

Quick Reference Test Pit Digging Guide

Step	Where to work	What to do
1	Booklet	Fill out all boxes on the front cover of your Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record booklet.
2	On marked test pit site	Measure out your 1 m square test pit with tape, string and nails.
3	Around test pit	Measure and draw a location sketch plan to record test pit location.
4	Near test pit	Lay out your plastic sheeting at least 2 m away from test pit.
5	Booklet	Fill in details on top right-hand side of the first Context Record Sheet page in your Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record
6	Booklet	Complete recording steps 1–4 on the Context Record Sheet , including drawing a plan of the surface of the pit in the gridded square at 1:10 scale.
7	Beside test pit	Line an empty finds tray with newspaper.
8	Beside test pit	Label a plastic resealable finds bag in permanent marker pen with the site-name, test pit number and context number, and place it in the finds tray.
9	In test pit	(Before first context ONLY) Remove turf (if present) with spade, in squares as neatly as possible.
10	In test pit & on spoil heap	Use mattock to loosen soil in test pit, and the shovel to put it into bucket. Keep the bottom of the test pit as level as possible and the sides straight. Try not to get soil on the grass.
11	On spoil heap	Sieve every bucketful of soil (holding the sieve over the plastic sheeting). Pick out of the sieve anything you see that looks man-made (these are your finds) and tip the residue onto the spoil heap on top of the plastic sheeting.
12	Beside test pit	Clean any finds and place them in the finds tray to dry (only put them in the finds bag when they are dry).
13	In test pit	Continue until you have removed 10 cm from the whole surface of the test pit.
14	In test pit	Use your trowel and hand shovel to remove all loose soil from the exposed surface and leave it level.
15	Booklet	Fill in the rest of the Context Record Sheet by filling in boxes steps 5–7.
16	Booklet	Begin your next context by starting a new Context Record Sheet , i.e. by returning to step 5.
Repeat steps 5–16 (omitting step 9) for context 2 and all subsequent contexts until you have finished your test pit, then go on to step 17.		
17	Booklet	Fill in the details on the top left hand side of the FINAL Context Record Sheet page in your Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record complete all 7 recording steps.
18	Booklet	Fill in all parts of the final Section Drawing Sheets .
19	In test pit	Back-fill your test pit and replace turf AS NEATLY AS POSSIBLE .
20	In test pit	Tidy site, collect up and clean your equipment and return with everything to the excavation base.

Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record

Date of excavation: 21 June 2015
Test-pit number: TP54
Test-pit team names:
 1. Rob Nicholson
 2. Anne Joneth Richer Collier
Site code/settlement name: SP15
Test-pit address: BRAMBLES II
 Sheila Ickeringill
 Jackie Snow
 3. Graham Smith
 4. Nigel Bailey
 Steven Miller

Test Pit Location Map

Site code: Test Pit number:

Site measured by:

Map drawn by:

Test pit location recording checklist	
Task	Tick when completed
Measure and draw map of area around your test pit with North marked.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Add written description of test-pit location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. Make a measured, labelled plan of the unexcavated surface the test pit, showing where it is in relation to features such as houses, boundaries, roads, walls etc which are marked on your Ordnance Survey map. Include lines showing the exact distances from your test pit to permanently identifiable points nearby such as buildings or field corners. Show your test pit as a square with the corners numbered 1- 4, to correlate with the numbers on each context plan in the **Context Record Sheets** in this **Record Booklet**.

2. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your map:



Terrace west of
louse barn (soyds.)



location by GPS

3. Describe where your test pit is, adding any notes which help explain this to someone who doesn't know your site:

Pit on second terrace N of wall in field west of
Brambles. Pit approx 50yds west of louse barn.

Section Drawings

Site code: Test Pit number:

1 Ground surface **2**

2 Ground surface **3**

3 Ground surface **4**

4 Ground surface **1**

FINAL Context Record Sheet

Site code: Test Pit number: Context number:

Context recorded by:

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1 2 3 4

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

1
2

<p>Please see drawing on context 4 page.</p> <p>A sondage was dug in bottom left corner SW / corner 4 to determine if further excavation would be carried out. It was determined this level was too natural and is hence the final context.</p>									
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4
3

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Final Context Recording task checklist	
Task (complete all these before starting to backfill)	Tick when completed
Photograph surface of bottom of test pit	
Draw plan of bottom of test pit	
Complete section drawings for all 4 sides of your test pit	
Ensure all finds are clean and in clearly labelled bags	
Fill in all sections on this Final Context Recording Sheet	

6. Did you excavate your test pit to natural? If not, explain why you stopped digging.

7. Use this space for your conclusions about how well your test-pit excavation went, what you think it revealed, any technical problems you encountered which may have affected the results, and any other thoughts that might be useful when writing up your test-pit excavation:

Context Record Sheet

Site code: SDF 15 Test Pit number: 54 Context number: 1

Context recorded by: A Jowett

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1 0 cm 2 0 cm 3 0 cm 4 0 cm

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

1
2

<p>Context plan</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">Grass</p>									
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4
3

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Grass - poor quality of grass / pasture

Recording task checklist	
Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer before starting to dig it	✓
Draw plan of top of context before starting to dig it	✓
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	50 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	✓
Fill in all of this Context Record Sheet	

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percentage?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	Y	% 1	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	% 99	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	Y	% 3	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: 3-4

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

Pipe stem

Context Record Sheet

Site code: **SBD F 15** Test Pit number: **54** Context number: **2**

Context recorded by: **A Jowett**

Recording task checklist	
Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer before starting to dig it	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Draw plan of top of context before starting to dig it	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	100 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fill in all of this Context Record Sheet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?
1 10 2 10 3 10 4 10

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

Context plan

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Soil with two stones
hard compact earth with root

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percentage?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	Y	% 15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flecks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small	Med	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	% 85	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	Y	% 1	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: **3/4**

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).
Coal/clink/charcoal

Pottery - cream glazed **Blue glazed**
Brown glazed **Blue + white glazed**
Black glazed **Black lustre glazed**
Brick green glazed

Pottery - red unglazed
Lime

Clay pipe stem
Glass - green
Clay - all clear robin
Nails / metal
Bone **white composition material possibly containing metal**

Context Record Sheet

Site code: Test Pit number: Context number:

Context recorded by:

Recording task checklist	
Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer before starting to dig it	
Draw plan of top of context before starting to dig it	
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	%
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	
Fill in all of this Context Record Sheet	

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?
1 2 3 4

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

Context plan

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percentage?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?:

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

FINAL CONTEXT

Context Record Sheet

Site code: **SBDF 15** Test Pit number: **54** Context number: **4**

Context recorded by: **A Jarett**

Recording task checklist	
Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer before starting to dig it	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Draw plan of top of context before starting to dig it	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fill in all of this Context Record Sheet	

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?
1 **30** 2 **30** 3 **30** 4 **30**

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percentage?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)		
			Flecks	Small	Med
Stone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	% 40	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	% 40	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	% 40	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charcoal	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What colour was this context?: **S**

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

1 Context plan **2**

4 **3**

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Red Sand Stone

Context Record Sheet

Site code: Test Pit number: Context number:

Context recorded by:

Recording task checklist	
Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer before starting to dig it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Draw plan of top of context before starting to dig it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	<input type="checkbox"/> %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fill in all of this Context Record Sheet	

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?
1 2 3 4

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percentage?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)		
			Flecks	Small	Med
Stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sand	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soil	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charcoal	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What colour was this context?:

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

1 Context plan **2**

4 **3**

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

