

## VOCABULARY LIST: PEOPLES OF THE SOUTHWEST VIRTUAL TOUR

**Absolute dating-** age can be related back to “real time;” actual years related to when the earth rotates

**Agriculture-** farming and the technology related to farming

**Analysis-** studying something to determine what it is made of, how it works, and its similarities or differences to other things of the same type

**Ancestral Puebloan-** the ancestors of contemporary Puebloan peoples

**Apache-** an Athabaskan-speaking group of tribes that moved into the Southwest from the north several hundred years ago that now live in New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma

**Archaeology/ists-** the study of the past through material culture; archaeologists practice archaeology

**Artifact-** portable objects used, modified, or made by humans

**Atlatl-** a tool used to allow humans to throw spears further and faster

**Ceramic-** any item made from fired clay

**Climate-** changes in weather averaged out over a large span of time (a few decades or more)

**Clovis-** a Paleoindian culture defined by the bifacially flaked projectile points of the same name; 13,100-12,800 BP

**Colonization-** the deliberate spread and takeover by a group of a territory that is not their own; usually as a way to obtain more resources or wealth

**Context-** the things that surround artifacts and features that remain in their original location; this includes the matrix (surrounding soil), the provenience (exact location), and association (relationship in the ground to other artifacts)

**Continuity-** staying the same over a period of time

**Datum-** a fixed starting point from which units are established and elevations are taken

**Dendrochronology-** tree ring dating; measures time using the annual creation of tree rings; can match cross-sections of trees with established, dated tree rings to give an absolute date

**Descendant-** someone related either culturally or genetically to someone in the past

**Ecofacts-** plant, animal or mineral remains that were not modified by humans but still give an idea of what life was like in the past

**Environment-** the natural surroundings where humans live including the available resources such as plants and animals as well as the weather conditions and the climate

**Evidence-** facts and observations gathered to help support a belief or hypothesis

**Excavation-** the process of methodically and scientifically digging a site layer by layer (or level by level) to uncover artifacts and features; this usually requires the use of permits issued by state and federal governments to ensure that the excavation is done properly and ethically by qualified people

**Feature-** non-portable objects used, modified, or made by humans, such as fire hearths, walls, or floors

**Folsom-** the Paleoindian cultural group that came immediately after Clovis; 12,600-12,100 BP

**Great house-** a very large Pueblo building; exclusively used to refer to structures in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado at Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, and surrounding areas

**Infestation-** the invasion of an area or a house by pests such as insects or rodents

**Lithic-** any item made from stone

**Material culture-** the basic “units” of archaeology left behind by past cultures that give us clues about past behaviors; this includes artifacts, features, and sites

**Metate-** a ground stone slab used to grind corn and other plants

**Navajo (Diné)-** an Athabaskan-speaking group that moved into the Southwest from the north several hundred years ago that now lives in northeast Arizona, northwest New Mexico, and southeast Colorado

**Pictograph-** a symbol or picture painted on the surface of a non-portable rock

**Pithouse-** a semi-subterranean house used by peoples of the Southwest prior to the building of pueblos

**Relative dating-** something is older or younger relative to something else

**Resource-** an item that is needed to live, such as plants, animals, clay, stone, etc.

**Ritual-** relating to or done as a religious or solemn rite

**Seriation-** the formalized study of stylistic changes; used in archaeology for relative dating

**Site-** a location and concentration of artifacts *in situ*, or in their original location

**Stratigraphy/strata-** the study of the strata, or layers, of the Earth; allows us to put deposition of soils or sediments in order from “youngest” to “oldest”

**Subterranean-** beneath the surface of the ground

**Superposition-** the geologic principle that states that in undisturbed layers of rock or soil those layers above were laid down after layers below; the deeper layers are older than the ones above them

**Survey-** the act of trained archaeologists searching for archaeological sites; survey usually requires the use of permits issued by state and federal governments to ensure that survey is being conducted properly by qualified people

**Symbol-** an image or object that communicates a meaning other than the literal

**Technology-** the application of knowledge towards a practical purpose; usually to make our lives easier

**Traditional knowledge/tradition-** world views and skills passed down through time in a cultural group; often used to refer to knowledge from Indigenous groups