

Discussion Questions for supplemental books

(These questions are also on a sheet inside the book)

Archaeologists Dig for Clues by Kate Drake

Summary:

A group of classmates go on an archaeological dig with a friend, Sophie, who is an archaeologist. The book goes through the process of choosing the dig site through to the lab work done after the dig. Throughout the book there is side information that explains some of the archaeological principles more in-depth.

Discussion questions:

1. Why is it important to have an expert (like Sophie) conduct archaeological digs? How did she help the children?
2. Sophie tells her friends that some day in the future, "archaeologists will study us." What are some possible names that scientists might call the time we live in one thousand years from now? Why?
3. The garbage of the past that archaeologists excavate is called "midden." What would your garbage tell about you?
4. Why are even the tiniest pieces of artifacts important to archaeologists? What are some of the methods that they use in this book to ensure that they don't lose any important evidence?



The All-New Amelia
by Marissa Moss

Summary:

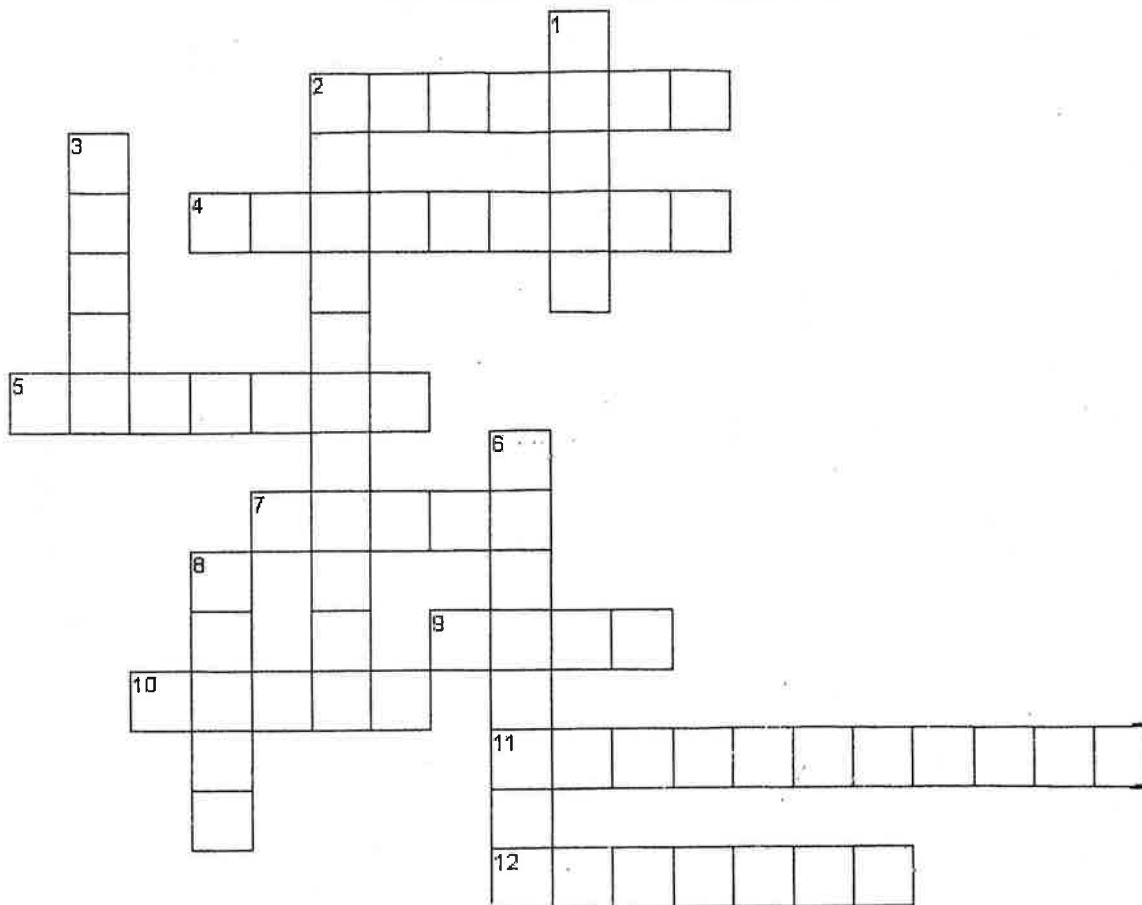
This book is a part of the popular "American Girls" series. Amelia is an elementary school student involved in many adventures, including a class trip to dig at an archaeological site. The book takes the form of Amelia's diary, and explains the equipment and some of the concepts of archaeology in a fun, casual way.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Ms. Busby decide to have her class participate in the dig?
Would you like to participate in this kind of event in your class?
2. Amelia compares the layers of dirt at the dig site to her mom's lasagna?
Think of some other comparisons for these layers.
3. What does the button that Brandon found tell us about how people lived when that button was made and used? What can one of our buttons tell people in the future about us?
4. Can you think of any other tools that Amelia and her classmates might use in their dig at the site?
5. Amelia found part of a basket during the dig and was very excited. What artifact would you most like to find in an archaeological dig? Why?

Principles of Archaeology

Crossword Puzzle



Across

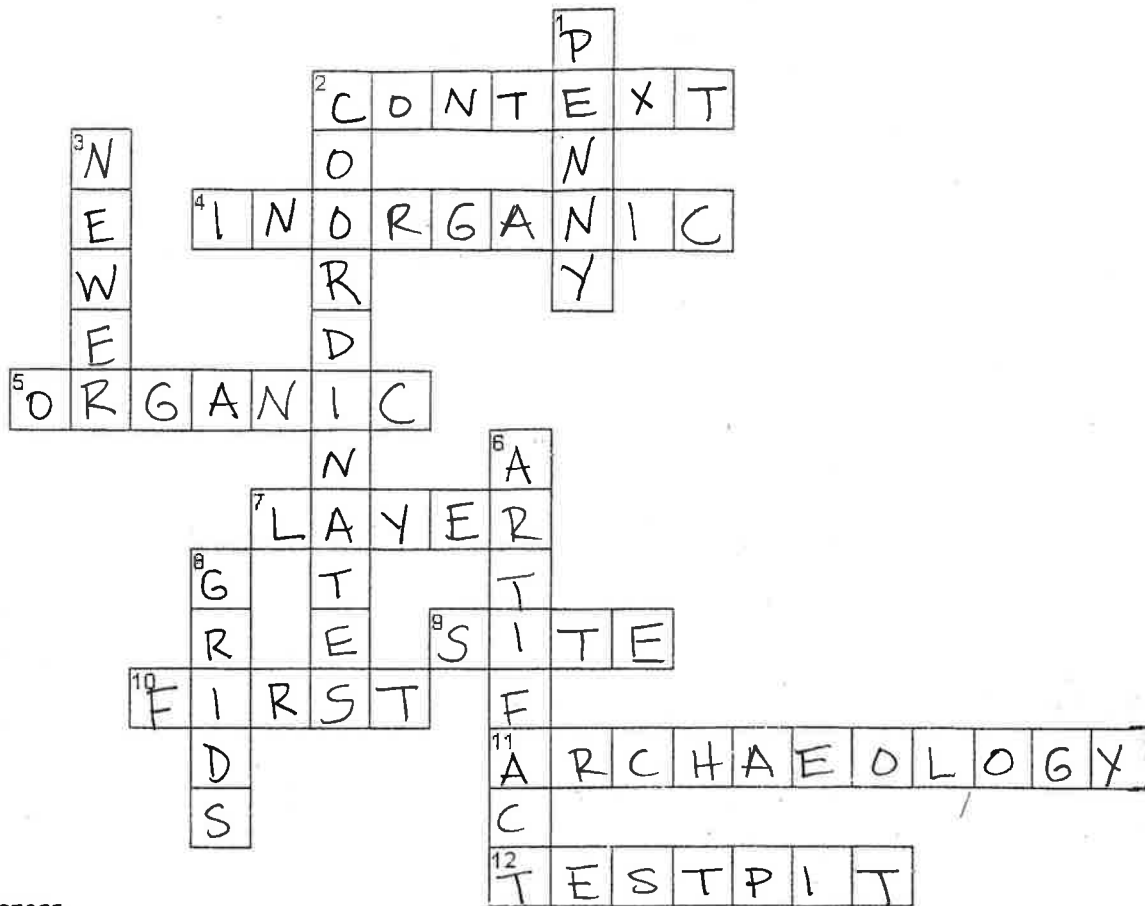
- 2. The situation in which something is discovered.
- 4. Stone, pottery and plastic are all examples of _____ materials.
- 5. Made of or relating to living things. Wood, plants and bone are examples of this.
- 7. Stratigraphy is the study of soil _____ in an archaeological site.
- 9. The place where an archaeological dig occurs.
- 10. "_____ in, last out" is another way to describe the principle of stratigraphy.
- 11. The study of human past through a scientific study of the debris or clutter left behind by a culture.
- 12. A limited excavation done prior to a larger dig (2 words).

Down

- 1. A U.S. coin worth one cent is called a _____
- 2. These are the names assigned to the squares on a grid.
- 3. Usually, artifacts found in the top layer of soil are _____ than artifacts found in the soil below it.
- 6. Anything made or used by people
- 8. Archaeologists and mapmakers use these to help plot out land.

Principles of Archaeology

Crossword Puzzle- ANSWER KEY



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Glossary of Terms

- Abenaki --** The descendants of the prehistoric Native Americans who inhabited Vermont and other nearby areas. Today many people of the Abenaki group in Vermont live in or near Swanton. They belong to the larger Western Abenaki group, whose traditional territory also included southeastern Quebec, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, and western Maine. (See Bibliography; Day 1978)
- A.D. --** An abbreviation under the Gregorian calendar for *anno Domini*, which translates from Latin as "In the year of our Lord."
- anthropology --** The study of humankind, past and present, from an all-encompassing holistic approach. Its sub-fields include cultural anthropology, physical anthropology, linguistics, and archaeology.
- Archaic Period--** The time period in Vermont from 7500 B.C.E. to 300 A.D., which began when the climatic changes ended the Paleo-Indian way of life. People of the Archaic hunted and gathered extensively using atlatls, moved seasonally, and had semi-permanent homes.
- archaeology or archeology --**The exploration of human past through a systematic and scientific study of the debris and clutter left by past cultures. The ultimate objective is the discovery of processes that underlie and condition human behavior.
- arrowhead --** Small, triangular, aerodynamic stone projectile point used on an arrow and shot with a bow. Arrowheads were used by native people of the Woodland Period.
- artifact --** Anything made or used by people.

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- assemblage** -- Artifacts that are found together and that presumably were used at the same time for similar or related tasks, by a specific individual or group of people.
- atlatl** -- An Aztec term meaning "spear-thrower." The atlatl is a sophisticated compound hunting weapon system consisting of a wooden throwing stick or launcher used to propel a long dart tipped by a stone point. The throwing stick functions like an extension of the arm, providing more thrusting leverage.
- B.C.E.** -- An abbreviation for *Before the Common Era*, meaning before the present time. (B.C. is also used as an abbreviation under the Gregorian calendar for *Before Christ*.)
- ceramics** -- Earthen pottery. This includes pottery from the Archaic period and crockery, porcelain, or china from the later eras.
- Contact Period** -- The time period marked by the arrival of Europeans in various areas of North America, generally during the 1600s in Vermont. One hundred years after their first contact with Europeans, ninety percent of the Native Americans in the Northeast were dead of disease.
- context** -- The situation in which something is discovered.
- culture** -- The way of life of a specific group of people, their collective consciousness, learned beliefs, customs, traditions, language, values, and behavior.
- dark soil** -- A layer of soil found by archaeologists in the earth that indicates the presence of rotted material, such as wood.
- diagnostic artifact** - An item that is unique to a particular time and/or cultural group. For example, fluted points are diagnostic of Native Americans of the Paleo Period.

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- excavation --** The scientific, methodological process of digging an archaeological site. (See pothunting)
- fieldstone --** Any stone found in or on the ground by early settlers as they cleared the land for fields and farms. They were often left in a pile or used to build walls that divided the fields.
- fragment --** A piece of an artifact, such as broken pottery, or a piece of an item such as a bone. Fragments, rather than whole items, are often the only artifacts that archaeologists find at a site, which makes interpreting a site a difficult task.
- flotation --** The use of fluid suspension to recover tiny plant and bone fragments from archaeological sites.
- grid --** A network of uniformly spaced horizontal and perpendicular lines that divide a project area or site into units; used to keep track of artifact locations across space.
- hammerstone --** Any stone used to strike off flakes from a core to make stone tools. They usually were cobbles found in streambeds.
- hunting and gathering --** The means of food procurement throughout the Paleo, Archaic and Woodland Periods. Plant foods provided a stable food base and were gathered by women. Men provided additional protein by hunting and fishing.
- in situ --** The original place where an artifact is found. Also refers to preserving an unaltered site in its original location or context. (Latin for in place)
- lab --** Scientific laboratory where artifacts are cleaned, catalogued, categorized, and analyzed. Soil, pollen, zoological, and botanical analysis also occur in the lab.
- lithic --** Stone, or made of stone.

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- myths --** Explanations of the unknown and/or supernatural.
- Paleo/Early Prehistoric Period** - The period of time that followed the end of the last ice age, from about 10,000 to 7,500 B.C.E. People of the Paleo Period were the first to inhabit Vermont. They hunted large animals with fluted points, moved across large areas, and lived in family groups.
- pit (storage) --** Hole dug in the ground for the storage of foods that can be identified with careful excavation. These features yield much information about diet.
- pothunting --** Amateur (ILLEGAL) artifact collecting without keeping note of where objects were found.
- pottery --** Vessels made from clay, which have often been tempered and fired. Its presence at a site indicates the Woodland Period.
- prehistory --** The time period before writing; in Vermont, this is the time period before the arrival of Europeans in the 1600s. Also referred to as the Precontact Period.
- projectile point --** Any chipped stone point used on an atlatl, arrow, or spear.
- scraper --** A stone tool with a sharpened edge and blunt backside, used for fleshing or softening hides or in woodworking.
- sherds --** Broken pieces of pottery.
- silt --** Very fine particles of dirt carried by water and deposited on flood plains.
- site --** Place where prehistoric or historic people lived or worked and at which they left behind artifacts.
- soapstone --** A very soft stone used during the Archaic Period as vessels or pipes, made by carving or drilling.

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- spear** -- A hunting weapon consisting of a long shaft of wood with a sharp tip that was often made of chipped stone. Could be thrust or thrown.
- stratigraphy** -- The study of sediment or soil layers in archaeological sites. Soil layers provide a relative chronological sequence of the site; the oldest deposits are at the bottom and the more recent deposits are at the top.
- terminus ante quem*** -- The concept that that all soil below a solid, undisturbed layer dates before that layer.
- terminus post quem*** -- The notion that a datable object provides only the date on or after which the layer of soil that contains it was deposited.
- test pit** -- Small or limited excavations undertaken prior to actual excavation of an archaeological site, or in place of broader unit excavation if the site will only be sampled.
- tool** -- Any object that is made or used to help meet human needs.
- use wear patterns** -- Patterns left on artifacts, which show how the artifacts were used. When studied under a microscope, these patterns can indicate, for example, if a tool was used to chop, cut, etc.
- Woodland Period** -- The time period in Vermont from 300 A.D. until European Contact in the 1600s. The Woodland Period is marked by the beginning of the use of pottery, as well as the use of the bow and arrow. Horticulture began during the later part of this time period.

