

Archeologists

Archeologists are scientists who study the remains of past civilizations. They reconstruct the past by gathering clues. Bones are one kind of clue. Artifacts and fossils are other clues. Artifacts are objects from the past, usually made by people. Fossils are impressions or remains of animals and plants that have turned to stone. Archeologists begin to collect evidence at a spot where people might have lived and worked. Scientists begin to clear away layers of earth to find signs of human civilization. Archeologists call this spot a site, or dig.

Archeologists remove each layer by hand, using many kinds of tools, from shovels to dentist instruments. They work very slowly because they do not want to damage the delicate artifacts and fossils buried in the soil. Workers sift the dirt and rubble through a sieve. They look for things like bits of pottery, tools, seeds, weapons, and bones.

Archeologists record the exact location of every item they find. Then they use high-tech equipment to determine the age of each item. Archeologists must know as much as possible to identify artifacts.

