**What is Archaeology?**

Archaeology is the study of the remains of the past. It has been called the “science of rubbish”.

**What you need to know:**

**Artifacts:** An artifact is an object with features that have been made by human activities. Examples include tools, weapons, ornaments, homes, etc.

**Ecofacts:** Ecofacts are remains that were not made by humans, but still provide some information that helps us to understand people of the past. Examples include fossils and remains of plants and animals.

**Fossils:** Fossils are remains or traces of organisms that lived prior to historic times. It is generally accepted that life has existed on our earth for more than two billion years, and that fossils are important clues to understanding its history and development.

**There are many ways fossils are formed**

FREEZING: The best-preserved fossils are those of organisms that have been frozen quickly.

DRYING: Some organisms in the desert regions crawled into caves and died.

ORIGINAL PRESERVATION: Bones, teeth, shells, and wood can be buried and remain unchanged for millions of years.

PETRIFACATION: It literally means “turn to stone”.

CARBONIZATION: It occurs when a fossil such as a leaf is squeezed, generally on a bedding plane, and the fluids are removed, leaving a thin carbon film.

CASTS AND MOLDS: When an organism, buried in sediment, dissolves and leaves an imprint it is called a **mold**. When the mold is filled, it creates an exact duplicate. This is a **cast**.

**Archaeologists try to make *inferences* about how people lived based on what they find.**

**Inferences:** Inferences are conclusions archaeologists make.

**Theory:** A system of ideas to explain how a certain situation or event might have come about.

