

## Digging Up The Past

- Archaeologists find most of their evidence buried in the ground. Thus, they plan very carefully where they will dig.
- The excavation site must be carefully examined so that they don't overlook or destroy any evidence at the site.
- As archaeologists excavate a site they look for layers where the soil has a slightly different colour, texture, or chemical make-up.
- Each layer (strata) shows the influence of different environmental factors or human activities.
- After the archaeologists find artifacts or fossils, they follow various techniques to gather more information on their discoveries.

### Techniques

(1) Comparison: Archaeologists compare finds with similar objects found at other sites.

(ie) If a pot looks like pots from another region, the two people may have been trading.

(2) Statistical Analysis: Archaeologists make accurate counts of various types of remains.

(ie) A large amount of gazelle bones might indicate that people who lived at the site liked eating gazelles.

(3) Chemical Analysis: Using various forms of chemical analysis, archaeologists can figure out many things.

(ie) A high level of lead in a body could indicate that a person died of lead poisoning.

(4) Dating: A common test, carbon 14 dating, measures the carbon-14 in an object. Because the amount of carbon-14 declines over time, scientists can tell when something died.

(5) Remote Sensing: Satellites with special equipment can measure light reflecting off the earth's surface. This allows archaeologists to find ~~previously hidden ancient roads, fields and buildings.~~