

CLUES ABOUT THE PAST

ARTIFACTS are just one of the clues that archaeologists use to answer questions about the past and peoples' lives.

Besides *artifacts* - which are moveable, objects made or modified by humans - what else do archaeologists use to solve history's mysteries? A few other kinds of archaeological clues are called *features*, *ecofacts*, and *context*.

As long as archaeologists "ask" the right questions, these clues can reveal a lot about the past. What are the objects? Who used them? When were they made? Why were they made? These are just a few such questions. It's also very important to know where the object was found and what it was found with (that's the *context*).

Context is one of the most important clues. It can help archaeologists understand not only what an artifact, ecofact, or feature was used for, but even when it was used. All the findings from a site are grouped into types based on their characteristics and context.



Quartz Crystal Pendant
The groove along the top allowed this to be worn like a necklace.



Pyrite (fools gold)



Graphite



Hematite

MINERALS
American Indians gathered and used different minerals for adornment and in making other tools.

ECOFACTS
These are natural remains that aren't artifacts because humans didn't make them, they just used them. Animal and plant remains can reveal what species lived in the area and what the American Indians were eating.



Turkey Spur



Antler

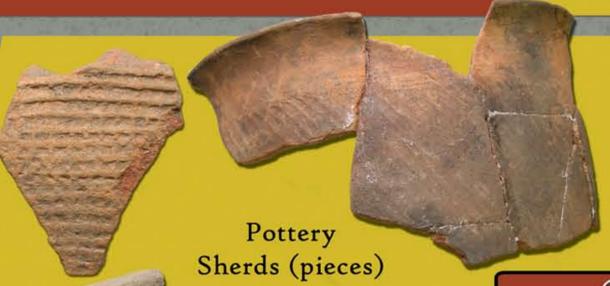


Animal Bones
Archaeologists found remains of deer, turkey, and turtle.

Features are a tricky type of clue. Find out more about them on panel 7, "What's in a Site?"

The Leake Site provided archaeologists with many clues about who once lived here.

These are some of the stone, clay, mineral, and even bone objects that archaeologists found at this site.



Pottery Sherds (pieces)

For more on pottery, check out panel 14 - "Pieces of the Past."

CERAMICS
Ceramic objects can reveal much about everyday life as well as the spiritual and religious views of people. Clay objects are some of the most important clues an archaeologist can find.



Human Effigy
Archaeologists think this effigy may have been made to resemble someone considered to be important.



Projectile Points
Not everything with a point is an arrowhead. These tools were also used as spears, knives, scrapers, and drills.

Arrowheads



Scraper



Spearpoint



Celt
An early type of axe used for woodworking or to cut down trees.

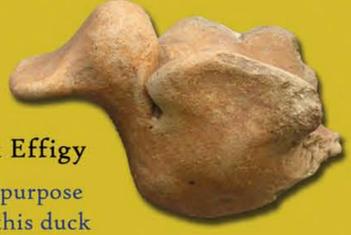
STONE
Large amounts of stone objects (*lithics*) are found at archaeological sites because they're made from durable materials that don't decompose easily like wood or bone.



Soapstone Pipe Bowl
Several broken pipe pieces were found at the Leake Site.



Animal Effigy
Some archaeologists think this might be a manatee? What do you think?



Duck Effigy
What purpose might this duck figurine have served?



Soapstone Gorget
These holes allowed the gorget to be worn like a necklace.



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