



Cookie Excavation!

Dig into the world of archaeology! You will be able to simulate the process of an archaeological excavation as you “excavate” the chocolate chips or raisins out of your cookies! You will also learn how excavation is both destructive and scientific.

Materials

- Chocolate chip and/or oatmeal raisin cookies
 - Can substitute with granola bars and any cookies that contain a chip or ingredient that can be picked out
- Paper plates
- Toothpicks
- Paper
- Pencil
- Optional:
 - Tweezers
 - Craft paint brush/brushes
 - Magnifying glass

Introduction

- Archaeologists are both scientists and detectives. They use scientific methods like excavation to discover clues that help them solve the mysteries of the past.
- What is excavation?
 - This means removing soil to discover tools and other things used by people who lived a long time ago.
- What are the things archaeologists find?
 - The things they find are called artifacts.
- Artifacts and the layers of soil in which they are found are some of the most important clues for archaeologists.
- True or False: excavating a site to find artifacts destroys the soil layers—TRUE
 - This means that archaeologists can’t go back and repeat the process if they miss a clue the first time. They have to be very careful to not damage any hidden artifacts as they dig.
 - Excavation is a SLOW and DIFFICULT process.

Activity

- To understand how careful an archaeologist must be, try excavating a cookie!
- The cookie represents an archaeological site and the chocolate chips or raisins are the artifacts!
- Grab one cookie, plate, and toothpick. If desired, get some paper and pencil to map the cookie.
- Begin to “excavate” your cookies with the toothpicks. You should be careful not to damage any artifacts.
- Challenge 1: You cannot pick up your cookies because archaeologists cannot pick up sites!
- Challenge 2:
 - Use paper and pencil to practice mapping your cookie and chocolate chips like an archaeologist maps a site and artifacts.
 - Trace your cookie on a piece of paper before “digging.”
 - Mark where any chocolate chips are visible. As you dig, keep marking where you find chocolate chips.
 - Archaeologists create similar maps to discover patterns that tell about the people who created the site.
 - Do your maps reveal any patterns of where the chocolates were distributed? If so, can you come up with a hypothesis?

Cookie Excavation Example

