

# INTRODUCTION

## Welcome!

Welcome to the world of archaeology! Archaeology, the study of human culture through material remains, is an inherently hands-on discipline. We have designed this manual to capitalize on the unique experiential opportunity archaeology represents. We have created short, hands-on, inquiry-based exercises as a fun and creative supplement to traditional classroom lectures. Some activities will require you to work actively in teams (as real archaeological work is done), while others are more individually based. These activities will engage both majors and nonmajors using tactile experiences, problem-solving skills, and discussions and debates. Another unique aspect of archaeology is how it relies on so many different disciplines—there is literally something for everyone! Math, geology, art, religion, environment, chemistry, animals, and agriculture are only a few aspects regularly incorporated into archaeological studies of human populations. We hope you will find the activities in this manual engaging and that they will help you appreciate the breadth of archaeological research.

## What's Inside?

This volume is divided into six modules focused on a different aspect of archaeology. Module 1 focuses on how archaeology fits into its parent discipline of anthropology. These chapters explore concepts such as the scientific method, cultural relativism, and the uniquely human trait of using symbolism and art. Module 2 examines how archaeologists attribute meaning to artifacts. Using everyday objects such as buttons or kitchen gadgets, these chapters will help you learn how to interpret artifacts from an emic (i.e., insider) perspective. These chapters are also designed to make you aware of the biases and difficulties archaeologists face when interpreting artifacts, particularly when we are unaware of our own etic (i.e., outsider) tendencies. Module 3 uses everyday materials and ideas to explain how archaeologists date the past. Module 4 allows you to explore common archaeological specialties such as lithics and ceramics. It also explores the interdisciplinary nature and teamwork approach of today's archaeology. Module 5 tackles explanation in archaeology through various philosophical and theoretical lenses such as evolutionary theory and human agency. We've sought to relate these more difficult concepts to your daily lives to create analogies from which you can better interpret the past. Finally, Module 6 explores ethical topics that are often overlooked, such as the preservation ethic, stewardship, and accountability to descendent communities.

Many of these activities are designed as debates to get you thinking about all sides of these issues, as well as to challenge assumptions and stereotypes arising from our own cultural paradigm, such as assuming agriculture is in-

herently positive. These last chapters will introduce you to the Society for America Archaeology's Principles of Archaeological Ethics that govern contemporary archaeological practice, guide ethical behavior, and support all public stakeholders in the protection of cultural resources. The ultimate goal of this chapter, and the entire volume really, is to cultivate an appreciation for, and attitude of, stewardship for past and present cultures. Your instructor will provide you with copies of any reading materials that are not freely available online and will show you any videos that require a subscription or purchase to stream or download. If any of the provided links to free video-sharing websites are broken or no longer active, ask your instructor for updated ones, or try finding them by searching for the title in a search engine. *Enjoy!*