



Online Courses for High School Students
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Archaeology

Detectives of the Past

The famous Spanish philosopher and writer George Santayana once said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” We know from studying history how true this statement is, and the age-old field of archaeology helps us to better understand, through discovery and analysis, how ancient civilizations have shaped the modern world. This fascinating course, *Archaeology: Detectives of the Past*, explores the various techniques, methods, and theories of this field and illustrates how archaeologists conduct their studies. What is it like to uncover precious artifacts? How are they located and preserved? Find the answer to these questions and more as you learn how ancient discoveries can unlock the secrets of a long and colorful past.

Course Highlights

- Explore the beginnings of human culture.
- Discover how archaeologists use ancient artifacts to learn more about the cultures they came from.
- Investigate how archaeologists conduct research.
- Examine how ancient artifacts are recovered and preserved.

Prerequisite: None

Course Length: One Semester

Required Text: There are no required textbook for this course.

Materials List: There are no required materials for this course.

Course Outline:

Unit 1: The World of Archaeology

The archaeologists of the movies live a life of constant action and imminent danger in their quest to uncover ancient archaeological relics. They must solve riddles, decipher ancient texts, dodge deadly snares, and outwit their rivals who are trying to ambush them and steal their treasure. Do the archaeologists portrayed in the movies really reflect the lives of real-life archaeologists? In this unit, you will be introduced to the world of archaeology.

Unit 2: Recording the Past

Archaeologists interpret our past and help shape our future, but exactly how do archaeologists gather and record information? In this unit, you will learn how archaeologists record the past and reconstruct ancient lifeways. We will discuss how archaeologists conduct field research, excavate sites, and date artifacts.

Unit 3: Unearthing Ancient Civilizations

While each excavation site is unique, archaeologists everywhere follow a standard procedure to unearth the artifacts hidden beneath the surface. These artifacts help us better understand the time period they were used in and the people who used them. In this unit, you will learn how archaeologists work as a team to dig up these artifacts and how they classify them

Unit 4: Cultural Origins

Archaeologists seek to understand where humankind began and how it has evolved and expanded over the ages. Factors such as farming, changes in technology, and written language made the first civilizations possible. In this unit, you will learn where civilization started and explore how humankind has evolved as a result of civilization. You will also learn how human language emerged over time to make civilization possible.

Unit 5: The Fossil Record

Archaeologists use the fossil record to date artifacts and sites. The fossil record refers to the preserved remains of plants, animals, and humans which provide us with a history of life. It is not a complete record; rather, there are holes and unexplained oddities found within it. In this unit, you will learn how archaeologists use the fossil record to record and reconstruct human behavior. You will explore its importance as well as investigate its limitations.

Unit 6: Social Organization

Archaeologists seek to piece together and understand the social organization of the societies they study. While there are commonalities to all societies, each has many unique attributes as well. In this unit you will investigate the structure of ancient societies by taking a look at their political, social, and economic structure.

Unit 7: The Survival of Ancient Text

Scrolls, codices, ostraca, annals, defixiones, and maps are all examples of ancient text. These written records are priceless clues which provide archaeologists with details about ancient life that could never be extracted from material evidence alone. In this unit you will investigate the most important ancient texts to have been discovered. You will learn how they have helped piece together the details missing from material evidence.

Unit 8: Public Archaeology & Modern Society

Archaeologists are the public relations agents of the past. Public archaeology includes all the elements of archaeology that are of importance to modern society, including education, archaeo-tourism, and media representation. In this unit you will learn how archaeologists manage the resources of a site and work to protect what they uncover. We will also discuss how they share what they have found with the public.