

# Student Activity

## Archaeological Dig At The Lighthouse

In 2004, students from the University of Michigan did excavation on the site of the first Grand Traverse Lighthouse. Built in 1852, the lighthouse was torn down six years later. All that remains is the dwelling foundation & the base of the light tower.

### The Grid

(Courtesy of the Alexandria Archaeology Museum)

Archaeologists make maps and lay a grid over the site before an excavation begins. This grid is a network of strings stretching over the ground surface that intersect each other at right angles. It is used to help in mapping the site. During the excavation, the archaeologists add to the map to show which portions of the site were excavated and where features and artifacts were discovered. In this way, an artifact's provenience or the exact place where it was uncovered is maintained.

The grid is established according to the cardinal directions or the points on a compass (north, south, east and west). The measurements are taken with surveying equipment such as a transit. A datum point, or point of reference, is established and then measurements are taken from it.

1. Print out the artifact list and grid on page 2.
2. Label the directions North, South, East and West on the grid.  
(The datum (\*) is in the southeast corner of the site).
3. Draw pictures of the artifacts on the list in the squares indicated. The first one has been done for you.
4. Compare your answers to the finished grid on the answer page and see how you did!

### **Vocabulary**

Archaeology - The scientific study of the human past through excavation and related research.

Archaeologist - A person who specializes in the study of material remains of past human life and activities.

Artifact - An object made or modified by people.

Datum - A permanent point used as a standard from which to measure other points at a site both horizontally and vertically; usually a point marked on a United States Geological Survey map.

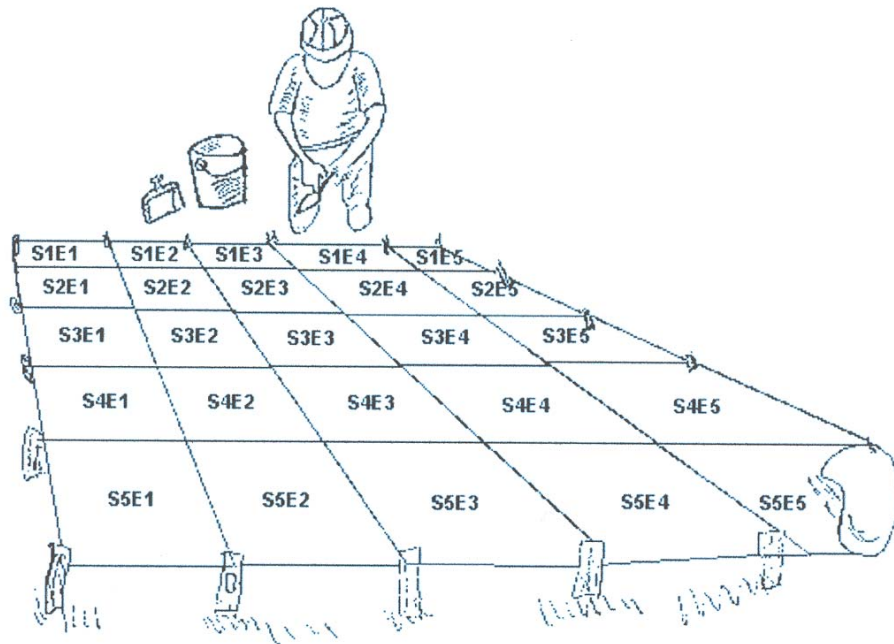
Excavation - An archaeological dig.

Excavation Unit - A section of the site designated for excavation, such as a one meter square.

Feature - A distinct physical aspect of a site which is treated as a separate entity, for example, a trash pit or well. Each feature is recorded and analyzed separately (i.e., not grouping the artifacts with those found in surrounding soil layers.)

Grid System - A network of strings stretching over the ground surface that intersect each other at right angles. It is used to establish a horizontal control for mapping the site.

# Archaeological Dig At The Lighthouse, Page 2



Draw pictures of the artifacts listed below on this grid, in the squares indicated. The Grid:

Artifact Catalogue:

Artifact:

ceramic sherd 1720 coin ceramic doll's head pipe bowl bottle lip nail

oyster shell pottery sherd with rim fish bone handle of ceramic mug wood fragment

Grid Square:

S5E5

S5E4

S5E3

S5E2

S5E1

S4E1

S4E2

S4E3

S4E4

S4E5

S3E1

projectile point S3E2

# Archaeological Dig At The Lighthouse, Page 3

