

Boy Scouts of America Archaeology Merit Badge Information Sheet

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 1:

What is Archaeology? The study of the past through the materials remains (stuff) people left behind.

Do you have a “cool” thing that you know your parents or grandparents used before you were born? What is it? What was it used for? Do we still use something like it today?

What is Geology? The study of dirt, rocks, minerals, and the earth formation processes.

What is Paleontology? The study of dinosaurs, animals, and plants that existed prior to humans.

What is History? The study and documentation of written events in the past.

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 2:

What is a Site Location? The place where the features (building and other non-moveable items) along with artifacts are located that determine the area of an archaeological site.

What is Background Research? Reading books and talking to local people about the history of an area or site.

What is Research Design? The overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way.

What is Site Survey and Fieldwork? Strategic way to determine where an archaeological site is, typically done by walking over an area and doing a grid-type survey using shovel probes or recording the presence/absence of features.

What is Artifact Identification? Any object that was left behind by a person or people in the past is called an **artifact**.

What is Artifact Examination? Artifacts can be examined based on what they are made of, how they were used, and where they were found.

How are Artifacts Interpreted? Artifacts are interpreted based on how they function within the site as a whole and what they may have meant to the person or people using them.

How are Artifacts Preserved and how is Information Shared? Artifacts are thoroughly cleaned and cataloged for preservation then information gleaned is used in museum displays to convey ideas and actions about the past.

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 3:
Absolute Dating vs. Relative Dating

Absolute Dating: provides a numerical age or range.

Example: you are 12 years old **OR** that car was built in 2004

Relative Dating: provides an age as related to something else.

Example: you are older or younger than your siblings are **OR** trains are older than airplanes

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 4:
Choose 5 of these 24 Archaeological Sites:

Cahokia Mounds	The Acropolis	Roman Colosseum
Pyramids of Giza	The Great Wall	Çatalhöyük
Stonehenge	Terracotta Army	Clovis
Machu Picchu	Olduvai Gorge	Gila Cliff Dwellings
Chichén Itza	Knossos	Chaco Canyon
Pompeii	Cave of Altamira	Angel Mounds
Tikal	The US Capitol Building	Fort Kaskaskia
Mesa Verde	Meadowcroft Rock Shelter	Serpent Mound

You should be able to point them out on a map, describe some “cool finds” from the sites, and know generally how these sites fit into the history of the region.

Pick 1 site and give a short presentation to your Cub Scout Pack, Scout Troop, class at school, or another group.

Archaeology Merit Badge Questions 5 & 6:

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 is a federal law that protects archaeological resources in the United States.

NO Stealing or collecting of materials from PUBLIC LANDS (parks, forests, buildings, rivers, beaches, creeks, and lakeshores.)

NHPA laws, County Sheriffs, Conservation Officers, and County and City Historical Associations protect Public Land.

Property owners and local Law Enforcement protect Private Land.

What do you do if you find something? Leave it in place and let the local authorities know about it.

The MAIN way to learn about an archaeological site is to excavate it systematically and scientifically. The excavation process is ALWAYS destructive.

Illinois Historic Preservation Office Contact information:

Visit: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric/Pages/default.aspx>

State Historic Preservation Office (Preservation Services)

IDNR-One Natural Resources Way

Springfield, IL 62702-1271

(217) 782-4836

Historic Sites

DNR-One Natural Resources Way

Springfield, IL. 62702-1271

(217) 782-6302

Missouri Historic Preservation Office Contact Information:

Visit: <https://mostateparks.com/page/84371/state-historic-preservation-office>

State Historic Preservation Office

P.O. Box 176 | Jefferson City, MO 65102

800-361-4827

573-751-7858

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 7:

- (a) We will visit the University Museum at SIUC on the day of the Badge certification.

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 8:

- (a) Scouts will participate in an Archaeological dig at the Thompson House on Campus the day of the Badge certification.

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 9:

- (b) Scouts will recreate the use of an **atlatl** with a modern “chuck-it” the day of the Badge Certification

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 10:

Local people/groups that lives in Southern Illinois/Missouri

Cherokee Trail of Tears

French and or Spanish explorers/ original settlers

Lewis and Clark

and many others!

Archaeology Merit Badge Question 11:

Career opportunities for archaeologist include:

Teaching High School and/or college level classes on local history

Field Tech for construction and building projects

Forest Service Heritage Management

Helping locate cemeteries