



## Museum of Natural History & Science Gallery Guide for *Earth Stories*

This exhibit is a self-guided tour that begins every 90 seconds. The exhibit surveys some of the diverse items that one may encounter in a natural history museum while focusing on the history of a Paleo-Indian spear point. During this tour, some of the varied scientific disciplines that come together in a museum setting are discussed. At the end you will find *EarthWorks*, an interactive exhibit detailing archaeological sites in southwest Ohio.

**Concepts:** archaeology, artifacts, cultural anthropology, cultural history, biology, education staff, exhibits staff, entomology, geology, ornithology, natural history, paleontology.

### **Background Information:**

The goal of any natural history museum is to help explain the varied **natural** and **cultural history** of the world around us. While most of this is done either through **artifacts** in protective cases or through more interactive exhibits, there is more to the natural history museum. Behind the scenes are many who work to bring the visitor a greater understanding of the Earth and the cultures that inhabit it. Researchers such as **ornithologists**, **paleontologists**, **biologists**, **entomologists** and **geologists** all conduct research to understand the natural history of the Earth, while **archaeologists** and **cultural anthropologists** work on further understanding cultural history. Working together and sharing results can advance the whole of human knowledge. Museum staff such as **exhibits staff** and **education staff**, take the results of current research to create exhibits and teach visitors about them. Through collaboration such as this, society as a whole can have a greater understanding of not only the world, but also our place in it.

### **Vocabulary:**

*Archaeologist* – a researcher in the field of archaeology, which is the study of the human past

*Artifact* – any object or item created or modified by human action

*Cultural Anthropologist* – a researcher in the field of cultural anthropology, which is the study of human behavior

*Cultural History* – a history of human behavior throughout time

*Biologist* – a researcher in the field of biology, which is the study of life

*Education Staff* – museum professionals who specialize in interpreting museum exhibits in an educational manner

*Entomologist* – a researcher in the field of entomology, which is the study of insects

*Exhibits Staff* – a museum professional who specializes in creating museum exhibits for public showing

*Geologist* – a researcher in the field of geology, which is the study of the Earth and its processes

*Ornithologist* – a researcher in the field of ornithology, which is the study of birds

*Natural History* – both the geologic and biologic history of the Earth.

*Paleontologist* – the study of ancient non-human life, such as dinosaurs or marine invertebrates, often through the fields of geology and biology.

**Focus Questions:**

1. At each stop, examine and discuss the role of each of the professions and the understanding of their contributions to the archaeological site and the human cultures that inhabit it.
2. Why is the concept of stratigraphy so important in the field of archaeology? How is stratigraphy used in the fields of geology and paleontology?
3. In today's society, museums play an active role in the preservation and education of the past. Why is this important to both society and the individual?