

Excavation is not as common as it used to be

- 1) Excavation destroys sites.
- 2) Excavation is very costly.
- 3) The lab work that accompanies excavation is extremely expensive.

Why excavate?

- 1) culture history
- 2) analysis of features
- 3) recover perishable items

Horizontal excavation units

Test units

- 1) good for determining the extent of cultural remains across space
- 2) small size limits information on particular places

Areal excavations

- 1) good for gathering lots of information about a particular space
- 2) focuses all effort on that one place

Technique chosen will depend on the question asked.

Often one technique will be used in different phases of research.

Vertical Excavation Units

Arbitrary levels: thickness is decided upon by the archaeologist

Often 10 centimeters

Divides up depositions with little to no natural strata

Natural stratigraphic units: vertical excavation units that represent roughly contemporaneous depositions

Combination of natural strata and arbitrary levels

Always use natural strata

But use arbitrary levels to divide up thick natural strata

Collecting and Recording Locational Data

Grid unit provenience: location of artifacts within a grid unit

- 1) Establish a datum point.
 - 2) Set up a pair of baselines.
 - 3) Decide on a grid unit size.
 - 4) Establish grid lines every X meters off each baseline.
 - 5) Give each grid unit a name.
 - 6) Collect artifact by grid unit.
- Only know that the artifact came from a particular unit.

Surface versus Buried Sites

Surface Site

Site name: 41 DN 123
Unit: 16E 10N
Collector: Lisa Nagaoka
Date: 28 Oct 99

Buried Site

Site name: 41 DN 123
Unit 16E 10N
Layer/Level: Layer II, Level 3
Collector: Lisa Nagaoka
Date: 28 Oct 99

Point Provenience

Radiation offset

- 1) Establish a datum point.
- 3) Measure the distance to the object.
- 4) Measure the bearing.

Within grid units

Triangulation

Artifact becomes the third corner of a measured triangle.

- 1) Measure the distance of the object from two corners of a unit.
- 2) Measure the artifact in from the walls.

Coordinate system

- 1) Measure the distance perpendicular from a unit wall to the artifact.
- 2) Measure the distance perpendicular from the next wall to the artifact.

Surface versus buried site

Surface sites require only two point provenience measurements as described above.

Buried sites require three measurements, including depth.

Depth

- 1) Put a line level on a string.
- 2) Move the string until the bubble in the line level is within the two lines.
- 3) Measure down from the level line to the artifact to get the depth of the artifact.

Drawing Profiles

Used to record stratigraphy of excavation units.

- 1) Set up a line level from stake to stake above the wall you want to draw.
- 2) Set a tape measure on the surface horizontally across the unit.
- 3) Measure down from the line level to each stratigraphic break.

Notetaking

Excavation Forms

Feature forms

Catalog list

Photo journal

Excavation journal