



Discovering Archeology Activity Booklet

National Park Service National Capital Regional Archeology Program

The National Park Service, National Capital Region's Regional Archeology Program (RAP) serves the archeological needs of national parks in portions of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and all of the District of Columbia.

Our mission is to provide for the study, protection, preservation, and interpretation of archeological sites and their collections located on or collected from NCR's parks. This mission is accomplished by the RAP archeologists assisted by student interns and volunteers or, as necessary, by project archeologists.

This booklet belongs to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

We hope you enjoy this booklet.

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Hey kids! Please help us preserve our cultural resources for everyone. Pass the word: Metal detecting and artifact collection without permission are strictly forbidden in all parks and on all other federal property. Thank you.

Where Do You Find the Sites?

Everyday human activities leave their mark in the ground and on the surface. Archeological sites are the result of these activities.

This site, on a river floodplain, is easy to spot in the aerial photograph. The dark soil stains are what remains of an Indian Village. This village had a wall around it. The soil stain shows the disturbance caused by the building and eventual decay of the wall.



However, sites can be found where you least expect them. For example:

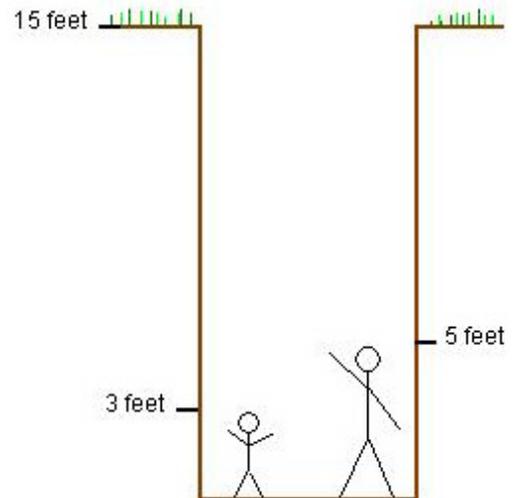


Archeological investigations were conducted under the floor in the Peterson House, immediately beneath the room where President Lincoln died.

Where Do You Find the Sites?



A prehistoric occupation layer, or floor, was excavated 15 feet below the ground during a project on the Whitehurst Freeway in Washington, DC.



Tools Left Beneath the Lincoln Memorial

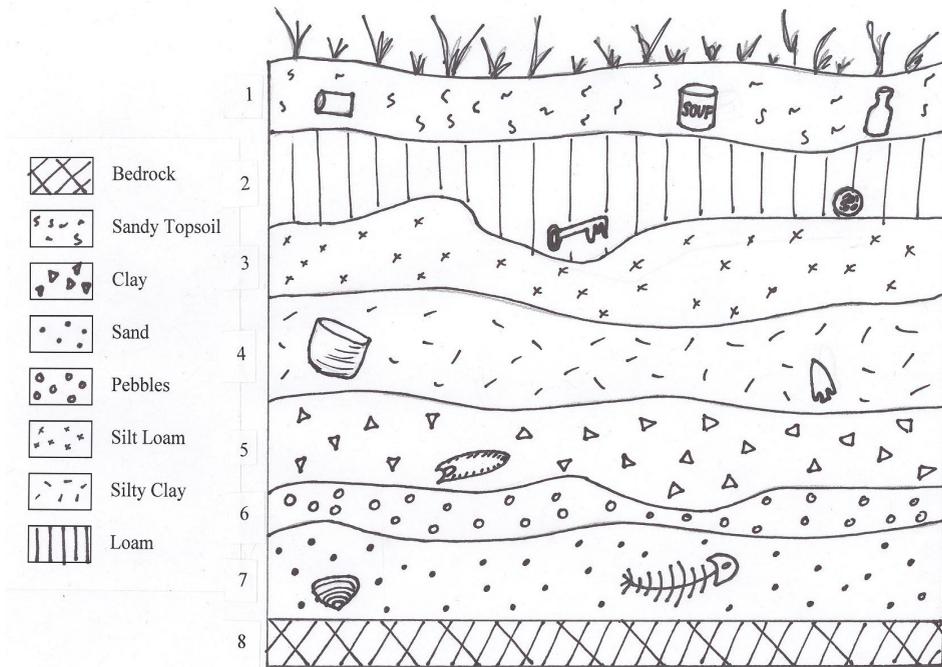


Exterior of the Lincoln Memorial

So... think about it as you walk through your neighborhood. Who else might have lived where you live? What evidence would they have left behind?

Stratigraphy

Stratigraphy and chronology are two very important concepts in archeology. Stratigraphy is the study of different layers or deposits in the soil. Soil builds up in layers over time due to both natural processes and the actions of humans. If we think of a cross-section of soil as a layer cake, the oldest layers will be found on the bottom and the younger layers will be found on top (unless the soil has been disturbed by other digging). Each soil layer (or stratum) provides clues about what happened at that site during a particular time period. Archeologists can interpret the chronology (events in the order in which they happened) of a site or artifacts by comparing two or more layers (or strata) where artifacts were



Using the picture above answer the following questions:

1. Identify what each layer is made of using the key to the left of the diagram.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

2. Which layer is the oldest? Which layer is the youngest?

3. At what layer did the fish appear?

4. According to this picture, are soup cans older or younger than keys?

Word Search

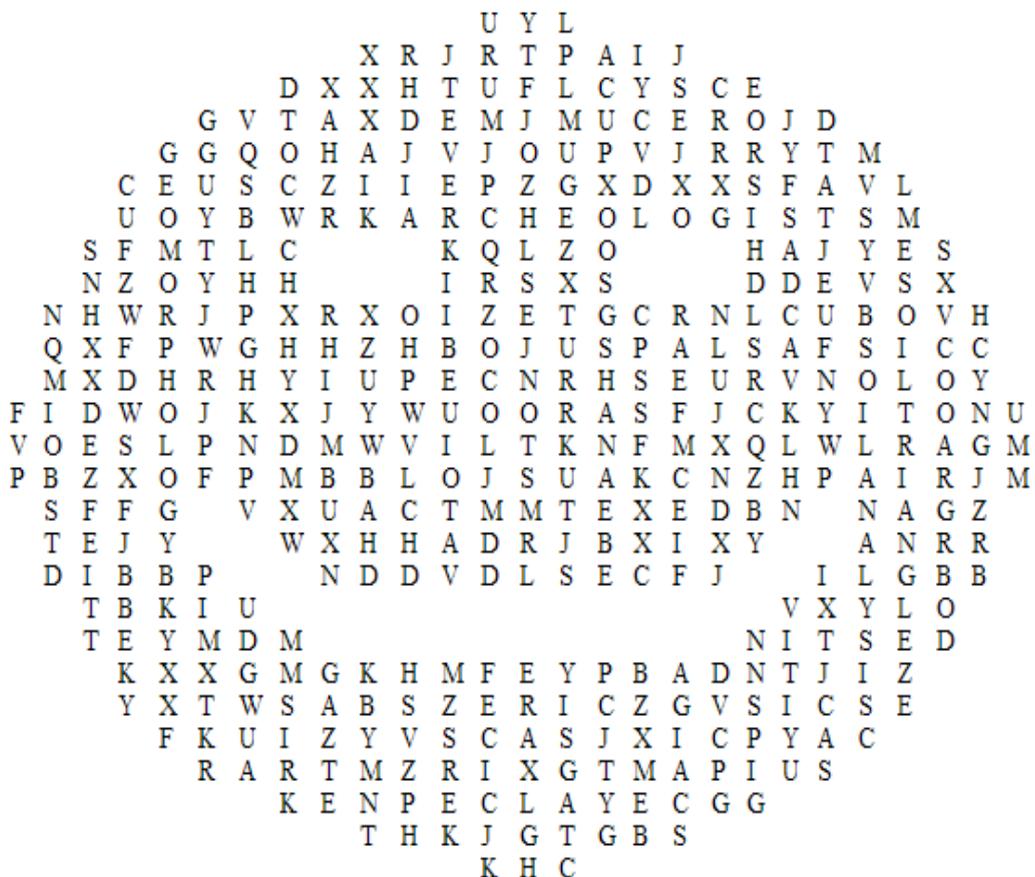
Read the paragraphs below then try to find the underlined words in the smiley face.

When **archeologists** excavate, they dig through soil **layers** formed by people's activities. The artifacts that archeologists recover from the soil layers provide clues about what happened at that site, but the soil itself is also an important source of information for archeologists.

Through **soil analysis**, archeologists can help date sites, learn about the environment at the time the soil layers were formed, and find out how soil layers were formed.

Accurate descriptions of soils help archeologists understand what happened in the past at their site. Archeologists use a special book called a **Munsell** Color Chart to help them describe the **colors** of the soil layers they are excavating. This book has pages filled with color squares, like the paint chips or samples you may have seen at a hardware store. By comparing the color of the archeological site's soil with the color chips, archeologists can determine soil color and name it in a standardized way.

In addition to describing the color of the soil, archeologists also need to characterize the **texture** of the soil layers on their sites. Soil is made up of three components: **sand**, **silt**, and **clay**. Particles of each component are different sizes, with sand the largest and clay the smallest. It is unusual to find a soil composed entirely of sand, silt, or clay. Generally, a combination of these three types of particles is found in most soils. Archeologists borrow from soil sciences such as pedology and **geomorphology** by using a **soil triangle** to help them determine what type of soil they are examining. Just as using a Munsell Color Chart ensures that everyone describes soil color in the same way, using a soil triangle guarantees that people describe soil texture consistently.



Artifact Word Scramble

Figure out the scrambled words to learn more about the artifacts archeologists find. The names of the artifacts on the left are all mixed up. The underlined letters are the first letter of each word. Look at the artifact pictures on the right to help figure out the words. (The pictures are not in order, so you have to figure out which scrambled words go with each picture.)

lnai = _____



tnotbu = _____



aet upc = _____



hraworead = _____



letb ckuleb = _____



hsoesrohe = _____



Historic Bottles

Bottle glass is one of the most common artifacts found on historic archeological sites. Historic bottles come in a wide variety of shapes, colors, and sizes and held many different products that were used every day. Bottles can be painted (A), embossed (B&D), or have a paper label (C) that help us to determine what the bottle once held. Bottle glass is also very useful to archeologists because they can use the bottle's shape, color, and how it was made to help them determine how old a site is. Below are four examples of historic bottles from the archeological collections of the National Capital Region. These bottles contained a variety of products including soda (A), milk (B), medicine (C), and hair styling products (D),



A



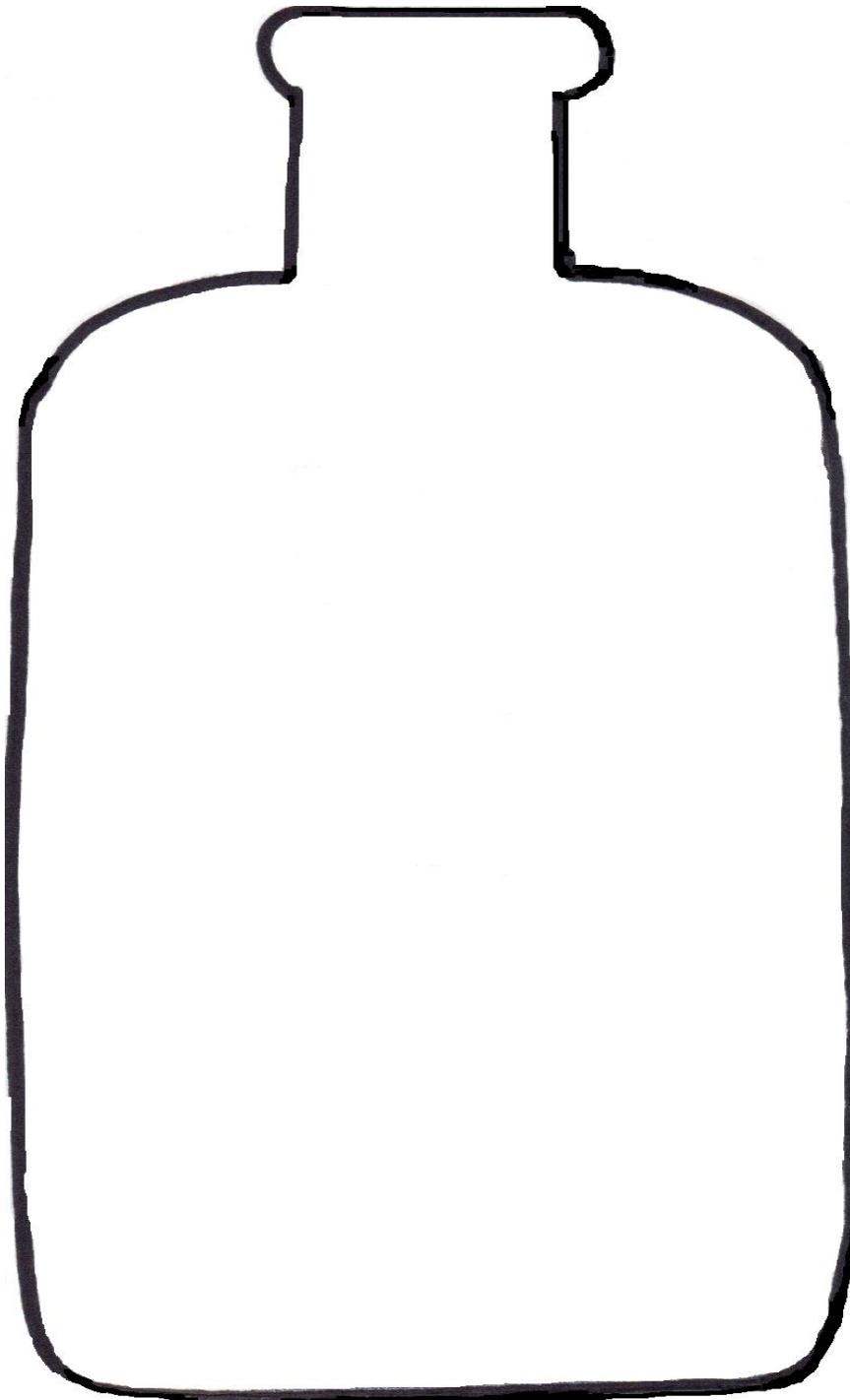
B



C



D



Based on what you just learned about historic bottles, draw your own bottle label!

Artifact Analysis



Archeologists work with many different types of artifacts. Once they have been removed from the ground, they need to be cleaned and then described in order to help find out how they were made, how they were used, and who might have used them. Pick one artifact from the pictures above and circle it, then try to answer the questions below.

1. What material do you think your artifact is made of (wood, metal, glass, stone, clay, plastic, shell)?
2. Is the artifact whole or is it a piece of a larger artifact?
3. How and when do you think your artifact was made?
4. Who do you think made your artifact and what do you think it was used for?
5. Was it difficult to answer all of the questions using only a picture, or would it be easier if you could hold the artifact?

After the artifacts are studied, they are either placed in museum exhibits or are carefully packed away and put in special storage so that archeologists of the future

Artifact Connect-the-Dots

.28 .27
.29 .30 .26
.1
.25
.2 .24 .23 .22 .21 .20 .19 .18 .17
.3 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14 .15 .16
.4 .7 .8 .9
.5 .6

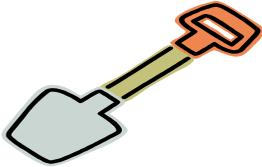
This is a _____.

.41 .40 .39 .38 .37 .36 .35 .34 .33 .32 .31 .30 .29 .28 .27 .26 .25 .24 .23 .22 .21
.42 .43 .44 .45 .46 .47 .48 .49 .3 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14 .15 .16 .17 .18
.51 .50 .2
.1

This is a _____.

Tool Matching

Archeologists use many different tools to gather information about the past. Draw a line to match the tool with the description of how it is used by archeologists.



Write notes and record information



Dig large holes or excavation units



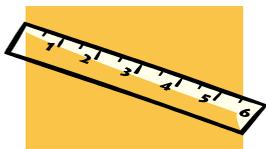
Carry dirt away from the digging area



Measure excavation units and artifacts



Determine the color of soil or dirt



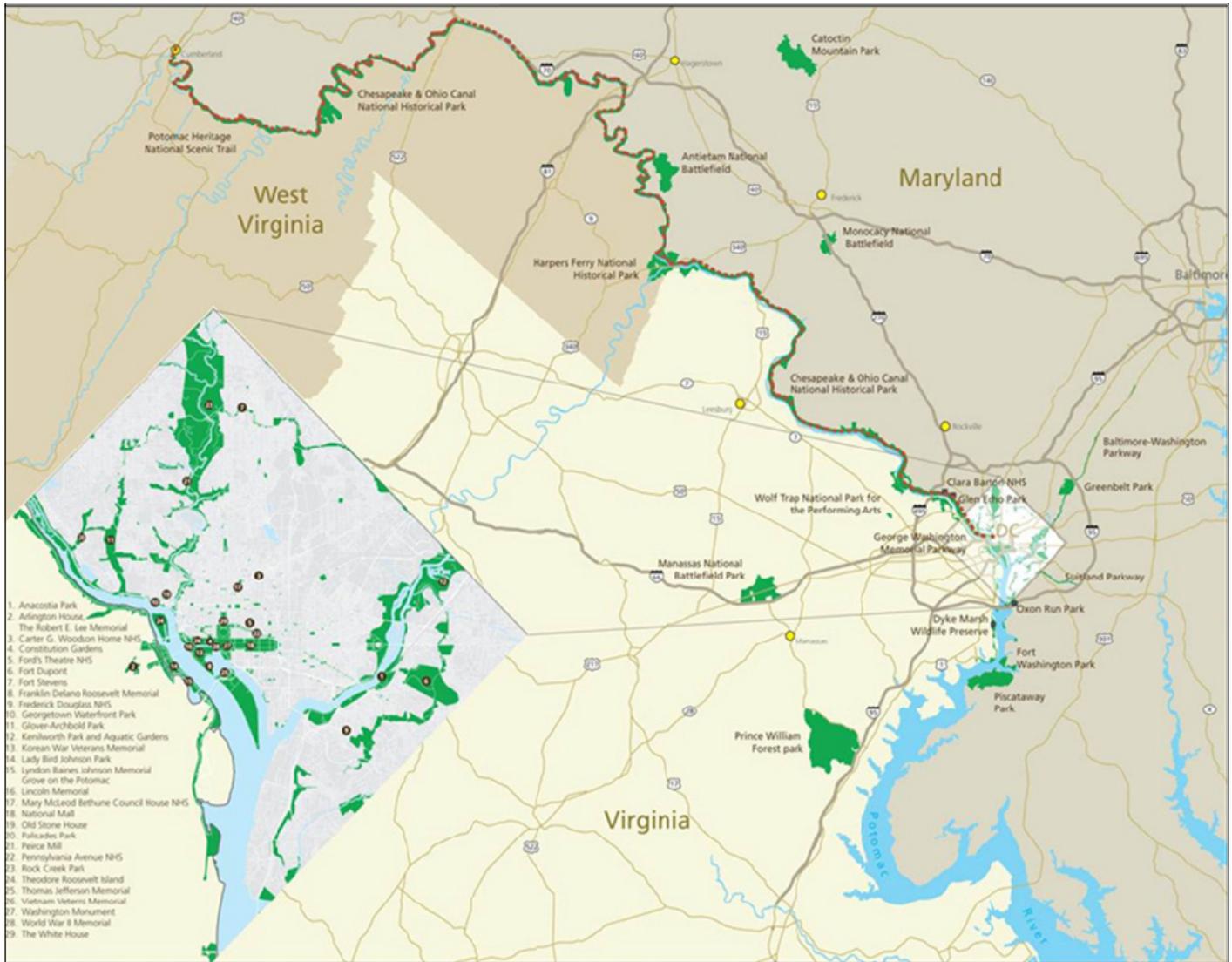
Clean dirt off of artifacts and from the bottom of excavation units after digging



Dig smaller areas of excavation units slowly and carefully

National Capital Region

National Park Service
U.S Department of the Interior



The National Capital Region (NCR) of the National Park Service (NPS) – headquartered in Washington, D.C. administers the National Mall and monumental core parks that were established at the same time the Nation’s Capital was founded in 1792. These national park areas, along with dozens of historic sites, natural areas, and Civil War battlefields (in the District of Columbia and portions of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia) make up NCR (above). The National Capital Region is one of seven National Park Service Regions which together administer 400 NPS areas.

To learn more about the National Capital Region, visit our website at:
<http://www.nps.gov/ncro>

To learn more about archeology in the National Park Service, visit:
<http://www.nps.gov/archeology>

We thank you for your interest in the archeology of the National Capital Region, and hope that this booklet sparks an interest for you to explore, learn, and protect your national parks!