

ArchaeologyLand!

You will visit archaeological sites today. Each site contains a different activity. On real archaeological sites, there are specific areas for each type of activity. Think of your house. You have a kitchen, a living room, and bedrooms. Each place has objects that are special to that room.

What are four objects that you would find in the kitchen that you would not (or should not) find in your bedroom?

_____	_____
_____	_____

People in the past organized their homes and neighborhoods to fit their needs and their lifestyle. Everything had a place. Archaeologists learn about people and the past by studying the things people left behind in the place that they were left. The things that are made and used by people are called artifacts. If artifacts are removed from their place, much of their information and importance is removed with them.

THE SITES

Pottery Village Site

Broken pieces of pottery are called “sherds” (rhymes with “birds”). Sherds are very common on sites in New Mexico. Several different groups of people made and used pottery in the past. The three main groups who lived in the place we call New Mexico about 1,000 years ago are the Ancestral Puebloan people (Anasazi) in the north, the Mogollon in the south, and the Mimbres along the border by Arizona. Many other groups lived here and used the area’s rich resources through time.

Cordage Site

People have been making cordage ever since they needed to tie things together. Different materials are used to make cordage, depending on the purpose of the string or rope. Cordage can be thousands of years old! It is rare to find cordage and other organic materials in sites. Sometimes, these materials are found in dry caves. Cotton, corn, yucca cordage, and other organic materials are very fragile. People who study these materials wear cotton gloves to protect them from the oils from our skin.

Petroglyph Site and Pictograph Wall

Before the Spanish brought writing to this continent, people used symbols painted on rocks (pictographs) or chipped into the rock surface (petroglyphs) to communicate. Some symbols may be maps, some may be messages, and some may tell a story. It is difficult to know the age or the meaning of the message, which is all the more reason to protect them. As we learn new scientific methods, we may discover a way to gain new information from these old stories.

Help Protect the Past! Guard It and Keep It Safe!

If you find an artifact when you are out walking, leave it where you found it and bring the archaeologist to the artifact. Don’t know an archaeologist? Check the Yellow Pages! Or, you can contact the state archaeologist at the State Historic Preservation Office.