



# Archaeology Cookie Dig

Discover how archaeologists excavate to uncover mysteries about people who lived in the past. The best part? You get to eat the results!

**Suggested Ages:** 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> graders

## Guiding Questions

- What is **archaeology**? What is an **artifact**?
- Where do archaeologists work?
- What does **excavate** mean? How do archaeologists excavate? What are some tools they might use?
- How is archaeology similar and different from paleontology?



## Materials

Chocolate chip cookie (raisin would also work), a toothpick, a pen or pencil, colored pencils, and the Archaeology Cookie Dig Grid

## Activity Instructions

- Print out the Archaeology Cookie Dig Grid.
- Get a cookie, and place it in the center of the top grid. Draw the outline of the cookie in the bottom grid, matching how it covers the top grid.
- Do you see any chocolate chips? These are your “artifacts”. Use a colored pencil to draw the exposed artifacts (those you can see without digging) on the bottom grid, all in the same color. Try to be as accurate as possible on the position of the artifacts.
- Using a toothpick, slowly excavate the cookie to search for more artifacts. Hold the cookie still with your other hand as you dig. Start from the side closest to you and move back. Try to not let the cookie move.
- As you find buried artifacts, use a different colored pencil to draw these on the bottom grid.
- Place artifacts and “sediments” (cookie crumbs without chocolate chips) in the appropriate boxes as you excavate. Continue to dig until your whole cookie is done.
- At the end, you can eat your findings!

## Extensions

- When you finish excavating, count your artifacts. How many do you have? How many artifacts are drawn on your bottom grid? What would it mean for a real archaeology dig if the numbers do not match?
- While excavating, were there clues when you got close to an artifact? What kind of clues do you think archaeologists look for in the field?
- After the excavation is finished, look at the top grid. What is left? Why is it important for archaeologists to document their findings?
- If you were an archaeologist, where would you want to work and why? Draw a picture of yourself as an archaeologist on an excavation.

## Extra Information

- **Archaeology** is the study of people who lived in the past. **Archaeologists** are the scientists who study archaeology. Archaeologists can work anywhere a person has been. This includes every continent on Earth, sites that are now underwater, or even the moon!
- An **artifact** is any item that has been made, changed, or used by people. Look around you. Do you see artifacts?
- To **excavate** means to dig. Archaeologists must dig very carefully so they do not damage or overlook artifacts. Archaeologists first grid off an excavation site so they can accurately document the exact location and depth of any artifacts found. They also document information about the environmental conditions surrounding the artifact, such as soil type and color.
- Examples of tools archaeologists use to excavate include stakes, string, line levels, paper, pencils, trowels, brushes, measuring tapes, and sifters.
- Archaeology is often confused with paleontology. While archaeologists study people of the past through their artifacts, paleontologists study ancient plants, non-human animals, and other types of life through their fossils. Paleontology work is spread over a larger timeframe of Earth's history. Archaeology work focuses on the recent past because humans have been on Earth a relatively short time as compared to other life.

# Archaeology Cookie Dig Grid

Sediments



Artifacts

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Place  
Cookie  
Here

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Draw  
Cookie  
Here