

Archaeology

Merit Badge Workbook

Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).
Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on December 31, 2025.
Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.
This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Tell what archaeology is and explain to your counselor how it differs or relates to other fields of study such as anthropology, geology, paleontology, and history. Explain how archaeology is different than artifact collecting or treasure hunting.

Scouting America resources: Archaeology: Digging Into the Past (video)
Archaeology vs Anthropology—What's the Real Difference? (video) · Know Your Scientists! Archaeology or Paleontology? (video)

What archaeology is

How archaeology differs from or relates to other fields

Field	How it differs from or relates to archaeology
anthropology	
geology	
paleontology	
history	

How archaeology is different from artifact collecting or treasure hunting

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Describe the following steps of the archaeological process: site location, development of background research and a research design, site survey and fieldwork, artifact identification and examination, interpretation, preservation, and information sharing.

Scouting America resources: Archaeologist Explains How We Know Where To Dig (video)
Archaeology Project Step 1: Research Design (video) · Archeological Surveys (video) · The Excavation Process: How We Excavate (video)
Archaeological Artifact Processing (video) · Archaeology Project Step 5: Interpretation (video)
How Do Modern Archaeologists Communicate Discoveries to the Public in the Digital Age? (website)

Steps of the archaeological process

Step	What happens in this step
site location	
development of background research and a research design	
site survey and fieldwork	
artifact identification and examination	
interpretation	
preservation	
information sharing	

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Describe at least two ways in which archaeologists determine the age of sites, structures, or artifacts. Explain what absolute dating and relative dating are.

Scouting America resources: What Is the Stratigraphic Record of a Site? (video) · How Does Radiocarbon Dating Work? (video)
Relative vs Absolute Dating (video)

Ways archaeologists determine age

Method	How it works

Two kinds of dating

Kind	What it is
Absolute dating	
Relative dating	

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Learn about a combined total of five archaeological sites located both within and outside the United States.

Scouting America resources: 5 Most Amazing Archaeology Sites in the USA (video)
6 Archaeology Sites You've Never Heard of in the USA (video) · Mesa Verde National Park (video) · Machu Picchu (video)
Touring the Hidden World of Cahokia, America's First City (video)
The Evolution of Ancient Egypt's Pyramids | Lost Treasures of Egypt (video) · What Is Stonehenge? (video)
Terracotta Army: The Greatest Archaeological Find of the 20th Century (video)
Underwater Lost City in England | Lost Cities With Albert Lin (video)

(a) For EACH site you research, point it out on a map and explain how it became known to archaeologists. Describe some of the information about the past that has been found at each site. Explain how the information gained from the study of these sites answers questions that archaeologists are asking and how the information may be important to modern people. Compare the relative ages of the sites you research.

My five archaeological sites

Site	Where it is	Found it on a map?	How it became known to archaeologists

What each site tells us

Site	What was found about the past	Questions it answers, and why it matters to people today

Comparing the relative ages of my sites

(b) Choose ONE of the sites you picked and give a short presentation about your findings to a Cub Scout pack, your Scout troop, your school class, or another group.

Site I chose _____ Group _____ Date _____

Main points of my presentation

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Do the following:

(a) Learn about the federal laws and international conventions that protect archaeological sites. Find out if your state, county, or local government has regulations that apply to archaeological or historic sites.

Scouting America resources: Laws, Regulations, & Guidelines (website)

Laws and conventions that protect archaeological sites

Law or convention	Federal or international	What it protects

Regulations in my state, county, or local government

(b) Identify a national, international, or local organization that helps to protect archaeological sites.

Scouting America resources: Organizations and Agencies that Work to Protect Cultural Heritage (website)

Organization _____ National, international, or local _____

How it helps protect archaeological sites

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Do the following:

(a) Explain why it is important to protect archaeological sites.

Scouting America resources: Ethics in Archeology (video)

Why protecting archaeological sites matters

(b) Explain what people should do if they think they have found an artifact.

Scouting America resources: What Do You Do with a Found Artifact? (video)

What to do if you think you found an artifact

(c) Describe the ways in which you can be a protector of the past.

Scouting America resources: The Secret That Saved Kartchner Caverns (video)
Protecting Archaeology Sites in Illinois: Mission Possible (video)

Ways I can be a protector of the past

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. Do ONE of the following and discuss your findings with your counselor:

☐ **(a)** Visit a museum to observe how artifacts aid in conveying history.

Scouting America resources: Archaeology Museums in the US (website)

Museum _____ Date _____

How the artifacts helped tell history

☐ **(b)** Present to your counselor a significant family artifact/heirloom and discuss its history.

Family artifact or heirloom _____

Its history

☐ **(c)** Make a list of the trash your family throws out during one week. Discuss with your counselor what archaeologists might learn about you and your family if they found your trash a thousand years from now.

Scouting America resources: Why Archaeologists Are Obsessed With Ancient Trash (Top 10 Finds) (video)
The Garbage Project (website)

One week of our family's trash

Day	What we threw out
Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	
Day 6	
Day 7	

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What archaeologists might learn about my family a thousand years from now

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

8. Research a group of people who lived in your area more than 100 years ago. Find out about their ways of life, including housing, clothing, arts and crafts, tools, trade and markets, rituals and religions, and diets, and their relationships with other groups of people in the area. Describe what you would expect to find at an archaeological site where these people lived. Explain how these people influenced your current community.

Group of people I researched _____ When they lived here _____

Their ways of life

Topic	What I found
housing	
clothing	
arts and crafts	
tools	
trade and markets	
rituals and religions	
diets	
relationships with other groups of people in the area	

What I would expect to find at a site where they lived

How they influenced my community today

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

9. Explore careers related to this merit badge. Research one career to learn about the training and education needed, costs, job prospects, salary, job duties, and career advancement. Your research methods may include—with your parent or guardian's permission—an internet or library search, an interview with a professional in the field, or a visit to a location where people in this career work. Discuss with your counselor both your findings and what about this profession might make it an interesting career.

Scouting America resources: Jobs Breakdown in Archaeology (video) · How to Become an Archaeologist (video)
How I Became an Archaeologist (video) · How To Become An Underwater Archaeologist (video)
Anthropologists and Archeologists Occupational Outlook (website)

Careers I explored

Career	What the job involves

The one I researched _____ How I researched it _____

What I learned about it

Topic	What I found
training and education needed	
costs	
job prospects	
salary	
job duties	
career advancement	

What might make it an interesting career for me

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

10. Do ONE of the following:

Scouting America resources: Volunteering in Archaeology (video)

☐ **(a)** With your parent or guardian's and counselor's permission, assist a qualified archaeologist for at least eight hours with a project being worked on. Projects may include surveying, site monitoring, site stabilization, surface excavation, laboratory analysis, use of digital archaeological technology, or public outreach. Describe your involvement in the project, what you learned about archaeology, and the steps of archaeological inquiry. Note: Visiting an archaeological site will require advance planning. An archaeological site during study can be a dangerous place. While there, you will need to closely follow the archaeologist's directions and comply with all the safety procedures. Be aware of the changing conditions at the site.

Archaeologist _____ Project _____

My hours on the project

Date	What I did	Hours

My involvement, what I learned, and the steps of archaeological inquiry

☐ **(b)** With your counselor's approval, take part in a simulated archaeological project designed by a qualified archaeologist. The project must include the use of a simulated archaeological site including artifacts and features for the site. Using the steps of archaeological inquiry, analyze the artifacts and features and document the spatial relationships of the artifacts and features at the simulated site. Explain how the environment and time can affect the interpretation of an artifact and the overall archaeological site. Tell how you would share the results of your analysis with other researchers and the public. Note: To find out how to make a simulated archaeological site, talk with a professional archaeologist, trained avocational archaeologist, museum school instructor, science teacher, advisor from a local archaeology society, or other qualified instructor.

Project designed by _____ Date _____

Map of the artifacts and features at the simulated site (draw here or attach)

My analysis of the artifacts and features

How the environment and time can affect interpretation

How I would share my results with researchers and the public

Requirement 10 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

11. Under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist or instructor, do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** Help prepare an archaeological exhibit for display in a museum, visitor center, school, or other public area.

Exhibit _____ Where it was displayed _____

Supervised by _____

How I helped prepare it

☐ **(b)** Use the methods of experimental archaeology to re-create an item or to practice a skill from the past. Write a brief report explaining the experiment and its results.

Item or skill from the past _____ Supervised by _____

My brief report: the experiment and its results

Requirement 11 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

Official Scouting America resources

Scouting America resources: Archaeology merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Archaeology merit badge pamphlet (free PDF)
All merit badges

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
Spot an error or a requirement change? Tell me at scoutsmarts.com/contact.
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