



# Warm-up Lesson

## Thinking Like an Archaeologist

### Materials

*For Each Student*

- “What Is Archaeology?” activity sheet (page 21)

*For the Teacher*

- A posted classroom chart of this unit’s enduring understandings and essential questions

### Background Information

This lesson introduces the science of archaeology. The words archaeology, archaeologist, and archaeological site will be defined as the unit progresses, after students have experienced and applied some of the conceptual tools that archaeologists use. Archaeology and paleontology have some similarities and are often confused.

#### Misconception Alert: Archaeology versus Paleontology

Many people of all ages think that archaeology is the study of dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals. Archaeology is the study of the human past through the objects that people made and left behind. Sometimes archaeologists study animal remains, but only if they are related to human activity. Paleontology is the study of prehistoric plant and animal fossils; paleontologists do not study humans. Archaeology and paleontology employ some of the same methods and concepts, but what they study is very different.

The Misconception Alert below shows the differences between the two. The lesson introduces the archaeological investigation of how people got their food in the distant past.

### Preparing to Teach

1. Select a region that you are going to use for the unit. You may choose the Great Basin Forager (this volume) or you may select a regional investigation from the Project Archaeology Food and Land database at [www.projectarchaeology.org/teachers.html](http://www.projectarchaeology.org/teachers.html). The password is the first word on page 77 of this book.
2. Make a copy of the “What Is Archaeology?” activity sheet for each student.
3. Prepare to share background information.
4. Post the words: “archaeology,” “archaeologist,” and “archaeological site.”
5. Post the Enduring Understandings for the unit in a prominent location to refer to while teaching.

### Uncover Prior Knowledge

1. Direct students to think quietly as you ask each question:
  - What do you think the term **archaeology** means?
  - What picture comes to your mind when you hear the word archaeologist? How would you describe an **archaeologist**?
  - What picture comes to your mind when you hear the words **archaeological site**? What do you think an **archaeological** site looks like?
  - How does an archaeologist investigate a question she or he has about how people lived in the past?
2. Distribute the “What Is Archaeology?”



- activity sheet.
3. Guide students to complete the activity sheet. Emphasize that they do not need to have the correct response and may not be able to respond in all four blocks at this time. The object is to find out what they already know.
  4. Have students pair up and share their work.
  5. As students share their work, walk around the room to get a general idea of what students think archaeology is. If some students think that archaeologists study dinosaurs or other fossils, use the “Misconception Alert: Archaeology vs. Paleontology” to lead a brief discussion about the difference between the two. Before continuing with the unit, be sure that students understand that archaeologists study humans and they do not study dinosaurs.
  6. Explain that they will return to this activity at the end of Lesson Six for possible changes and/or additions to their ideas.
- We are going to look at the words **archaeology**, **archaeologist**, and **archaeological site** more closely after you have learned and applied some the conceptual tools that archaeologists use.
2. Ask students: What questions do you have? Record examples to refer to later in the unit or post them and check each one off as it is answered.

## Discover New Knowledge

Tell students:

1. We are going to use archaeology to learn about how people got their food in the past. We will find ways to apply our knowledge of the past to our lives today. We will study, as archaeologists do, the plant and animal foods that people ate in the past. You do not know how archaeologists do their work yet, but you will learn that as we go along.
  - We are going to study archaeological sites in what is now Lincoln County, Nevada in the Great Basin of the United States of America (or substitute the regional investigation of your choice from the Project Archaeology website). Show students the photograph of O’Malley rock shelter on the cover and the map of the Great Basin [page 118] to prepare them for the investigation.)



## What Is Archaeology?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

<p>1. Define the word archaeology.</p>	<p>2. Draw a picture of an archaeologist, of what an archaeologist does, or the tools used by an archaeologist; or describe an archaeologist.</p>
<p>3. Draw a picture of an archaeological site or describe it.</p>	<p>4. List the steps an archaeologist might take when he or she studies an archaeological site.</p>