



Shoebbox dig supplies, including sand, potting soil, and vermiculite



Bottom layer 3 (sand) in a shoebox dig  
(with no visible artifacts)



Middle layer 2 (soil) in a shoebox dig  
(with no visible artifacts)



Top layer 1 of vermiculite in a shoebox dig



Side view of three layers in a transparent shoebox dig



Digging top layer 1; middle layer 2 is starting to appear.



Incorrect digging through top layer 1 into layer 2; two layer colors are visible in the discard pile, so the layers have been mixed



Side view of a pit in layer 2, filled in with soil of layer 1



Side view of the pit in layer 2 once layer 1 has been excavated. The bottom of the pit reaches layer 3. Contents of the pit should be bagged separately from those of layers 1 and 2.



Top layer 1 removed: pit fully excavated. The top of layer 3 is exposed.



Neatly arranged artifacts with a meaningful "back story" will test students' ability to excavate carefully and figure out connections.



Compressing shoebox layers firmly will permit a more authentic excavation experience. Loose soil allows artifacts to slip downward.