

# Archaeology Word Bank

## and

# Glossary

*Adobe*—clay soil used to plaster walls and make bricks

*Ancestral Puebloans*—people who lived in the Four Corners area (where AZ, NM, CO, and UT come together) from about AD 1 to about AD 1200; also known by the Navajo name “Anasazi”

*Archaeology*—the science that studies past cultures by looking at the things they left behind

*Artifacts*—things made or used by people in their daily lives

*Atlatl*—a device used by many ancient peoples to amplify spear-throwing force and distance

*Awl*—a pointed wood, bone, or metal hand tool used for making holes in leather, baskets, cloth, or wood

*Basketmakers*—an early Native American group (around AD 500) named for their skill in basket making

*Corrugated pottery*—pottery with rows of surface indentations, used for cooking and storage

*Dehydrated*—to have lost water and dried out

*Dendrochronology*—dating wood by comparing its tree rings with samples of known age

*Drought*—a long period with little or no rain

*Excavation*—uncovering buried objects from the past by carefully planned digging of a site

*Foot drum*—rectangular pit covered with boards in a floor. Produces a deep drum-like sound when danced on.

*Groundstone*—stone tools shaped by pecking and/or grinding, used for pulverizing or grinding seeds, other plant parts, and colored pigments

*Hogan*—circular (or polyhedral) Navajo shelter, with log or stone walls, and a log roof covered with soil

*Interpretations*—using archaeological information collected from surveys and excavations to reconstruct what may have happened in the past

*Kiln*—a structure for heating clay vessels till they become hard

*Kiva*—a round or square, underground room used for cooking, eating, sleeping, and religious ceremonies

*Latillas*—small poles laid across roof beams (vigas) to form the ceiling of a Pueblo house

*Lithics*—stone tools with sharp edges, formed by chipping or percussion

*Mano*—a hand-held stone used to grind corn and seeds

*Mesa*—a land form that has a flat top and steep sides

*Metate*—a flat or trough-shaped stone slab used in grinding corn

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## Glossary

*Midden*—a trash heap

*Obsidian*—black glass-like rock formed from volcanic lava

*Petroglyph*—a picture carved into rock

*Pictograph*—a picture painted on rock

*Potsherd*—a broken piece of pottery

*Projectile point*—a stone, bone, or metal tip to a wood or reed-grass arrow or spear

*Rincon*—a small side canyon

*Screen*—to sift dirt to look for small artifacts

*Sipapu*—a small hole in the floor of a kiva where spirit ancestors emerge from an earlier underground world

*Survey*—Information about the distribution of past human activities, gained by walking systematically across the landscape

*Vigas*—roof beams

*M. Toll, Oct 28, 2014*