

# [Archaeology is the study of human society history essay](https://assignbuster.com/archaeology-is-the-study-of-human-society-history-essay/)

Throughout the course of the semester, we have explored many different aspects concerning Greek archaeology. “ Archaeology is the study of human society, primarily through recovery and analysis of the material culture and environmental data which they have left behind, which includes artifacts, architecture, biofacts, and cultural landscapes” (Wikipedia). The history of past cultures has been a fascinating topic of debate and discovery for hundreds of years. Many of us have been curious and interested in regards to our origin. Prehistoric remains often lie near the earth’s surface, especially stones and flints. These findings of the past lead to interest and eventually important examination as to where they came from. This is where archaeology comes into play. Archaeology has many distinct objectives, which span from studying human evolution to cultural evolution and understanding culture history. Archaeology involves surveying, excavations, and some time after analysis of the data collected. These all help us learn more about our past history.

Archaeological field survey is very common. This is the method archaeologists use to search for archaeological sites and gather information about the setting, distribution, and order of previous human cultures across a great area. Archaeologists manage surveys to search for particular archaeological sites or kinds of sites, to find patterns in the spreading of material culture over regions, and to make a sweeping statement or test hypotheses about past cultures.

Secondly, it is possible for an excavation to take place and uncover any archaeological artifacts buried under the ground. Excavation is the contact, processing, and recording of archaeological remains. Archaeological excavation has existed for quite some time now and remains to be the source of the majority of data recovered in most field projects, although it has improved a great deal throughout the years. An important aspect of excavations are they can expose many things that may not be easily reached by survey. For example, stratigraphy, which is a three-dimensional arrangement.

Thirdly, the information retrieved from the excavation is studied and assessed in an attempt to reach the innovative research objectives of the archaeologists. Once artifacts and structures have been excavated, or received from surveys, it is important to correctly study them. This way we can gain as much data as possible. This is what is considered analysis of data, which tends to be the most time-consuming part of the whole process of discovering archaeological information. Unfortunately, these reports usually take quite some time to get published.

Many archaeological remains have been discovered throughout the course of history through this archaeological process, and there are many that I consider to be most significant for the understanding of Greek civilization. Artifacts are possessions made by humans that are usually designed for a precise intention. Ancient artifacts are typically retrieved as part of an archeological dig, or excavation. The artifacts from the past are very significant and expressive. They represent characteristics of both the types of civilization and type of culture they were designed and used in.

Archeologists are attentive to artifacts from ancient and prehistoric times, because they tell us more about ancient civilizations and their lives. If we examine the artifacts left behind by these civilizations, archeologists and scientists learn more about how the people during that time lived, hunted, cooked, etc. Artifacts also tell us how these people designed their homes and other buildings and what tools they used in daily life. Structures, such as houses are often areas in which many artifacts are found (The Importance of Artifacts). For example, The types of settlements and houses that are characteristic of the Early Bronze Age on the Greek mainland are large and dominated by well-built houses with complex ground plans, corridor houses appear to have served as residences for powerful families, and strong defensive walls of stones equipped with towers and gates (Runnels-Murray, 70). By studying these artifacts, archeologists can learn more about the culture and the social atmosphere of these ancient civilizations.

Archeologists also are interested in the clothing and jewelry worn by past civilizations. The way people dressed and what they used to adorn themselves often tells us a great deal about their belief system. Jewelry, in particular, often reflects the ideology of the culture, so these artifacts are particularly interesting.

Ancient artifacts were manufactured in many different ways by many different societies and cultures. The methods used vary greatly between civilizations. Some ancient artifacts were made from bone or stone. Early man often used the natural products around him to create tools and weapons. Later civilizations used manufacturing processes to create tools and weapons (The Importance of Artifacts).

“ Technically, prehistoric means “ before history,” which begins when populations began keeping written records of the names of individual people and some account of the actions and events that took place in the past. Prehistoric cultures, by definition, are not known from such records; they are eternally anonymous and silent, known only from the work of archaeologists who have excavated buildings and burials, classified tools and weapons, and described and catalogued pottery, jewelry, and idols of now nameless and forgotten gods” (Runnels-Murray 5).

I believe almost all material remains should be considered most significant for understanding Greek culture. Each artifact has it’s own story and importance within a specific time period and some are even connected to others as well developed and advanced from pervious items. Many of these material remains have affected today’s artists, historians, etc. According to Pedley, Acropolis and the Parthenon in Athens, and the Elgin Marbles signify Greek archaeology. These monuments mark the culmination of a long period of artistic development and reveal an early civilization of extraordinary achievement. In Greece lies the foundations of much of our Western civilization. Great philosophers, historians, poets, painters, etc. still influence the way we think and act and create today (Pedley, 11).

I also believe the study of pottery and coins is important to the study of archaeology, because it can survive even in large quantities. They tell us their trade patterns, customs, beliefs, trade connections, etc. Pottery in particular can tell us about its evolution as an art form. “ Accordingly, pottery has become a critical tool for dating archaeological contexts and for dating and building or objects by stylistic analogy. Coins are another useful dating tool since they exist in large numbers and are often dated themselves by internal evidence; hence, they can help date the context in which they are found” (Pedley, 28).

Throughout the history art has played a vital role in all of our surroundings. Art is worldwide and because it is everywhere, we have occurrences with it on a daily basis. For example, from the houses we live in, architecture, to the plays and movies we see or participate in, theatre, to the novels that we read and may write, literature. Even in ancient times, art has played a critical role. Throughout time art, along with archaeological findings, has recorded history for us. Most art is created for a specific cause or intention for the most part. It has a way of making a statement, and a way of expressing ideas and beliefs. It can also record the experiences of all people. Art can be religious, symbolic, literal, traditional, etc.

Archeologists hope to find some kind of material remains, and when they do it is important for them to consider more than the artifact itself. During an excavation, if archaeologists do find an artifact, they must also explore its meaning and significance as it relates to where the item was found. Where the item was found is very important, because this can often can help archeologists further understand its use and importance. When it comes to material culture, the more we know about the citizens and civilizations who have populated the world before us, the more we can comprehend and appreciate our past. With that said, by learning and accepting our past, we can have a much clearer view into our future