysis

***Artifact 1: Clay Smoking Pipe Bowl with British Coat of Arms***

**Question 1:** Why might the pipe’s owner have chosen this detailed pipe over a plain one that was likely cheaper? Keep in mind that during the 18th century people often smoked together during leisure time so designs were very visible.

*Answer:* The pipe’s owner might have chosen this pipe for a variety of reasons. They might have wished to have a sentimental reminder of their home in England, or make a defiant statement against the constant Spanish threat to the fort. Given that this design would have been prominent, the expensive pipe may have served as a “status symbol” showing its owner’s wealth to others.

**Question 2:** Artifacts, like people, have “life stories” starting with when and where they were originally made to when they were discarded. Sometimes, artifacts obtain a second “life” when they are reused or modified into something new. Given what you know about this pipe, write its “life story” below. Include as many details as you can. Where was it made? How did it end up at Fort Frederica? How many “lives” does it have at this point in time?

*Answer:* In brief, this pipe was made in London by Thomas Dormer. A trader or a Fort Frederica settler then purchased the pipe and took it aboard a ship across the Atlantic. The pipe was taken directly or traded to Fort Frederica , where it was used, broken, and discarded. Archeologists uncovered the pipe and it now has a second “life” as an educational object.

***Artifacts 2 and 3: Wood Palisade Timber Artifact and Round Cannon Shot***

**Question 1:** Examine the timber artifact and cannon shot and read the information below each. What were these two artifacts used for?

*Answer:* The timber artifact was part of the Fort Frederica palisades. The cannon shot could be fired at ships, fortifications, or walls to blast through them. The palisade was defensive, while the cannon shot was for attack and defense.

**Question 2:** Archeologists can use **dendrochronology**, or the study of tree-rings, to date features and artifacts on a site. How would knowing what year this tree died or was cut down help understand how the fort was modified over time?

*Answer:* By dating sections of the palisades, archeologists can understand which areas of the fort were oldest, i.e. built first. This helps illustrate fort’s different construction sequences and shows repairs and expansions over time.

**Question 3:** Archeologists sometimes uncover objects **in-situ** (in place). These objects have not moved from when their original owners deposited them in the ground years ago. Their locations can reveal how individual spaces were used in the past for different tasks. Other times, objects were moved due to **post-depositional processes** such as wind, water, and human and animal actions move objects from their original locations. By knowing what kinds of processes are at work on a site, archeologists can better preserve and protect the area for future generations. Given what you know about Fort Frederica’s layout, where might you expect to find these two artifacts during an excavation?

*Answer:* Because of their military nature, one might expect these artifacts to be found in the fort itself or near the palisade.

**Question 4:** The timber artifact was found near other archeological remains of the fort palisade. However, the cannon shot was found in Lot 4S. This was once the home of Patrick Houstoun, Quartermaster of the Frederica Regiment and later President of the King’s Council. How do you think the cannon shot ended up in or near his home? What post-depositional processes might have occurred?

*Answer:* Answers will vary. Because of his role as Quartermaster, Houstoun had access to military supplies. He may have brought the cannon shot home after working in the fort for job or personal reasons. He, his family, or someone else during or after his time at Frederica may have collected it and placed it in the home. It is unlikely that natural forces moved the cannon shot due to its weight.

***Artifact 4: Earthenware Porringer***

**Question 1:** Archeologists sometimes use cross-mending (the piecing together of ceramic sherds, or pieces, from different areas of a site) to recreate an artifact. This porringer was found in Lot 8S that originally belonged to John Humble. Imagine that archeologists found the handle of this piece in the yard area between Lot 8S and 9S. How might they interpret their finding? What post-depositional processes might have occurred? How would these processes differ from those acting on the cannon shot?

*Answer:* Members of the Humble household might have broken and dropped or discarded the handle in the yard area. Other individuals after their time might have moved it as well. However, in contrast to the heavy cannon shot, the handle is light enough to be transported by natural forces too, including wind, water, and animal actions.

**Question 3:** Like today, ceramics in the past were made into specific forms for certain purposes. Porringers were used for soup, stew, or other foods eaten with a spoon. Large earthenware bowls, like the one you see within this collection, were used as “milk pans” for dairying tasks including making cheese and butter. Stoneware jars and coolers, also seen here, stored provisions such as beans and lard. Imagine that archeologists found this porringer, a milk pan, and a storage jar in three different areas of the Humble home site. What might this distribution tell them about the different spaces inside the home?

*Answer:* This artifact distribution might show how different areas were used, including specific spaces for cooking, dairying tasks, and storage (similar to a pantry or cellar today).

**Question 4:** Archeologists can use ceramic residue analysis alongside faunal analysis (the study of animal bones) and archeobotany (the study of plant remains) to recreate the meals people of the past ate. Think about the conditions at Fort Frederica. List the various ways people obtained their food and other provisions.

*Answer:* People hunted, fished, grew crops in yard gardens and nearby fields, and received rations.

**Question 5:** Using your answer to Question 4, how might scholars use this information to understand what the environment surrounding Fort Frederica was like? What might it mean if rationed food remains were more plentiful than crop remains?

*Answer:* Animals, fish, and crops all depend on certain habitats. By knowing what people ate and what kinds of habitats these animals and plants thrived in, archeologists can reconstruct the surrounding environment. If rations were more plentiful, it might be a sign that the nearby environment was not suitable for growing crops. Conversely, it might illustrate that people just chose not to invest time and effort in farming given the available supplies.

# Part IV: Reflection

Review your answer to the Introduction question. After learning more about archeology at Fort Frederica, did your answer change? If you were an archeologist working at the fort, what other artifacts, features, and historical documents would you look for to know more about life there in the past?

*Answer:* Answers will vary. Students may supplement their answers to include any of the items listed above in the Introduction question. Historical documents may include military and ship records, letters and diaries, wills and deeds, and maps among other documents.