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A-LEVEL

# Archaeology

ARCH2 Archaeological Skills and Methods  
Mark scheme

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2010  
June 2016

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Version: 1.0 Final

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

**Question 1**

**0 1** Study **Figure 1** and use your own knowledge.

Outline the advantages and disadvantages of the excavation method shown.

**[8 marks]**

**(Target AO1 6; AO2 2)**

- |     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| L1: | Name check and/or very thin.  | 1-2 |
| L2: | Generic advantages and disadvantages of trenches.   | 3-4 |
| L3: | Developed points on advantages and disadvantages with reference to the source. Balance not required. Move to top of band if step trenches specifically discussed. | 5-6 |
| L4: | At least 2 well developed points on advantages and 2 well developed points on disadvantages, with reference to the source.  | 7-8 |

**Guidance**

Credit sondage. Credit, but do not expect, step trench and move to top of level.

Advantages: Quick and therefore cheap to dig, view of change over time, no need for shoring unless the steps are 1.2m+, helps to identify period and phasing, can find features suggested by other methods, good for evaluating the potential of a site, can be extended if necessary

Disadvantages: Narrow, and narrows further the deeper the excavation goes, can't see a full plan of the site, can't see relationships between features.

Source: Trench at least 7m deep, good view of change over time in the section

Responses only considering an incorrect technique, but which are partially relevant by default are limited to Level 1.

**Question 2**

**0 2** Study **Figure 2** and use your own knowledge.

Outline the advantages and disadvantages of excavating a site such as this.

**[10 marks]**

**(Target AO1 8; AO2 2)**

- |     |  |      |
|-----|--|------|
| L1: | List or very thin/vague generic points.  | 1-2  |
| L2: | More detailed generic points on advantages <b>or</b> disadvantages or undeveloped points on both linked to the source. | 3-4  |
| L3: | More developed points on advantages or disadvantages linked to the source.   | 5-7  |
| L4: | At least three well developed points considering advantages and disadvantages and linked to the source.                | 8-10 |

**Guidance**

Advantages: Excellent organic preservation, largely protected from c-transforms, unique site types in this sort of environment.

Disadvantages: Access, training, weather conditions, expense, equipment, lack of opportunity for community engagement, lack of oxygen, communication difficulties, poor visibility.

Source: Visibility is poor, diver needed to excavate site.

**Question 3**

**0 3** Study **Figure 3** and use your own knowledge.

Identify and explain parts A, B and C.

**[6 marks]**

**(Target AO1 6; AO2 0)**

1 Mark for each of the following points:

- A Lab code and sample number
- B Error margin to 1 level of confidence (68%)
- C Maximum two of the following: Date in radiocarbon years or radiocarbon date; date before present; date before AD 1950.

**Question 4**

**0 4** Study the **introduction** and **Figure 4** and use your own knowledge.

Describe and explain the main changes in vegetation during the Mesolithic period.

**[8 marks]**

**(Target AO1 8; AO2 0)**

- |     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| L1: | Simple description of the changes in vegetation.   | 1-2 |
| L2: | Fuller descriptions or some attempt at explanation of changes in vegetation.                                     | 3-5 |
| L3: | Fuller description linked to calendar dates or pollen zones or climatic period with some attempt at explanation. | 6-8 |

**Guidance**

Few trees, although some birch at the beginning of the period – mainly grasses and weeds. Pine increases quickly and then decreases in pollen zone V, with birch. Oak, elm and hazel appear in pollen zone IV, sometime after 9500 BC. Alder and lime appear later, around 7000 BC. No grasses after the end of pollen zone IV until 3750. Suggests temperature increase, reforestation and then deforestation at the end of the period with the appearance of weeds and grasses. Credit, but do not expect woodland management.

NB. Some candidates may mention that the calibrated dates are quite late for the Mesolithic.

**Question 5**

**0 5** Study **Figure 5** and use your own knowledge.

Explain how archaeologists could study artefacts such as this.

**[8 marks]**

**(Target AO1 6; AO2 2)**

- |     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| L1: | List or thin description.  | 1-2 |
| L2: | Thin explanation of two points or fuller explanation of 1 point. | 3-4 |
| L3: | Fuller explanation of two points with use of source.             | 5-6 |
| L4: | Fuller explanation of at least three points with use of source.  | 7-8 |

**Guidance**

Candidates are most likely to mention microwear and refitting, experimental archaeology, ethnographic analogy, and typology. Petrological analysis is not appropriate for flint. Credit but do not expect trace element analysis. Accept thermoluminescence if made relevant.

**Question 6**

**0 6** Study **Figure 6** and use your own knowledge.

Explain how archaeologists could have obtained the information to create a diagram such as this.

**[12 marks]**

**(Target AO1 10; AO2 2)**

- |     |   |      |
|-----|---|------|
| L1: | List or thin description or explanation of the study of one type of environmental remain or other resource.           | 1-4  |
| L2: | Good explanation of the study of two types of environmental remains or resources or several undeveloped explanations. | 5-8  |
| L3: | Good explanation of the study of at least three types of environmental remains or other resources.                    | 9-12 |

**Guidance**

Environmental remains: wooden remains, egg shell, bird bones, fish bones, seeds, animal bones, antler

Other resources: flint, sandstone

Other evidence: harpoons and hunting equipment, stakeholes

Seasonal indicators, eg presence/absence of antlers, or hazelnuts suggesting autumn occupation.

Credit but do not expect ethnographic analogy or animal behaviour.

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**Question 7**

**0 7** Study **Figure 7** and use your own knowledge

Explain how archaeologists could create a reconstruction drawing from this plan, and from the artefacts and ecofacts which might have been recovered from this site.

**[8 marks]**

**(Target AO1 6; AO2 2)**

- |     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| L1: | List and/or thin generic points, may contain fleeting reference to the source.   | 1-2 |
| L2: | More developed generic points or specific source-related point partially developed.  | 3-5 |
| L3: | Well developed, specific source related points with some comment on the limits of evidence and/or reliability of the reconstruction drawing. | 6-8 |

Credit should be given within bands for discussion of the limitations of reconstruction drawing, but should not be used to move between them.

**Guidance**

Layout of postholes to show shape of structure, presence of wood and edge of slope to show the boundaries, size and depth of postholes linked to height, presence of burnt material or reddening of the ground for presence of hearth, spatial analysis of activities such as food preparation and knapping, possible remains of coverings, experimental archaeology, ethnographic analogy.

## Unit ARCH2: Marking Section B essays

The knowledge-based approach of this section enables students to select content from a wide variety of contexts. As a result, highly specific mark schemes are inappropriate. The scheme must be sufficiently flexible that it can embrace whatever case studies that teachers and students may select to study in that particular year.

Marking guidance therefore falls into two main types. A broad hierarchy of levels based on the assessment objectives for all essays and then exemplification for each particular question. In the latter case the contexts and lists of expected content are simply for the sake of illustration. There are many other sets of evidence, which would provide equally good answers.

The balance of assessment objectives on this section between AO1 and AO2 is 1:2.

The primary aim of the assessments is to test students' understanding of key techniques and issues in practical archaeology (AO2). Depending on the questions chosen they will focus, to a greater or lesser extent, upon the basis of archaeological knowledge, its limitations, and the nature of the factors affecting continuity and change in the past.

Understanding of AO1 will also be a key factor in differentiating responses.

Good examining is, ultimately, about the consistent application of judgement. Levels of response mark schemes provide the necessary framework for exercising that judgement but cannot cover all eventualities. Where you are very unsure about a particular response, refer it to your team leader.

### Generic Essay Levels Mark Scheme

**Below Level 1**                      **0 marks**

**Answers with no merit or relevance to the question set.**

Responses at this level may be of reasonable length and may contain archaeological examples and material but they will not respond to demands of this specific question. The student may have incorrectly interpreted a concept or simply responded to a word or phrase in the question by writing all they can think of about that 'trigger'.

**Level 1**                      **1-6 marks**      **AO1 (2) AO2 (4)**

**Weak or undeveloped answers.**

**Either: A** Responses at the bottom of this level (1-3 marks) may provide some information which could be relevant to the question but it will be undifferentiated from irrelevant or inaccurate material – in other words it will randomly rather than purposely linked to the question. More typically (4-6 marks) the student will demonstrate some understanding of the thrust of the question but is unable to respond in an adequate manner. Some understanding may be shown by the selection of relevant material although this will be presented in a 'scattergun manner' with little discrimination, explanation or attempt to use it as part of a logical argument. The account will be superficial and may be within the context of a purely narrative or descriptive framework.



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**Or:** **B** Alternatively the response may consist of a very weak description of technique(s) or a very thin account of a site(s), some of which may be relevant to the question but which are undeveloped. Nevertheless, some of these could have been developed into higher level responses.

At Level 1, where students submit full essays they are likely to display poor communication skills, work being characterised by disjointed prose, poor organisation and frequent lapses of spelling and grammar. This level also includes responses which do address the question but are only a few sentences in length or undeveloped lists or plans which had the potential to become higher level answers.

**Level 2**      **7-12 marks: AO1 (4) AO2 (8).**

**Limited responses with some merit.**

**Either: A** Responses which demonstrate understanding by including some material relevant to the question. However, it is likely that the student has been unable to organise their work successfully in order to meet the demands of the question. Typically this may include the very basic description of techniques with little or no exemplification. Understanding of the issues in the question will be simplistic and there will be very little assessment of the data which will often be presented in a descriptive format.

**Or: B** Answers which do address the question and demonstrate some understanding of the issues, perhaps making several valid points. However, there will be very little or no relevant archaeological examples or explanation of technique(s) to support their case.

At Level 2, students are likely to display some poor communication skills. Some of their work may be characterised by disjointed prose, poor organisation and frequent lapses of spelling and grammar. This level also includes good, detailed essay plans and promising essays which have not been developed (eg very brief or truncated).

**Level 3**      **13-18 marks: AO1 (6) AO2 (12).**

**Sound responses.**

**Either: A** Responses which largely contains material relevant to this question and where the student has begun to organise and structure their work successfully in order to meet its demands. This may be of similar depth to Level 2 responses but will be largely focussed on issues raised by the question. Introductions and conclusions are likely to be limited at this level and appraisal will be simple.

**Or: B** Answers which address the question and demonstrate a reasonable understanding of many of the issues it raises. They will be able to reach sensible conclusions but provide limited explanation of archaeological technique(s) to support their case.  
Include at this level: responses which are of Level 4 or 5 quality but which have only addressed half of a question which contains two main elements; good generic responses which include no exemplification; detailed accounts of archaeological sites which only partially address the question.

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At Level 3 communication skills may remain limited and may be adequate at best. At the lower end of the level spelling and grammatical errors are likely to be frequent and answers will show limited powers of organisation. At the higher end there may still be insecure structuring of paragraphs and weaknesses of expression breaking the flow of the answer.

**Level 4**      **19-24 marks: AO1 (8) AO2 (16).**

**Good responses.**

**Either: A** Responses largely containing well focused, relevant material organised in the form of 1-2 explanations of techniques or a range of 3+ with some limited development. Reasonable exemplification will be present. The response must reach some conclusions – perhaps in the final paragraph. Depth of understanding of terms may be very good but commentary and argument will be underdeveloped.

**Or : B** Well-focused responses which address the question directly and demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised by it. The account is likely to have a coherent structure and may be argued consistently. However, explanations of techniques will still be limited despite being supported by some examples. Detailed appraisal of specific techniques will not therefore be possible.

At Level 4 communication skills will generally be sound. Though spelling and grammar will be secure there may still be lapses with technical vocabulary. Organisation will be sensible but there may be passages of less well directed writing or an overly schematic approach.

**Level 5**      **25-30 marks: AO1 (10) AO2 (20)**

**Very good responses.**

**Either: A** Responses containing considerable, well focused relevant material either in the form of 1-2 detailed explanations of techniques or a range of 3+ with relevant development. (Expect the equivalent of a couple of sentences on each.) Analysis will be present although at the bottom of this level this will not necessarily be consistent and not all the data will be necessarily appraised. Exemplification will be sound. Evaluation and assessment of the relative merits of different sources and lines of argument will be present. A conclusion will be reached about the main element in the question.

**Or: B** Responses which address the question directly and precisely, and demonstrate a very strong understanding of the issues raised by it. The account will be well-structured and should be argued consistently. Appraisal of specific case studies via supporting evidence will be sound.

At Level 5 communication skills will be generally effective and organisation clear and logical. Spelling and grammar will be sound, though there may be occasional errors.

### **Deciding on marks within a level**

One of the purposes of examining is to differentiate between responses in order to help awarders distinguish clearly and fairly between students. We want to avoid too much “bunching” of marks which can lead to regression to the mean. A key element here is the way examiners approach the work. Given the constraints of time and circumstance, students will not produce perfect work. Ideally you should take a ‘cup half full’ rather than ‘cup half empty’ approach to responses above Level 2. This should help you to use the full range of marks available. Start by allocating the essay to the level which best describes it even though it may not be a perfect fit. If you really cannot decide between a level, award the response the top mark of the lower level where the decision is between levels 1-2 or 2-3 and at the bottom of the higher level in all other cases.

Where you are confident about a level, you should start by placing the essay on one of the middle marks for that level. Next consider whether you feel that mark to be about right, slightly generous or slightly harsh in comparison with other responses at that level. In the latter cases move the essay out to the lower or higher mark in the level. In making decisions away from the middle of the level, examiners should ask themselves whether the response is:

- Precise in its use of factual information?
- Technically accurate?
- Appropriately detailed?
- Factually accurate?
- Appropriately balanced, or markedly better in some areas than in others?
- Generally coherent in expression and cogent in development (as appropriate to the level awarded)?
- Well-presented as to general use of syntax, spelling, punctuation and grammar?

The latter two points indicate how the student’s quality of written communication might influence the award of marks within a given level of response and complement the information given elsewhere.

**Question 8**

- 0 8** Outline the information that archaeologists can find out from documentary sources. **[30 marks]**

**Use generic levels mark scheme****Indicative content**

Candidates will discuss a variety of documentary sources and their uses to archaeologists. Expect mention of previous excavation and survey reports, legal documents such as tax returns and wills, diary entries, travelogues, newspaper reports, eye-witness accounts, antiquarian writings, historical documents, maps, drawings, plans and photographs.

Candidates are most likely to draw on local examples and some mention of the SMR/HER is to be expected.

**Question 9**

- 0 9** Outline the information that archaeologists can find out from aerial survey. **[30 marks]**

**Use generic levels mark scheme****Indicative content**

Candidates are most likely to mention use of oblique and vertical aerial photographs to reveal information in the form of crop marks, shadow sites and soil marks. Candidates may also mention the use of LiDAR and satellite imagery.

Better answers will discuss the problems inherent in each method of remote sensing. Candidates are likely to draw on local examples as well as more well known ones such as Wharram Percy DMV, Silchester Roman town, recent work in Egypt and the Roman empire to investigate large areas by satellite and LiDAR, satellite imagery and its use in discovering lost Mayan sites, eg San Bartolo and LiDAR surveys by English Heritage, such as the Mendips and Stonehenge.

**Question 10**

**1 0** Outline the ways in which transformation processes affect the archaeological record. **[30 marks]**

**Use generic levels mark scheme****Indicative content**

Candidates are likely to examine formation processes, C and N transforms and recovery factors separately, and will discuss how each can alter our understanding of the archaeological record. Formation processes will warrant a discussion of the stage at which material is incorporated into the archaeological record, whilst recovery factors will examine the way in which archaeologists can create bias in their discoveries through the techniques of excavation used. N transforms may lead to students discussing differential preservation

Candidates are likely to mention local examples, Otzi, Egyptian mummies, Pompeii and other well preserved bodies and sites.

NB Candidates must discuss at least 2 of C+N transforms, recovery factors and formation processes to access L5.

**Marking Grid**

<b>Question Number</b>	<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>
<b>8</b>	10	20
<b>9</b>	10	20
<b>10</b>	10	20