

ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHOD
For
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ANALYZE EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

In order to interpret and find meaning in the physical world it is necessary to record precisely and categorize observations, develop questions based on evidence, research similarities and differences in a variety of locations and time periods in order to understand how meaning and value are assigned by a culture. Through the exploratory process, relationships across time and space are revealed, connections made. Visual Archaeologists identify common threads through acknowledging distinctions, learning to see the value of each human life through educational, religious, ethnic, civic and recreational artifacts.



Principle Categories of Archaeology:

- Aim is to construct cultural chronologies, to order material culture into meaningful segments in order to understand cultural processes that underlie human behavior, past and present.
- **Types**
 - Temporal** – the form is subject to change, due to either the whim of fashion or technological improvement.
 - Functional** – artifacts grouped on the basis of known or presumed functions.
 - Technological** – divisions which reflect the mode of manufacture
 - Modal** – based on a shared view of culture that causes artifacts to change in systematic ways through time.
 - Extrasomatic** – learned method of dealing with social and cultural environment.
- **Principles**
 - Stratigraphy** – All else being equal, older deposits will tend to be buried beneath younger ones. Must take into account intact or disturbed strata.
 - Plan, research design, specific questions** – Archaeology destroys its own data in the process of generating them.

Deciphering meaning from material culture is so complex that the archaeologist is often required to borrow from allied disciplines in the physical and natural sciences (geology, climatology, paleobotany, mineralogy, physics, chemistry and anthropology) in order to extract from sites, materials and events every possible piece of information which may lead to a better understanding of the subject of

study. The archeologist must be able to record and publish every minor fact for the benefit of colleagues and successors, because understanding places and objects requires the synthesis of many discoveries and interpretation.