

## Archaeology Acrostic

Adapted from lesson plan from Renee Goularte, Elementary Teacher, submitted to [readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/acrostic-poems-about-favorite-309.html?tab=5#tabs).  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/acrostic-poems-about-favorite-309.html?tab=5#tabs>

**Time:** 60 minutes

- English Language Arts:
  - By the end of fifth grade, students read four major types of literary texts in print and multimedia formats: fiction, literary nonfiction, *poetry*, and drama.
  - By the end of grade eight, students read four major types of literary texts in print and multimedia formats: fiction, literary nonfiction, *poetry*, and drama.
  - 
  - Grade 3:
    - Writing: 6.1
    - Communication: 1.1-1.5; 5.1, 5.2
  - Grade 4:
    - Writing: 6.1
    - Communication: 1.1-1.5; 5.1, 5.2
  - Grade 5:
    - Writing: 6.1
    - Communication: 1.1-1.5; 5.1, 5.2
  - Grade 6:
    - Writing: 6.1
    - Communication: 1.1-1.5
  - Grade 7:
    - Writing: 6.1
    - Communication: 1.1-1.5
  - Grade 8:
    - Writing: 6.1
    - Communication: 1.1-1.5

### Materials Needed:

- Archaeology vocabulary sheet
- Scrap paper
- Lined paper/printed paper
- Construction paper (larger than the white writing paper)
- Glue stick
- Pencil
- Dictionary
- Archaeology related books (optional)

In this lesson students write free-verse acrostic poems about archaeology using the letters of the word “archaeology” to begin each line. After proofreading the poems are recopied or typed and illustrated and then mounted on construction paper for display.

**Introduction:**

Archaeology is the scientific study of past human cultures by analyzing the material remains (sites and artifacts) that people left behind. This can include both prehistory (in the USA, the period before European settlers arrived), history (after European settlers arrived). Almost all information in history books has been developed through archaeological investigation and analysis, oral history, or examining historical documents. An acrostic poem is a type of poetry where the first, last or other letters in a line spell out a particular word or phrase. The most common and simple form of an acrostic poem is where the first letters of each line spell out the word or phrase. This lesson will have students use the letters “a-r-c-h-a-e-o-l-o-g-y” to spell out words or phrases about the discipline of archaeology and the past.

**Activity Steps:**

1. Give the students the definition of an acrostic poem. Have them do a warm-up exercise by writing an acrostic poem using their own name. \*
2. Give the students the definition of archaeology and a little information about what archaeologists do and how they contribute to our knowledge of history.
3. Post the archaeology vocabulary list on the wall or project it using the smart board/projector. Tell them they will now be creating an acrostic poem using the word “archaeology” and what it means. They are free to use some of the vocabulary on the board, use their own words, or use archaeology books/online resources for inspiration.
4. Have the students use scrap paper to brainstorm and write down ideas for their poems.
5. After the students are finished brainstorming, have them type or write their poems neatly on the lined paper. \*
6. Mount the finished paper on the construction paper using the glue stick.
7. Have students present their poems. How many people used similar or the same words? What were some unique ideas for words or phrases?

\*Try using the online acrostic tool from Read Write Think at the link below if you'd like to do the example poem as a class, or have students use this online tool to create their archaeology acrostic and print out the final poem for presentation.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/acrostic-poems-30045.html>

Another option for this lesson is have the students write acrostic poems using the letters in their names as the base, but have all of their descriptive words be based on archaeology or historical vocabulary words.

## Archaeology Vocabulary

**Absolute dating** - Determining the age of an object on a specific time scale.

**Archaeological Site** - A place where human activity occurred and material remains were deposited.

**Archaeology** - The scientific study of past human cultures by analyzing the material remains (sites and artifacts) that people left behind.

**Artifact** - Any object made, modified, or used by people.

**Chronology** - The arrangement of events or artifacts in the order of their occurrence in time.

**Context** - The relationship of artifacts and other cultural remains to each other and the situation in which they are found.

**Culture** - A set of learned beliefs, values and behaviors or way of life shared by the members of a society.

**Excavation** - The systematic digging and recording of an archaeological site.

**Feature** - Material remains that cannot be removed from a site such as roasting pits, fire hearths, house floors or post molds.

**Grid** - A network of uniformly spaced squares that divides a site into units.

**Historic** - The period of time after written records. Dates vary in different geographical areas.

**Level** - An excavation layer, which may correspond to natural strata. Levels are numbered from the top to bottom of the excavation unit, with the uppermost level being Level 1.

**Midden** - An area used for trash disposal.

**Prehistoric** - The period of time before written records. Dates vary in different geographical areas.

**Projectile point** - A general term for stone points that were hafted to darts, spears or arrows.

**Provenience** - The geographic location from which the artifact was found. The three-dimensional location of an artifact or feature within an archaeological site, measured by two horizontal dimensions, and a vertical elevation.

**Relative dating** - Determining the age of an object compared to other objects.

**Survey** - The systematic examination of the ground surface in search of archaeological sites.

**Trowel** - A small hand tool with a handle and flat metal blade; used in excavation.

**Unit** - A defined area within an excavation. Dividing a site into units helps archaeologists with spatial relationships between artifacts.

**Stratigraphy** - The layering of deposits in archaeological sites. Cultural remains and natural sediments become buried over time, forming strata.

**Test pit**- A small excavation unit dug to get more information about a site. Test pits can be used to determine site approximate site boundaries as well as artifact density.