FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A CAREER IN ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE U.S.

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Table of Contents

1. What jobs are available for archaeologists?
2. What education and training are required to become a professional archaeologist?
3. What college or university should I go to?
4. What are some general introductory books on archaeology?
   - Popular Books on Archaeology
   - Textbooks on Archaeological Methods:
   - Textbooks on Prehistory:
   - Video and Film.
5. I want to go on a dig. How do I volunteer?
6. Where can I get more information on archaeology?
   - Pamphlets and Brochures
   - Educational Resources
   - Web Resources
   - Magazines
   - Societies
7. Acknowledgments

1. What jobs are available for archaeologists?

Professional archaeologists work for universities, colleges, museums, the federal government, state governments, in private companies, and as consultants. They teach, conduct field investigations, analyze artifacts and sites, and publish the results of their research. The minimal educational requirement to work as a field archaeologist is a B.A. or B.S. degree with a major in anthropology or archaeology and previous field experience (usually obtained by spending a summer in an archaeological field school or participating as a volunteer, see question 5). While this is sufficient to work on an archaeological field crew, it is not sufficient to move into supervisory roles. Supervisory positions require a graduate degree, either an M.A./M.S. or a Ph.D.
Academic Positions. Academic institutions in the U.S. can be broadly divided into three groups: 1) universities (with graduate programs); 2) colleges (undergraduate programs leading to B.A./B.S. degrees); and 3) community colleges (two year programs leading to Associates degrees). A Ph.D. is required for faculty positions at colleges and universities. An M.A./M.S. is required for community college positions. Faculty teaching loads vary among these three groups. University faculty teach graduate courses, upper level undergraduate courses (for anthropology or archaeology majors), and introductory level courses. College faculty teach upper level undergraduate courses and introductory level courses. Community college faculty teach introductory level courses (and sometimes a few upper level courses). Requirements to obtain research funds and publish research results are highest in universities and lower in community colleges. Laboratory facilities are greater in universities than in community colleges. Most faculty positions are nine month appointments. During the summer, academic archaeologists conduct field research funded by grants or contracts, teach summer school, teach summer field schools, or work as private consultants. Research funds come from the archaeologist's school, from federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and from private foundations such as the National Geographic Society, Wenner- Gren, Earthwatch, and others. Within colleges and universities archaeologists are found in departments of anthropology, archaeology, art history, architecture, classics, history, and theology.

Museum Positions. Museums may be connected with a university or independent. Museum curators conduct research, publish the results, give public presentations, prepare displays, and conserve the museum collections. Museum positions require a graduate degree (M.A./M.S. or Ph.D.). Museum positions are usually full-year appointments.

State and Federal Government Positions. Many archaeologists work for the federal government. The U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have about 800 archaeologists among them. Many archaeologists also work for state government agencies. Every state has a State Historic Preservation Office with one or more archaeologists on staff. In addition, other archaeologists work in state parks departments, highway departments, and water resource departments. Some cities also hire archaeologists to handle local ordinances protecting archaeological sites. Federal and state laws that protect the environment include protection for important archaeological sites. As a result the government is involved in managing archaeological sites on federal and state lands (parks, forests, etc). Construction projects often require archaeological surveys to locate prehistoric or historic sites and the excavation of some sites before construction can begin. Federal and state archaeologists are involved in making these decisions and supervising the archaeologists who perform the work. This kind of archaeology is called cultural resources management (CRM). Most government positions require an M.A. degree.

Private sector archaeologists. Archaeologists also work for firms that conduct the CRM investigations required by law. They may work for laboratories or centers within colleges and universities, for engineering and environmental companies, for companies
specializing in archaeological investigations, or as private consultants. Positions in CRM work require an M.A. to have a supervisory role. Private sector archaeologists conduct archaeological surveys to locate prehistoric and historic sites. They also excavate significant sites prior to their destruction by construction activities. Private sector archaeologists work in the field, in the laboratory analyzing the results of their field investigations, in the office writing reports on those investigations and preparing proposals to conduct additional work. These organizations also hire field archaeologists as temporary staff to assist with the field investigations. Field positions usually require a B.A. degree and previous field experience in an archaeological field school.

2. What education and training are required to become a professional archaeologist?

Education and training requirements are different for different kinds of archaeology. In the U.S. anthropology departments include archaeology as one of four subdisciplines (the others are physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anthropology programs in the U.S. were established to study American Indian societies, languages, and ruins. As a result, there are few separate archaeology departments. Interdisciplinary programs that combine archaeology with various other fields of study are more common. Students who wish to study ancient or classical civilizations (including the Near East, Egypt, early civilizations of the Mediterranean, classical Greece and Rome, and the early civilizations of India, China, and southeast Asia) are more likely to pursue their studies in interdisciplinary programs that include courses in art, architecture, classics, history, ancient and modern languages, and theology. Students who wish to study the historical periods (roughly from the fall of Rome to the present) combine history (including archival and oral history research) with courses in historical and vernacular architecture, material culture and folklore, and archaeology.

At the undergraduate level, there is little specialization. A major in anthropology requires courses in all of the subdisciplines. For students interested in ancient and classical civilizations, the particular undergraduate major is not important, but it is advantageous to begin learning several ancient and modern languages (e.g. Greek, Latin, German, French). Historical archaeologists usually major in anthropology or history. An undergraduate degree (B.A./B.S.) is sufficient to work as a field archaeologist in the U.S. and to perform basic laboratory studies. Previous experience through participation in an archaeological field school or as a volunteer is often required. Summer archaeological field schools provide the best way to learn how to properly excavate and record archaeological sites and to find out if archaeology is really for you. Job opportunities outside the U.S. are very limited, but volunteers with field experience should be welcome almost anywhere.

There are two levels of graduate training in archaeology. The first is an M.A. or M.S. degree which takes about 1-2 years of course work beyond the B.A./B.S. degree and a written thesis which presents the results of original research by the student. Some programs offer a non-thesis M.A. degree. Unless you are planning to work immediately
on a Ph.D. degree, the preparation of a thesis is an important part of the educational process. An M.A./M.S. would be enough to direct field crews and is sufficient for many government positions in archaeology. It is also sufficient to work in the private sector, to teach in a community college, and to work for some museums. An M.A./M.S. with a thesis and a year of field and laboratory experience is the minimum for certification by the Society of Professional Archeologists. Most foreign governments will issue excavation permits only to archaeologists with a Ph.D. degree. This means that opportunities to direct field projects outside the U.S. are limited to those with a doctoral degree.

The second graduate degree is the Ph.D., which is required to teach in a college or university or hold a museum curatorship. The Ph.D. degree requires 2-3 years of courses beyond the M.A. and the successful preparation and oral defense of a dissertation containing original research in your chosen specialization within the field of archaeology. Some graduate programs offer streamlined tracks for students with a B.A. degree so that they work directly toward a Ph.D. while others require an M.A. degree first.

3. What college or university should I go to?

The American Anthropological Association publishes annually the "AAA Guide 1996-1997." It lists most of the graduate and undergraduate anthropology programs in the U.S. and Canada. Included in the listings are the names and research interests of all faculty in the department. The guide is published annually and can be purchased from the American Anthropological Association, AAA Book Orders, 4350 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203-1620 for $50 (http://www.ameranthassn.org/puborder.htm). You should be able to find a copy at any college or university library. The AAA guide coverage is less complete for interdisciplinary programs combining art, architecture, classics, language, and history to study ancient and classical civilizations or historical archaeology. Four other guides will be useful in locating these programs. The "APA Guide to Graduate Programs in the Classics in the United States and Canada" is available from the American Philological Association, 19 University Place, Rm. 328, New York University, New York, NY 10003-4556 for $12 (http://scholar.cc.emory.edu/scripts/APA/APA-MENU.html). The "Directory of M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in Art and Art History" is available for $10.50 from the College Art Association, 275 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10001 (http://www.collegeart.org/). The Classical and Mediterranean Archaeology web page has extensive departmental listings at http://classics.lsa.umich.edu/welcome.html#departments. Finally, the "Guide to Graduate Programs in Historical and Underwater Archaeology" is available from the Society for Historical Archaeology, P. O. Box 30446, Tucson, AZ 85751-0446, and online at http://www.sha.org/sha_coll.htm.

4. What are some general introductory books on archaeology?

Popular Books on Archaeology:


**Textbooks on Archaeological Methods:**


**Textbooks on Prehistory:**


**Video and Film:**

*Archaeology on Film,* Downs, Mary, Peter S. Allen, Mark J. Meister, and Carole Lazio, editors. Available from the Archaeological Institute of America, c/o Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., Order Department, 4050 Westmark Dr. Dubuque, IA 52002, (800) 228-0810. $13.50 + $4.00 shipping and handling for non-AIA members. Also describing many good archaeological films and videos is *Films for Anthropological Teaching, 8th edition* (American Anthropological Association Special Publication Number 29) edited by Karl Heider and Carol Hermer. $10 from [AAA Book Orders](http://www.ameranthassn.org/puborder.htm), 4350 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203-1620.

[The Ancient World on Television](http://web.idirect.com/~atrium/awotv.html) lists weekly schedules of archaeological programs on television.

*Archaeology on Film: An Electronic Database of Archaeology Film Reviews* provides reviews of archaeological films and allows you to add your own reviews at [http://www.sscf.ucsb.edu/anth/videos/video.html](http://www.sscf.ucsb.edu/anth/videos/video.html).

Finally, if you are just interested in a good read, Anita Cohen-Williams has compiled an extensive listing of works of fiction that include archaeologists or archaeological sites in [Archaeology in Fiction Bibliography](http://www.tamu.edu/anthropology/fiction.html).

### 5. I want to go on a dig. How do I volunteer?

Check with your state archaeological society. They may have an annual field school. Subscribe to the *PIT Traveler* (Passport in Time Clearinghouse, P. O. Box 31315, Tucson, AZ 85751-1315, (520) 722-2716, (800) 281-9176), a program in which volunteers work with archaeologists in the National Forest Service on a variety of projects. The Archaeological Institute of America publishes an annual *Archaeological Fieldwork Opportunities Bulletin,* Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Order Department, 4050 Westmark Drive, Dubuque, IA 52002 (800) 228-0810. $11.00 +$4.00 shipping and handling for non-AIA members.

On the internet, a number of projects seeking students and volunteers are listed on the [Archaeological Fieldwork Server](http://www.cincpac.com/afs/testpit.html).

Several organizations place volunteers and students into archaeological field projects directed by professional archaeologists:
6. Where can I get more information on archaeology?

**Pamphlets and Brochures:**

The federal government publishes a brochure, "Participate in Archeology," that lists books and videos on archaeology. Write to the Publication Coordinator, Archaeological Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, D. C. 20013-7127. The Society for American Archaeology has a brochure, "Archaeology & You" which is available for $4.00 shipping and handling from SAA, 900 Second Street N.E., #12, Washington, D. C. 20002-3557.
Careers in Archaeology from the Society for American Archaeology describes the training required to become a professional archaeologist. Careers in Historical Archaeology from the SHA covers historical and underwater archaeology and provides information primarily on training and job opportunities in the United States. A four page pamphlet, "Brief 343: Archaeologists," is available from Chronicle Guidance Publications, Aurora Street, P. O. Box 1190, Moravia, NY 13118-1190 for $3.00. The Princeton Review Guide to Careers has a some information on archaeology as a career on the web search on "Archaeologist" or "Curator" at http://www.review.com/career/).

Educational Resources:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service have produced a series of twenty-two lesson plans ($8.00 each) called, Teaching with Historic Places. (http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/home.html). Contact Jackdaw Publications for ordering information and shipping charges at PO Box 503 Armawalk, NY 10501, (800) 789-0022, fax: (800) 962-9101 or from the NPS order form on the web (http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/ordrfrm.html).

The National Museum of Natural History produces a free newsletter for teachers called Anthro Notes. For information contact P. Ann Kaupp, NHB 363, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560. Archaeology in the Classroom, edited by Tracy Cullen and Wendy O'Brien is available from the American Institute of Archaeology ($10.50 + $4.00 shipping and handling for nonmembers, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Order Department, 4050 Westmark Drive, Dubuque, IA 52002).

Everything We Know About Archeology for You to Use in Your Classroom identifies for teachers some of the educational material that is available concerning archaeology and archaeological methods for use in the classroom. Includes a number of articles and essays on archaeology in school programs, in addition to lesson plans for teaching cultural history and site preservation. Archeology and Education: The Classroom and Beyond responds to the need for making information about archaeology more accessible to the public. Both are available from the National Park Service. Write to Publications, Archeology and Ethnography Program, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, (202) 343-4101, Email: DCA@nps.gov.

Archaeological Resources for Education describes a variety of educational resources available on the web for teaching about archaeology (http://www.interlog.com/~jabram/elise/archres.htm). Similarly, the National Park Service site Tools for Teaching (http://www.cr.nps.gov/toolsfor.htm) also provides access to educational resources on the web. The national Trust for Historic Preservation has a new web page for kids called "Trusty's Kids Corner" (http://www.trustkids.org/).

For web resources to help you learn about archaeology, visit John Hoopes "Introduction to Archaeology" Web site (http://www.cc.ukans.edu/~hoopes/anth110.html) and Kevin Greene's Electronic Companion (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/~nktd/wintro/) to his introductory text.
For web resources to help you learn about North American Archaeology, visit the Archaeology of North America, a web page organized around an introductory course in North American prehistory (http://http.tamu.edu/~carlson/archaeo.html) or The Archaeology of North America by Kevin Callahan at the University of Minnesota (http://www.geocities.com/Athens/oracle/2596/index.html).

To stay up to date on the latest archaeological discoveries, visit Anthropology in the News a site that links you to current news stories concerning anthropology and archaeology (http://www.tamu.edu/anthropology/news.html).

Web Resources:

Several comprehensive guides to internet resources of interest to archaeologists are now available:

- Ancient World Web by Julia Hayden lists resources of interest to classical archaeologists and prehistorians (http://www.julen.net/aw/).
- Archaeology on the Net includes links to archaeology web sites and information on new books of interest to archaeologists (http://www.serve.com/archaeology/).
- ArchNet - The most extensive listing of web resources related to archaeology (http://archnet.uconn.edu/).
- The Atrium by David Meadows hosts the valuable "Ancient World on Television," "Commentarrium" (links to news stories about archaeology), and the "Explorator" (an email list to keep you up-to-date on the latest finds) (http://web.idirect.com/~atrium/).
- Internet Resources for Heritage Conservation, Historic Preservation and Archaeology by Peter H. Stott (http://www.cr.nps.gov/ncptt/irg/).
- Jennifer's Archaeology Website by Jennifer Hutchey. (http://arch.hutchey.com/).
- Yahoo! Anthropology and Archaeology (http://www.yahoo.com/Social_Science/Anthropology_and_Archaeology/).

The following world wide web servers provide additional information about archaeology or can link you to other archaeological resources on the web:

- Classics and Mediterranean Archaeology (http://rome.classics.lsa.umich.edu/welcome.html).
- Egyptology Resources (http://www.newton.cam.ac.uk/egypt).
- Exploring Ancient World Cultures (http://eawc.evansville.edu/).
- **Fantastic Archaeology** A thoughtful examination of outlandish claims (http://www.usd.edu/anth/cultarch/cultindex.html).
- **A Guide to Underwater Archaeology Resources on the Internet** (http://www.pophaus.com/underwater/).
- **LINKS to the Past (National Park Service)** (http://www.nps.gov/crweb1/).
- **Maya Civilization--Past and Present** (http://indy4.fdl.cc.mn.us/~isk/maya/maya.html).
- **Mining Company: Archaeology** K. Kris Hirst is your guide to archaeological resources on the net (http://archaeology.miningco.com/).
- **Mystery of the Maya** (http://www.cmcc.muse.digital.ca/membris/civiliz/maya/mminteng.html).
- **Seeking Sites Afar: Point of Reference** by Wayne Neighbors has lots of current information on archaeological research (http://anthro.org/main.htm).
- **Southwestern Archaeology** (http://www.swanet.org/).
- **U. K. Archaeology on the Internet** (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~aczkdc/ukarch/ukindex.html).
- **World-Wide Web Virtual Library: Museums**. Mirror at Illinois State Museum; (http://www.museum.state.il.us/vlmp/).

**Magazines:**


*Archaeology.* Published bimonthly by the Archaeological Institute of America. Subscription Service, P. O. Box 420423, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0423, (800) 829-5122. $19.97/year for six issues (U. S. domestic rate; http://www.archaeology.org/).

*Biblical Archaeologist.* American School for Oriental Research, Membership/Subscriber Services, P. O. Box 15399, Atlanta, GA 30333-0399. $35/yr for four issues (U.S. domestic rate; http://www.asor.org/BA/BAHP.html).


*Common Ground.* Published by the National Park Service Departmental Consulting Archeologist and Archeological Assistance Program. Editor, NPS Archaeological Assistance Division, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, D. C. (http://www.nps.gov/aad/pubs.htm).
Current Archaeology. 9 Nassington Road, London NW3 2TX, UK, (44) 171 435-7517. $30/year for six issues (U.S. rate; http://www.archaeology.co.uk/).


Historic Preservation. Published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Membership Department, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 673-4166. $20/year for six issues including a membership in the National Trust (U.S. domestic rate; http://www.nthp.org/).

KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt. KMT Communications, 1531 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94115. $32/year for four issues (U.S. domestic rate; http://www.egyptology.com/kmt/).


Societies:


Archaeological Conservancy. 5301 Central Ave. NE, Suite 1218, Albuquerque, NM 87108-1517 (http://www.gorp.com/archcons/).

Archaeological Institute of America. 656 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02215-2010 (http://www.archaeological.org/).

National Trust for Historic Preservation. 1785 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington D.C. 20036; (http://www.nthp.org/).


Society for Archaeological Sciences. Office of the General Secretary, SAS, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside, CA 92521 (http://www.wisc.edu/larch/sas/sas.htm).
Society for Historical Archaeology. P. O. Box 30446, Tucson, AZ 85751-0446; (http://www.sha.org/).

Society of Professional Archeologists. Has become the Register of Professional Archaeologists. Listing on the Register is offered through the SAA and SHA.

Numerous other archaeological societies and newsletters can be found in the "Directory of Archaeological Societies and Newsletters" by Smoke Pfeiffer (http://www.serv.net/~mallard/hr/archsoc.html).

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