Compare the fields

Anthropologists study people, cultures, and languages, past and present. Archaeologists investigate past human life through material remains such as pottery and structures. Paleontologists study the history of life using fossils in geological context. Specialists may work together and use similar tools while asking different questions. Recording where evidence was found helps preserve its meaning. Leave possible artifacts undisturbed and tell a ranger or site authority.

Source: National Park Service, Archeology and Paleontology (click here).

1. Which specialist might study how a living community uses language? Explain.

2. Which specialist might study a documented pottery fragment from a past human settlement?

3. Which specialist might study a fossil footprint made by a prehistoric animal?

4. What is one way the work of archaeologists and paleontologists can be similar?

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Continue the practice

Use the comparison on page 1. Answer independently and explain your reasoning.

5. Why should the location and surroundings of an object or fossil be recorded?

6. Why is a specialist's first guess not the same thing as a proven conclusion?

7. What should a visitor do if they encounter a possible artifact in a protected site?

8. Give one example of specialists or community members working together and explain why cooperation helps.

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