

## **ANT-202 Fact Sheet September 23, 2009**

- I. Introduction: What is Prehistory?
  - A. Definitions
    1. Prehistory is the era before the invention of writing. Dating of the prehistoric era varies geographically
    2. Writing is a technology for storing, manipulating and communicating data. It was invented independently in three places: in Sumer in the Near East (present-day Iraq) around 3100 B.C., around 1500 B.C. in China, and around 500-300 B.C. in Mesamerica.
  - B. Subfields of Anthropology
    1. cultural anthropology
    2. linguistic anthropology
    3. physical or biological anthropology
    4. archaeology
- II. Archaeology
  - A. Basic concepts
    1. Culture: Shared ideas held by members of a society or social group.
    2. Material Culture: Physical manifestations of culture in the form of artifacts, features, and sites.
    3. Artifacts: Any object or material made or used by a human being in the past.
    4. Features: An artifact that cannot be moved such as a house foundation, pyramid, or a hearth.
    5. Ecofacts: Remains of animals or plants that result from human activities but were not intentionally modified.
    6. Human skeletal remains: Remains of humans or human ancestors resulting from either accidental or intentional burial or some other preservation activity (e.g., mummification).
    7. Sites: Accumulations of artifacts, features, ecofacts and/or human skeletal remains that represent places where people lived, died, or carried out certain activities in the past.
    8. Associations: The proximity of an archaeological artifact or feature to other artifacts or features in the same matrix
    9. Context: The relationship between an artifact and its setting.
    10. Stratigraphy: Layering of soil deposits
    11. Fossils- Petrified remains of a once living organism.
    12. Law of superposition: the deepest levels are the oldest.
    13. Midden: Deposit of prehistoric garbage
  - B. Dating and Divisions of Time
    1. Discovering Geologic Time