

A Kid's Guide To

Archaeology on the

Coconino National Forest



What is Archaeology?

Archaeology is the study of the past through what we leave behind. An archaeologist can study the Egyptian pyramids, old houses, cave paintings, arrow heads, pottery—anything that was made and left behind by people!



Archaeologists DO NOT study or dig up dinosaurs



Terms You Need to Know:

Site:

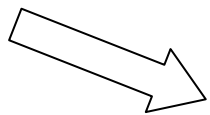
A site is the location, area, or boundary where the artifacts and structures are found.

Artifact:

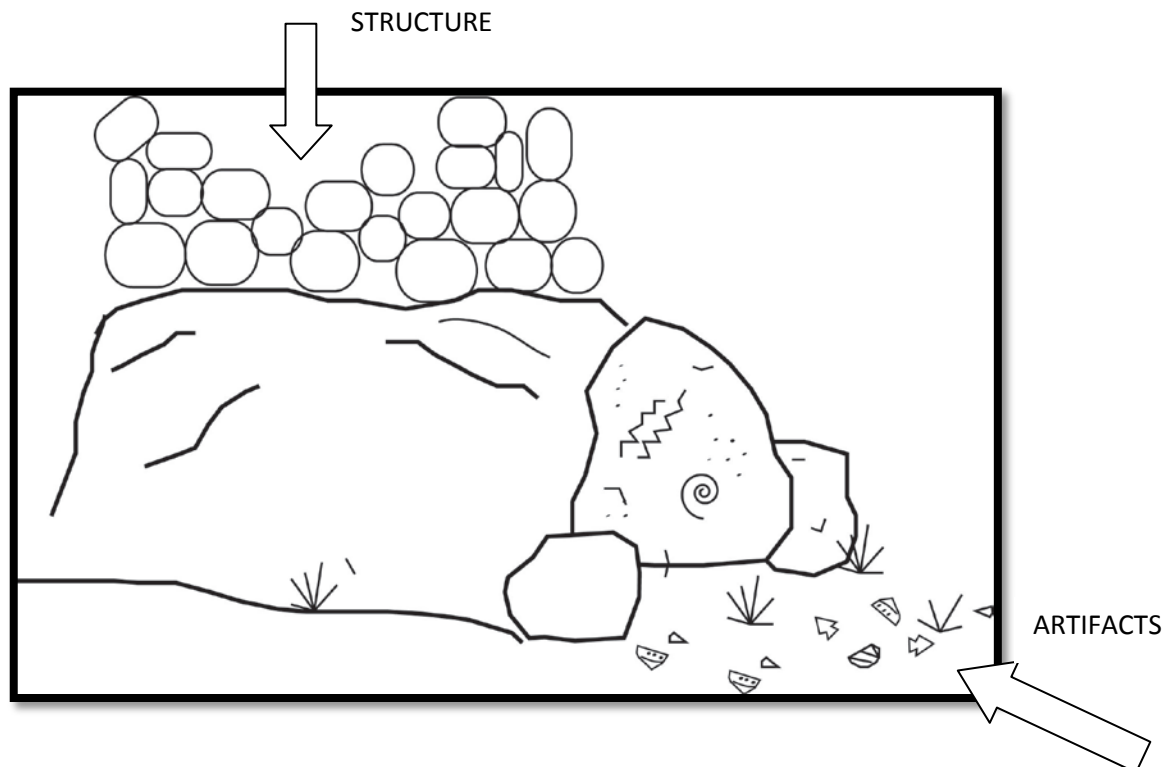
An artifact is an object created by people. It can be a bowl made from clay or a rock chipped away into an arrowhead. Just keep in mind that it has to have been made by humans!

Structure:

A building (i.e. house, pueblo, etc) created by people.

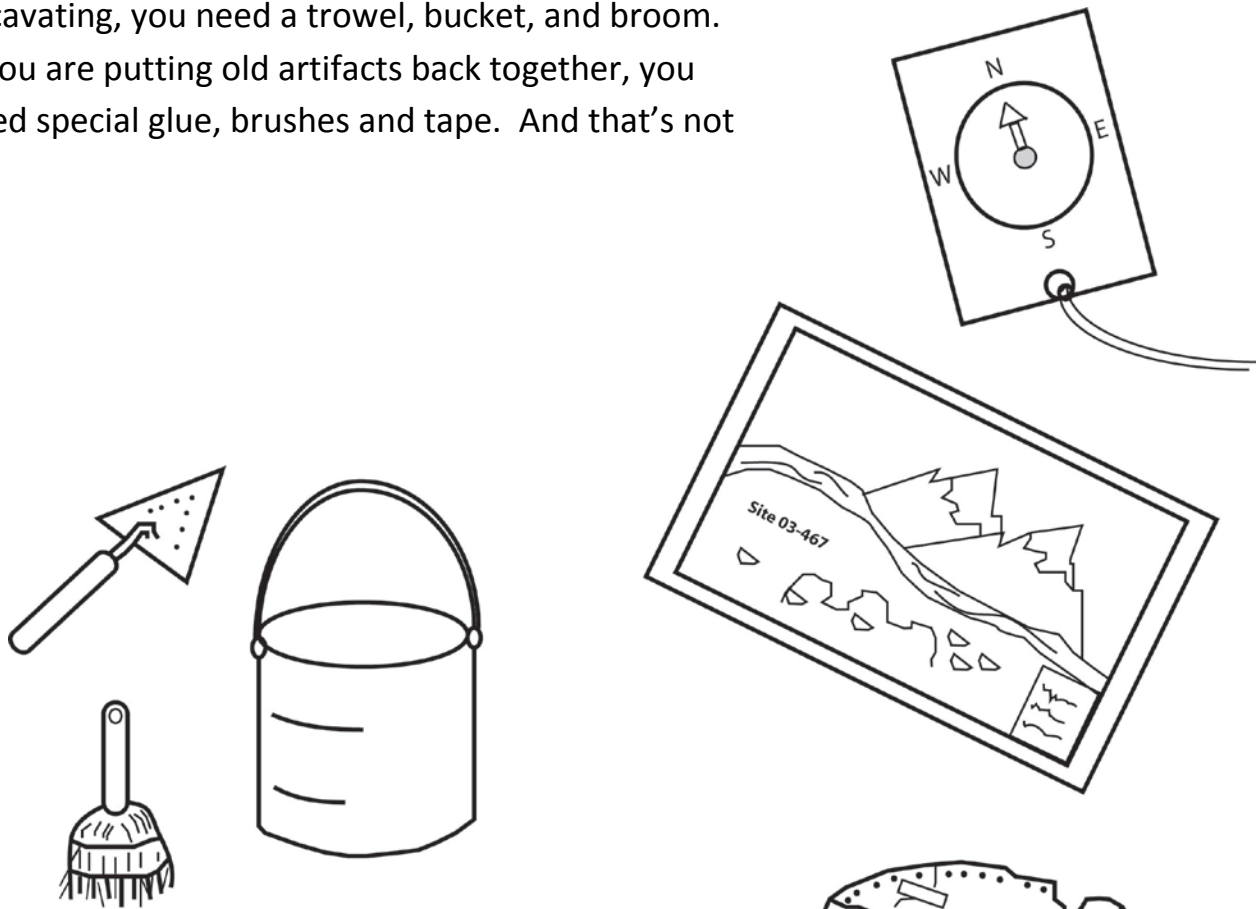


Think of the
box outlining
this picture
as the "site"

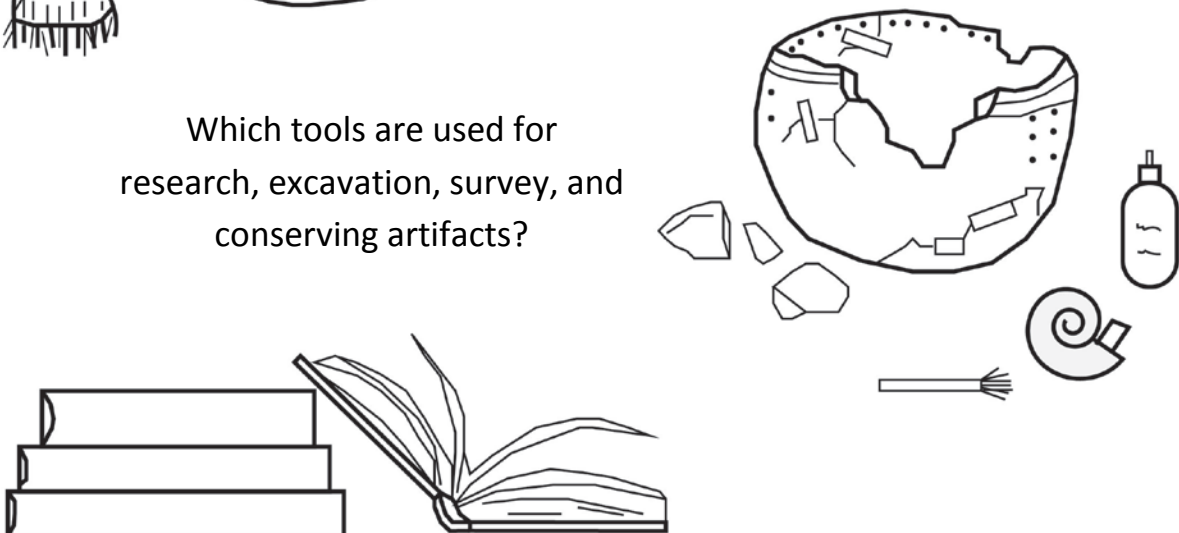


Tools in Archaeology!

To be an archaeologist you need all kinds of tools. Before looking for a site, you need to read lots of books. If you are looking for artifacts or structures, you need a map and a compass. If you are excavating, you need a trowel, bucket, and broom. If you are putting old artifacts back together, you need special glue, brushes and tape. And that's not all!

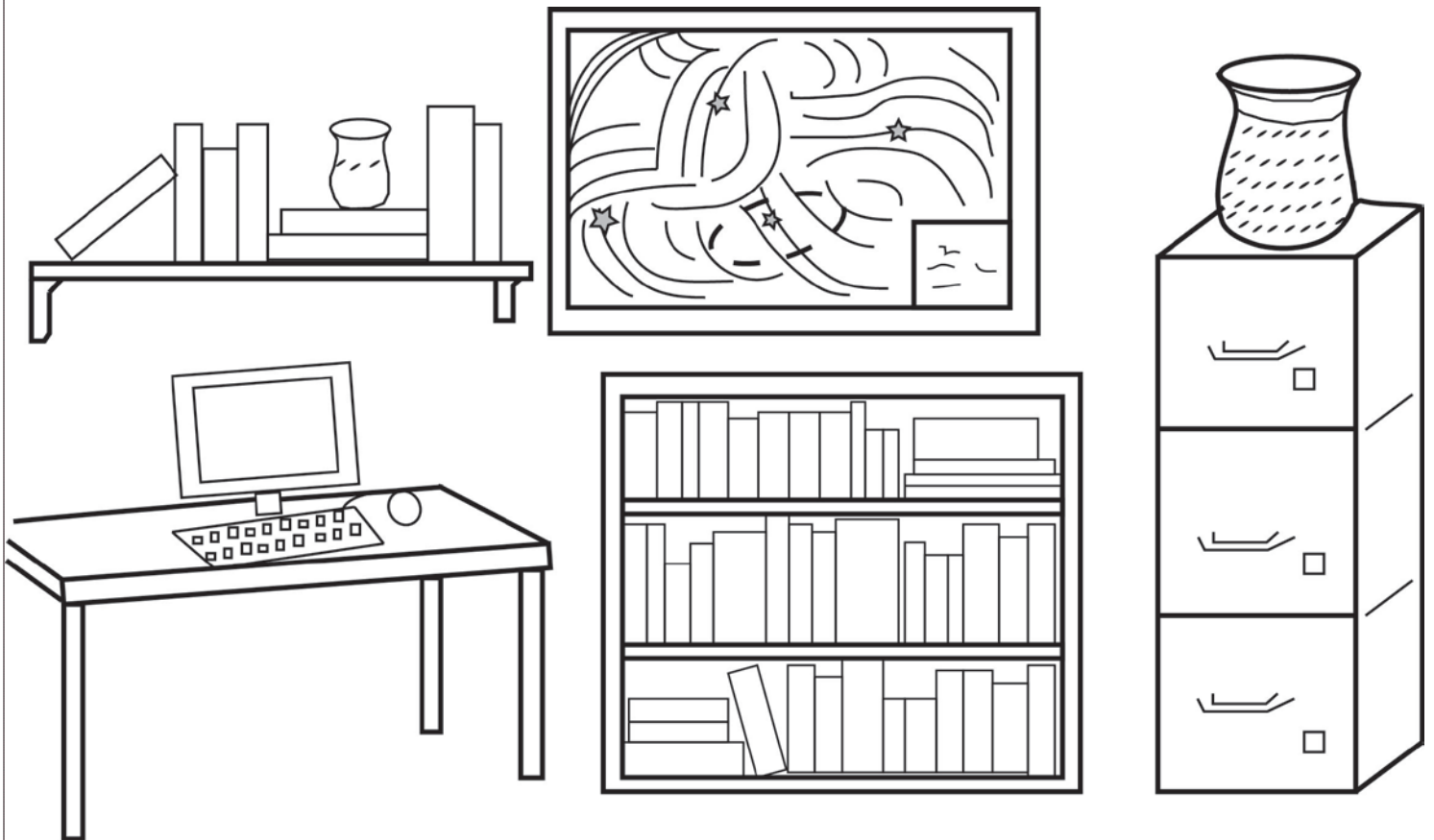


Which tools are used for research, excavation, survey, and conserving artifacts?



RESEARCH

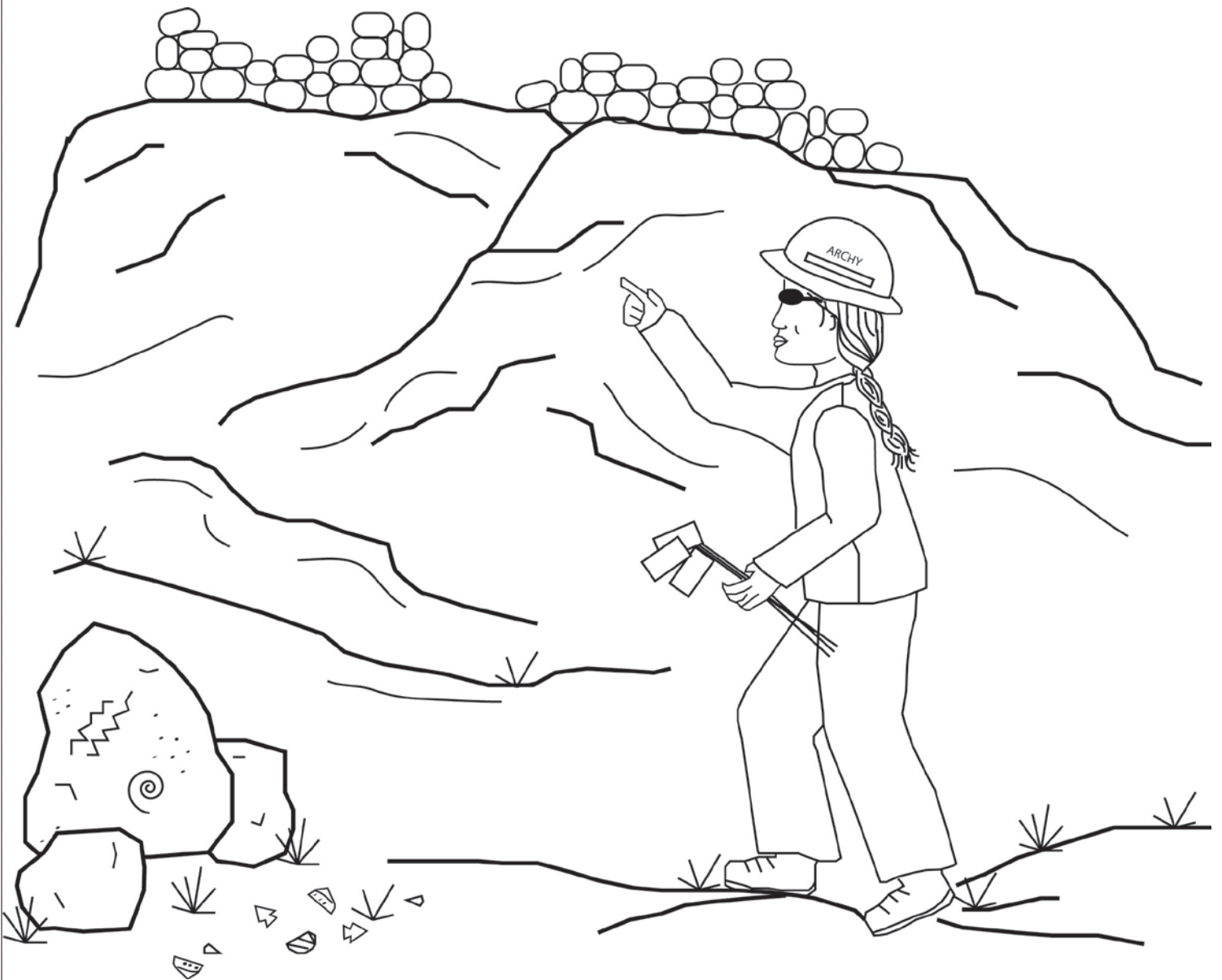
There are over 10,000 archaeological sites on the Coconino National Forest! And, there are still more to discover! Before going out on the forest, archaeologists need to check their records, books, and maps. We need to make sure what has been found before so that we can recognize what is new.



SURVEY

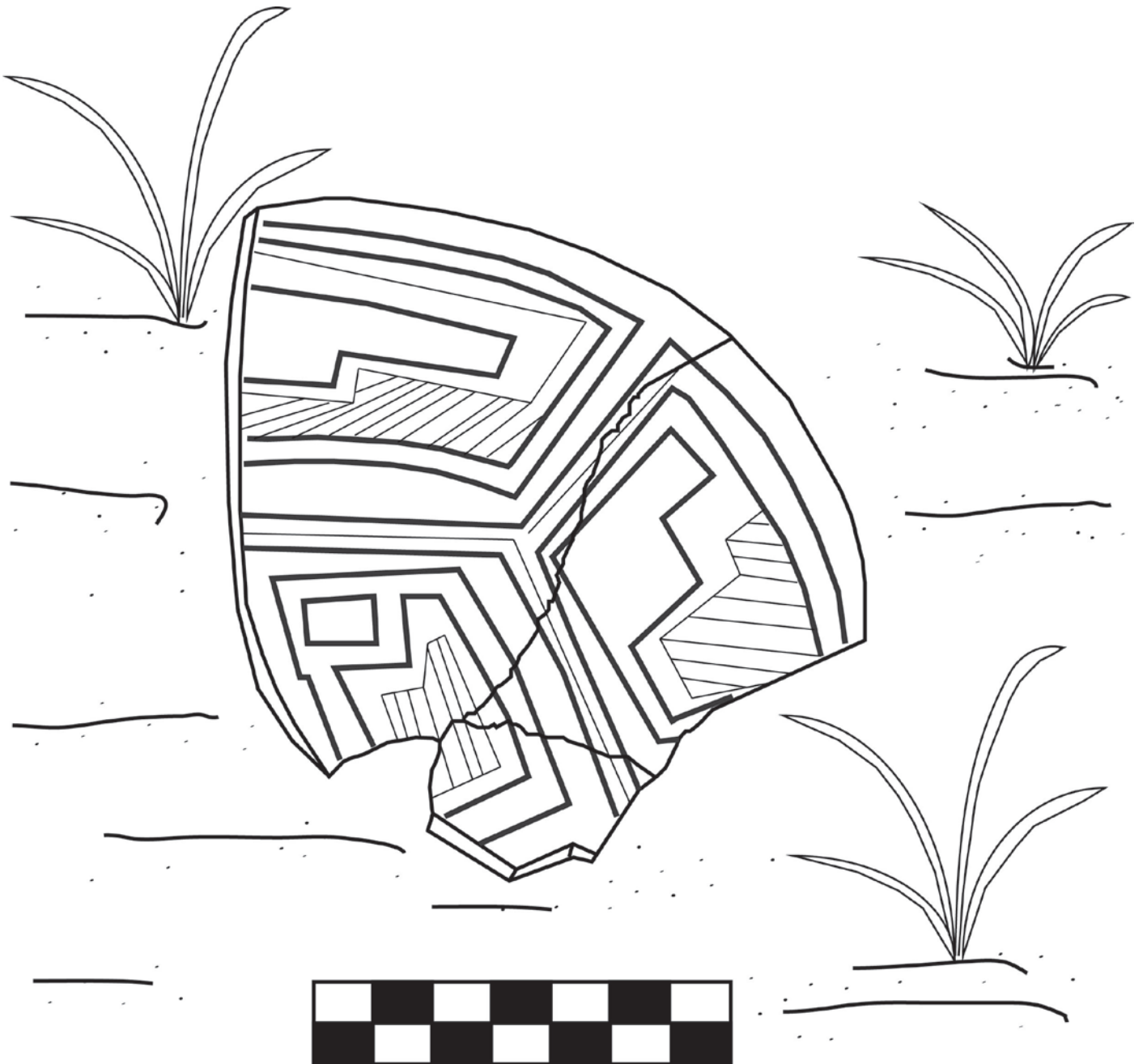
Archaeologists need to walk over acres and acres of land on the National Forest to discover, record and check-on sites. That's called 'surveying.' Sometimes it's hard finding sites and artifacts!

What can you find?



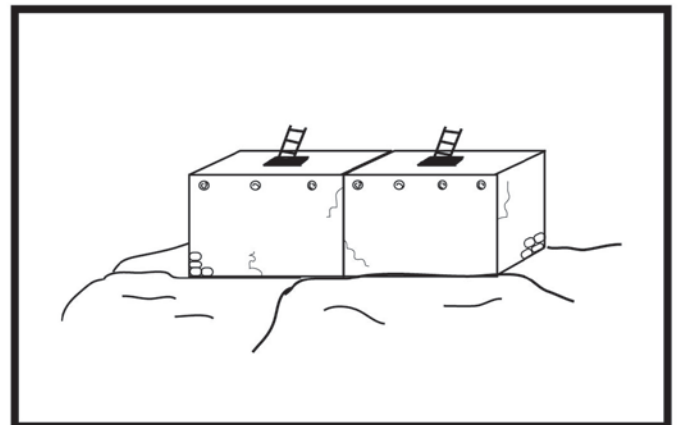
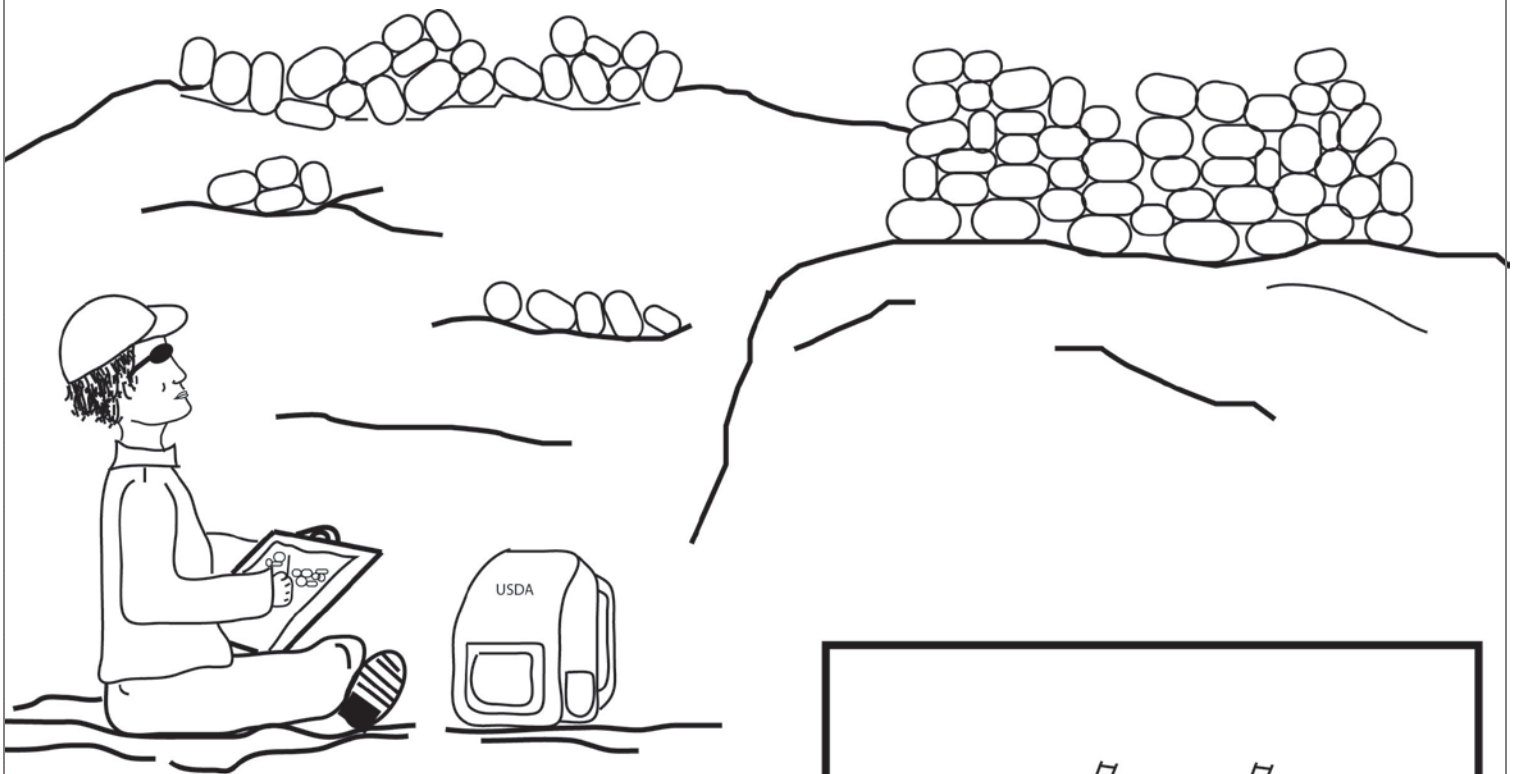
Prehistoric Artifacts

The word 'prehistoric' means a time before there was a written record. So, there weren't any books written for archaeologists to learn about old cultures. We have to rely on the artifacts the ancients left behind. There are a lot of broken bowls and jars scattered throughout the forest. These bits and pieces tell us how people cooked and served their food!



Prehistoric Structures

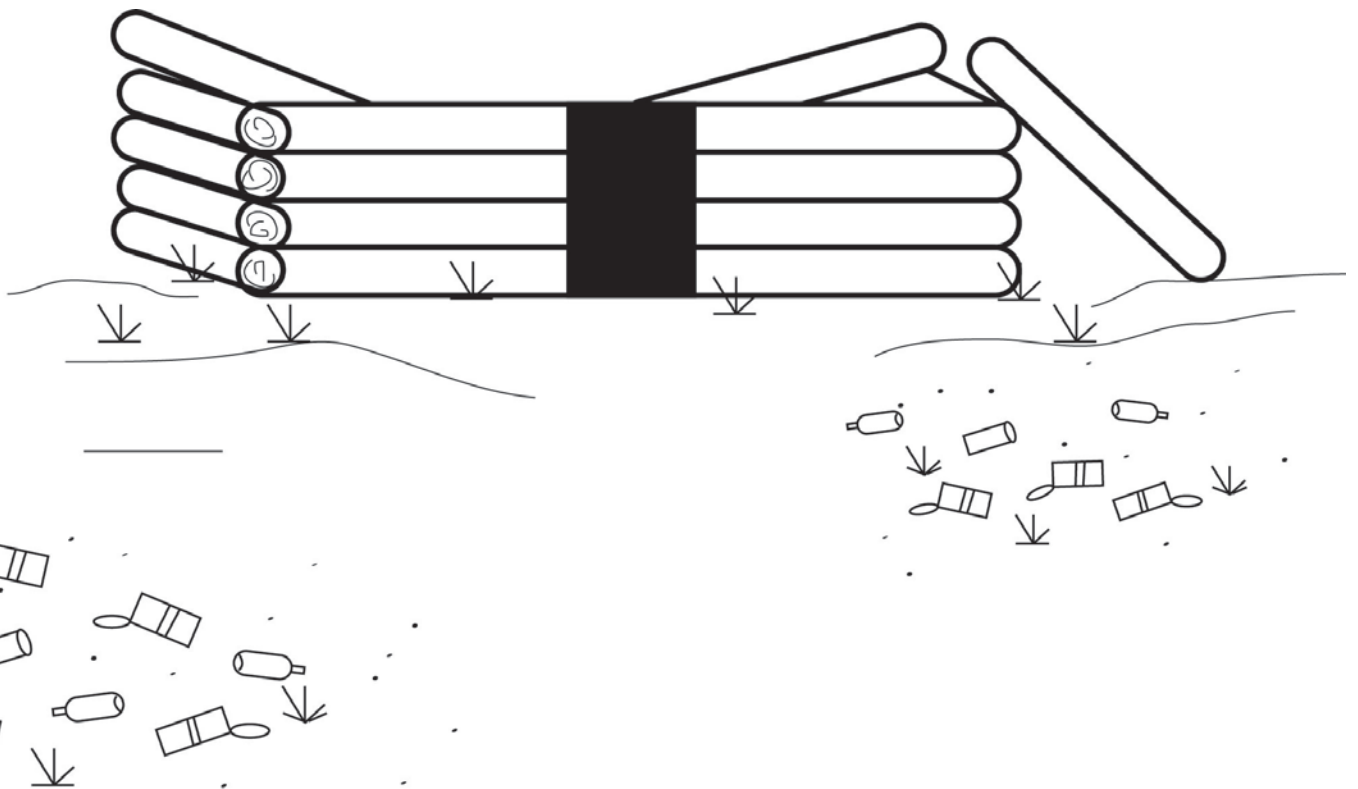
Ancient people built many kinds of structures on the Coconino National Forest, such as pueblos. Since these structures are so old, a lot of them have fallen down and do not look like buildings anymore. Archaeologists can figure out what the structures once looked like and how people would have lived in them.



This structure may have looked like this many years ago!

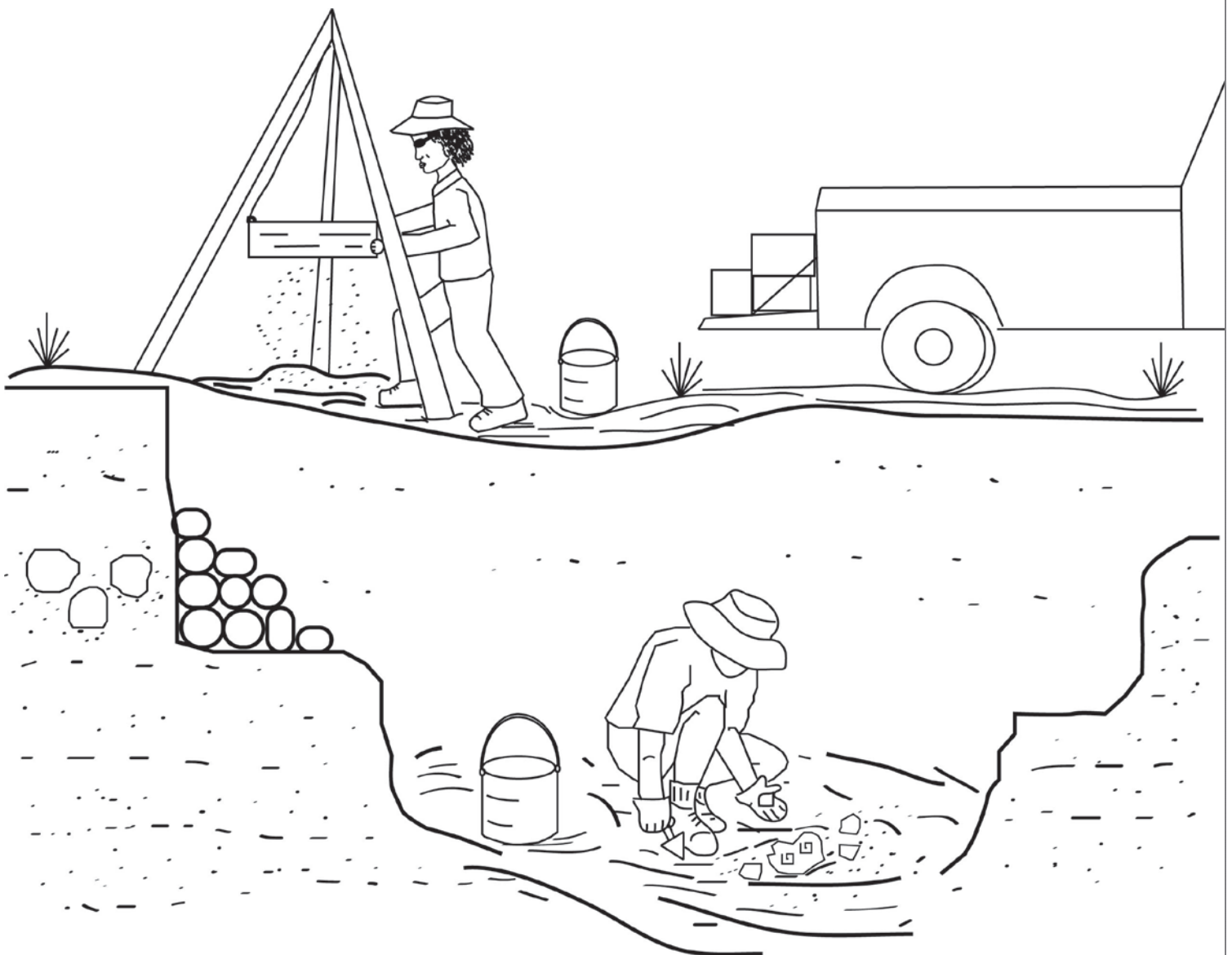
Historic Artifacts and Buildings

The Coconino National Forest has been used for ranching, logging, and mining since the 1800s and 1900s. There are old ranch houses and cabins with historic artifacts like tea cups, tin cans, and bottles. These structures and artifacts tell archaeologists a lot about how people lived on and used the forest in the past.



EXCAVATION

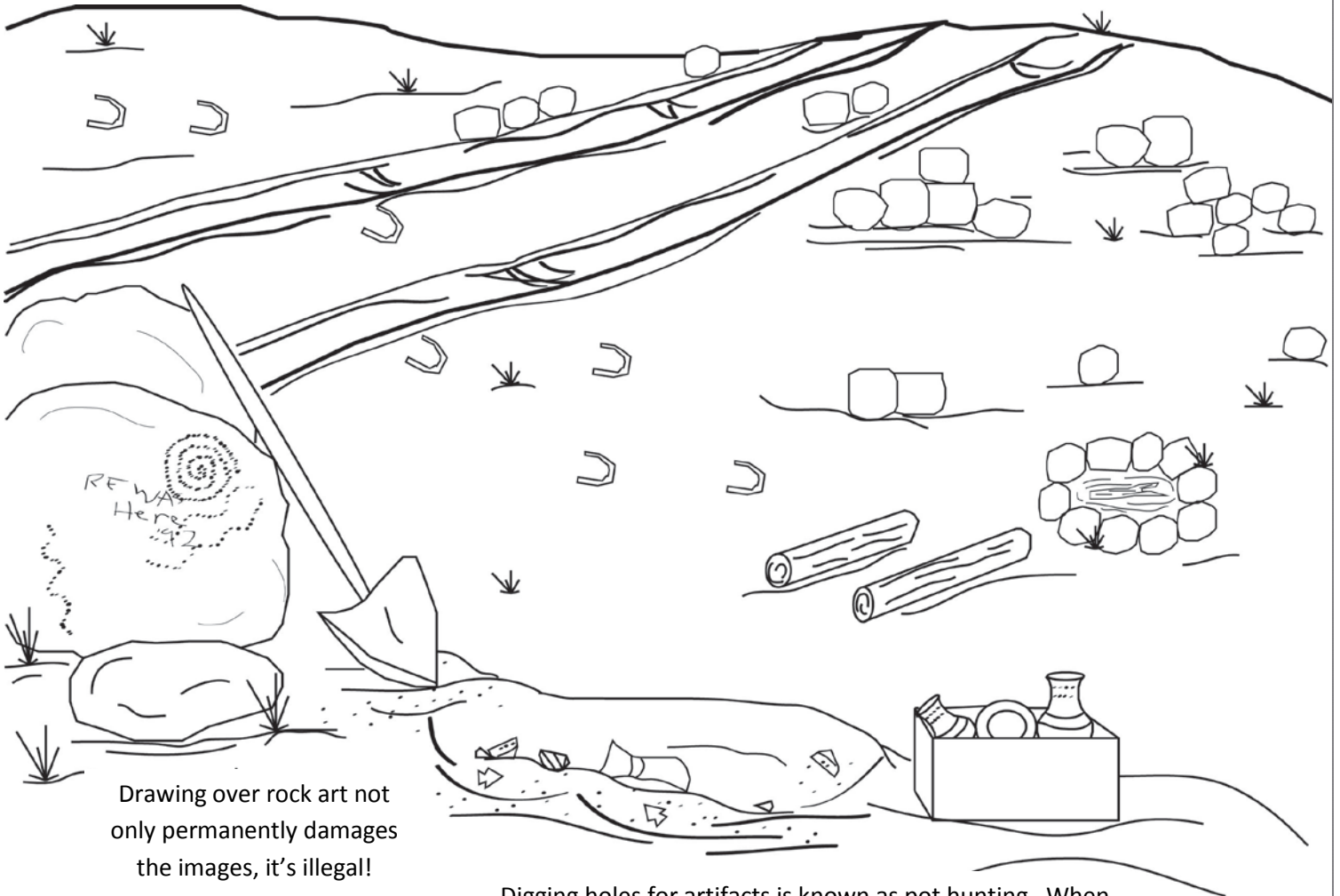
Most artifacts and structures on a site are beneath the dirt, which protects them until archaeologists and historians can study those remains. If a lot of construction needs to take place on the Coconino National Forest, such as building a new road, archaeologists might have to excavate. When excavating, archaeologists carefully remove the dirt in search for artifacts and structures. Everything is photographed and documented! Otherwise, how would we know where anything came from?



What happens if you damage a site?

If you damage a site in any way, you're taking away important information from archaeologists and visitors to the forest. You can't look at artifacts if they have been stolen or see buildings if they have been run over by a car. It is illegal to steal artifacts or damage an archaeological site! When you're on the forest, remember to respect archaeological sites!

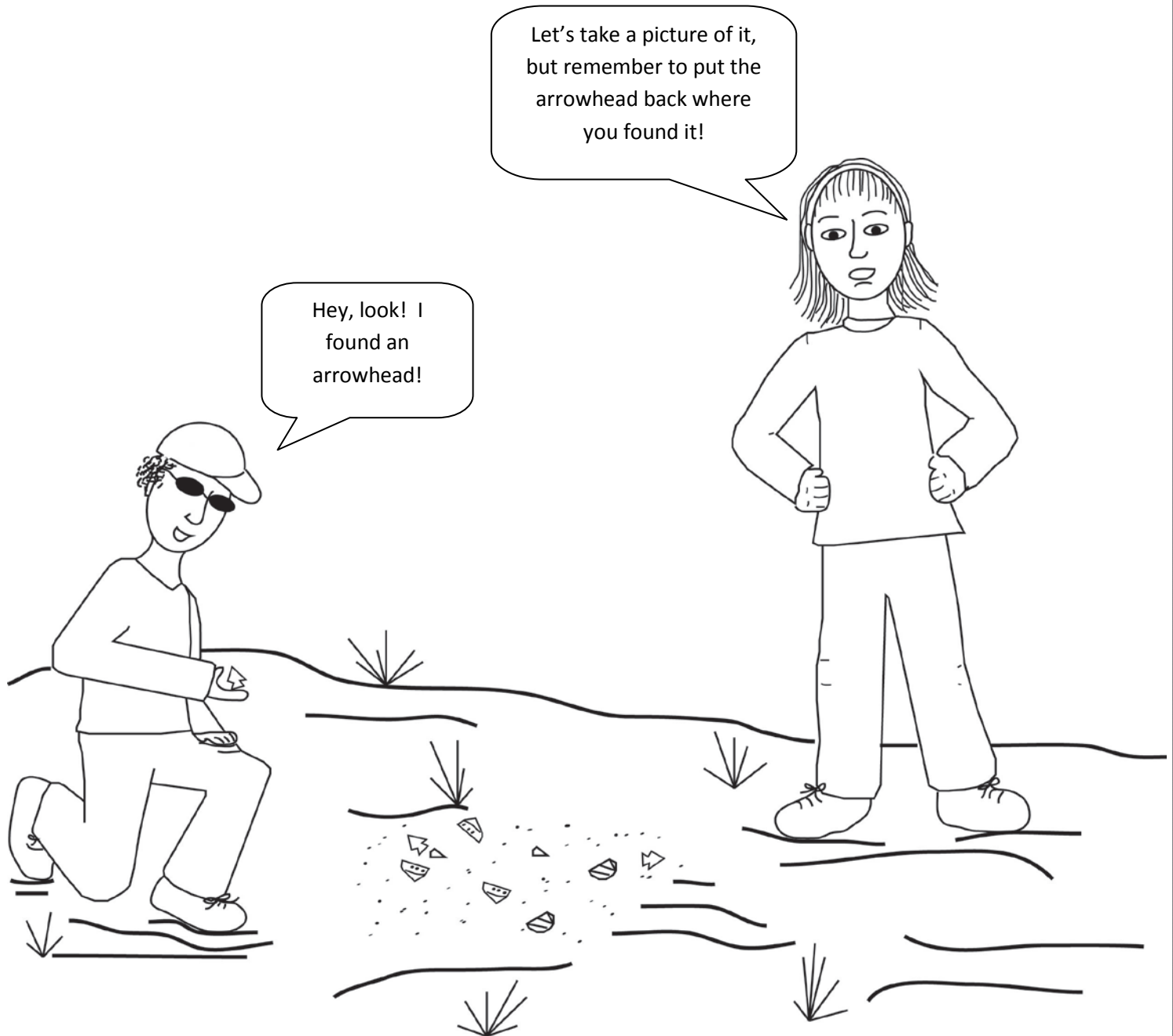
Cars can destroy structures by driving through them



Drawing over rock art not only permanently damages the images, it's illegal!

Digging holes for artifacts is known as pot hunting. When you take artifacts, you're stealing from that past culture, the Forest, archaeologists, and the public.

What should you do if you find an artifact?

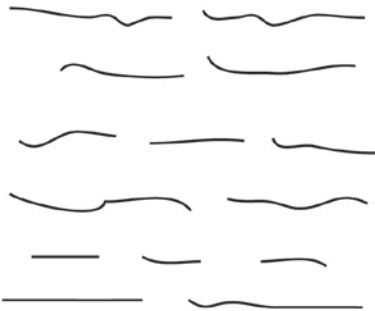


You can look at artifacts, but
ALWAYS put the artifacts back!

From the Field to a Museum

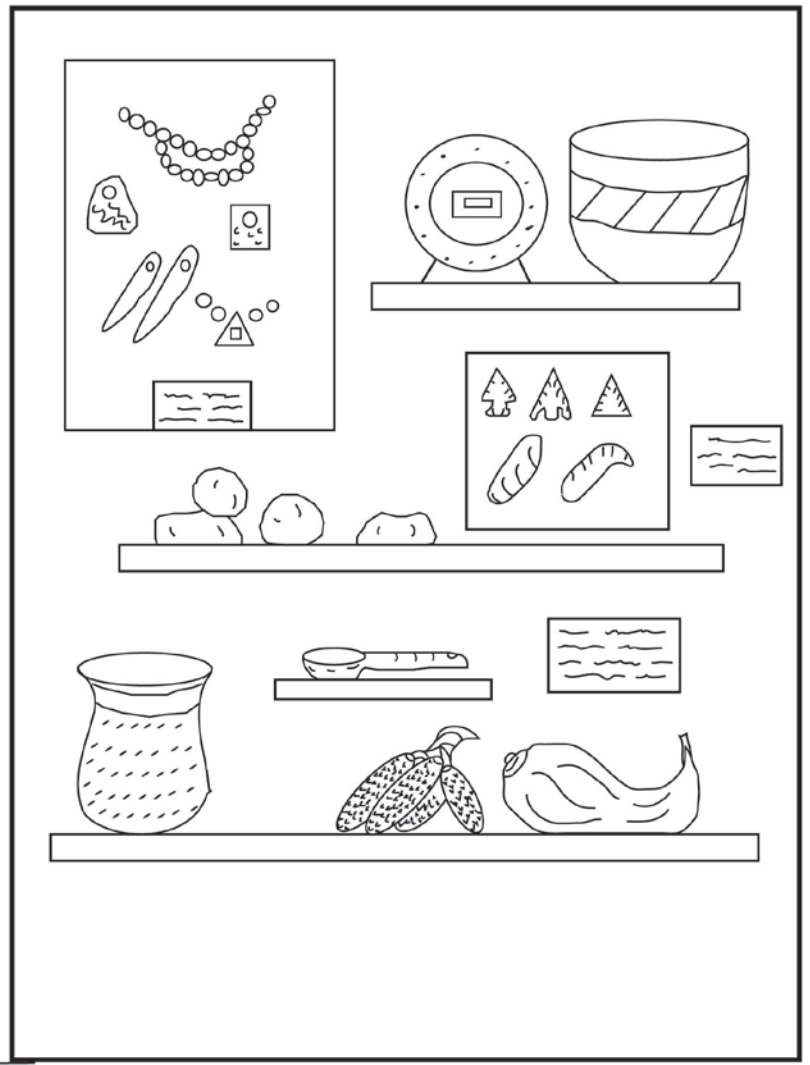
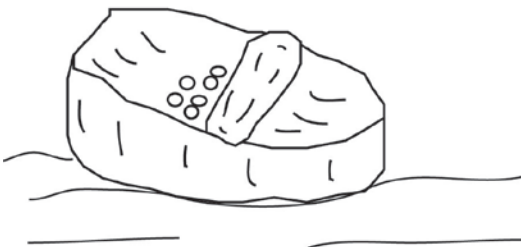
Many artifacts end up in museum collections and on display. That's why you should always put artifacts back, since they may end up in a museum some day. There are a lot of museums in Arizona where you can see the kind of artifacts archaeologists find on the Coconino National Forest.

Prehistoric Communities



BC | | | AD

Mano and Metate
Can You Grind Corn?



Check out these amazing archaeological sites on the Coconino National Forest:

- Elden Pueblo: the ruins of an ancient Sinagua village that was lived at from 1070 AD to 1275 AD. There are a lot of fun public programs that can teach you what it's like to be an archaeologist and what life was like for the ancient people who lived at Elden Pueblo.
- Palatki: there are trails that take you to cliff dwellings and rock art. Cliff dwellings are ancient houses built high off the ground in large caves or cliffs. Rock art are pictures drawn on rocks.
- V Bar V: this area has the best preserved (i.e. protected) rock art in the Verde Valley.
- Honanki: there are trails that take you to cliff dwellings and rock art.

It's About Time!

USFS Heritage Department