



Archaeology: 101

What tools do archaeologists use?

An archaeologist's "dig kit" contains tools as simple as a toothbrush and as sophisticated as a **total station theodolite**. The particular tools used at an excavation depend on the size, location and type of soil on each site, and what is being dug up. The principal objective at any excavation is meticulous precision when uncovering artifacts.

The almost universal tool is a simple pointing trowel. The trowel is used to carefully scrape back dirt in a controlled way. As each layer is uncovered, field notes are made and photos are taken.

Shovels, spades, hoes and wheelbarrows are used to take away the loose dirt. The loose dirt is usually screened for small artifacts that may have been missed. For delicate artifacts, small brushes or dental picks may be used to clear away dirt.



A **Total Station Theodolite** is an electronic surveying tool used to measure distance, slope, angles and elevation of features at an archaeological site.