



# Archaeologist

Archaeologists learn about the past by studying sites, excavating, classifying, recording and preserving objects. Archaeologists study how people lived in the past by studying the buildings, settlements and objects they left behind. They may specialise in geographical areas, historical periods or types of objects, such as pottery or coins. They may also carry out work relating to local authority planning.

## What does the job involve?

- identifying potential sites using a wide range of methods, including field walking, documentary research, satellite imagery, aerial photography and surveying
- working on field excavations (or 'digs'), tracing evidence of previous human land use, such as buildings, objects, bones, coins, seeds and animal remains
- cleaning and preserving any artefacts found
- analysing, interpreting and dating excavated materials, using methods such as laboratory testing
- using specialist computer software, such as computer-aided design (CAD) and geographical information systems (GIS) to record and interpret data
- protecting archaeological sites and managing fieldwork projects
- giving developers and planners advice on the implications of planning applications and work on sensitive sites
- writing and publishing reports, articles or publicity materials
- lecturing in universities, giving educational talks and presentations.

## Routes and choices while at school:

You will need to try to get at least five GCSEs at grades 4 or C or better, or equivalent qualifications. These should include English, maths and science. Other relevant subjects include computing, geography, history and design.



## Skills You'll need:

- an interest and knowledge of history
- the ability to work well with your hands
- knowledge of sociology and anthropology for understanding society and culture
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- persistence and determination
- excellent verbal communication skills
- analytical thinking skills
- concentration skills
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently



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## How to get into this role:

You can get into this job through:

- a university course
- an apprenticeship

## Apprenticeship

You could gain relevant skills through an archaeological technician advanced apprenticeship. Then you could move on to do an archaeological specialist degree apprenticeship.

The degree apprenticeship typically takes 36 months to complete as a mix of learning in the workplace and off-the-job study at an approved university.

## Entry requirements

You'll usually need:

- 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A\* to C), or equivalent, including English and maths, for an advanced apprenticeship
- 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A\* to C) and A levels, or equivalent, for a degree apprenticeship

## Volunteering

Competition for courses and jobs is very strong. It's essential that you get practical experience.

Local and regional archaeological associations often have programmes of field activities that you can join. You can look for volunteering opportunities through websites like the [Council for British Archaeology](#).

## Further information

### Career tips

It can be useful to have experience of things like:

- computer aided design (CAD)
- illustration
- geographical information systems (GIS)



## Career path and progression

With experience, you could:

- progress to a senior role like site supervisor or director
- become an expert in a particular field
- teach degree courses
- work as a freelance consultant

## Rates of Pay

Starting salaries for site assistants is around £18,000 a year. Experienced archaeologists earn between £28,000 and £32,000. Senior archaeologists can earn higher salaries