

# FISH TERMINOLOGIES

## FISH Archaeological Sciences Thesaurus

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Description:	Terminology used for recording the techniques, recovery methods and materials associated with archaeological sciences. Maintained by Historic England on behalf of the FISH Terminology Working Group.
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# A

## Alpha Spectrometry

BT : Chemical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ A technique that uses the emission of alpha particles of specific energies to identify the presence and concentration of certain radioactive isotopes in a sample

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## Altered By Animals

BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ Modified or damaged by an animal.

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## Amino Acid Racemisation

BT : Dating Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The measurement of chemical alterations in the amino acids in protein molecules from bones, shells and teeth. Date range can be between 1,000 and several million years.

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## Ancient Biomolecular Analysis

BT : Chemical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ Characterisation of organic molecules extracted from fossil or sub-fossil materials, including lipids, DNA etc.

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## Animal Fighting

UF : Cockfighting  
Baiting

BT : Animal Roles  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is zooarchaeological evidence for animal types, physical modifications or pathologies, or contextual associations, which suggest use of animals for fighting, such as bear-baiting or cockfighting.

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## Animal Roles

BT : Interpretations  
TT : Interpretations  
NT : Companion Animals  
Traction Animals  
Guard Animals  
Pack Animals  
Riding Animals  
Animal Fighting

★ Use where there is evidence for specific roles being performed by animals.

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## Anoxic

UF : Waterlogged  
BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ Material preserved by the exclusion of oxygen usually due to saturation with water which inhibits decay by micro-organisms.

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## Antler

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ Outgrowths of bone borne by most members of the deer family (Cervidae). They are shed and re-grow each year.

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## Antler Working

USE : Bone Working

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## Archaeobotany

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The study of plant remains, typically seeds, fruits, wood, leaves etc, preserved within archaeological deposits and palaeoenvironmental archives. Use palynology when pollen and spores are being analysed as opposed to macroscopic plant remains.

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## Archaeomagnetism

BT : Dating Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ Measures the remanent magnetisation direction of magnetic minerals. Useful for dating fired structures, in-situ since their last firing, and for sediments settling from non turbulent water bodies. In the UK, calibration data extends back to 1000BC.

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## Archaeomalacology

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The study of mollusca remains preserved within archaeological deposits and palaeoenvironmental archives.

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## Archaeometallurgy

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The the study of metalworking structures, tools, waste products and finished metal artefacts, from the Bronze Age to the recent past. It can be used in the field and in post excavation to identify and interpret metalworking structures, tools, waste etc.

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## Archaeozoology

USE : Zooarchaeology

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## Aspect

NT : Human Aspects  
Natural Aspects

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## Available Phosphorus Analysis

BT : Soil Phosphorus Analysis  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The analysis of the amount of phosphorus (P) (liable fraction) available to plants.

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# B

## *Baiting*

USE :Animal Fighting

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## **Basketry**

BT : Craft Working  
TT : Interpretations

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## **Beach Deposit**

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ A deposit formed by wave and tidal action on an estuarine or marine beach.

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## *Bioarchaeology*

USE :Human Osteology

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## **Biogenic Carbonate**

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ Any carbonate material produced by biological activity, for instance operculae of snails.

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## **Biostratigraphy**

BT : Dating Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ A technique in which the date is deduced from the presence of fauna and/or flora considered to be characteristic of a given period of time or that gives an indication of a probable date.

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## **Block Lifting**

BT : Method Of Recovery  
TT : Method Of Recovery

★ The removal of fragile or complex remains from an investigation as a block of earth for excavation under laboratory conditions. Typical examples are grave goods and cremation burials.

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## **Bone**

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ Any of the pieces of hard tissue consisting largely of calcium phosphate that make up the skeleton of a vertebrate animal.

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## **Bone Processing**

BT : Processing  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is evidence for the extraction of non-muscle meat components from bones, e.g. marrow, fats, collagen, including soup kitchen assemblages.

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## **Bone Working**

UF : *Tooth Working*  
*Antler Working*  
*Horn Working*  
BT : Craft Working  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use for evidence of working of bone, antler, horn or tooth.

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## **Brewing**

BT : Processing  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use where brewing waste and/or the presence of beer additives are present after K E Behre (1999). Use malting where sprouted grain or detached sprouts are present.

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## **Brick**

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ Material used for construction, commonly fired in its manufacture.

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## *Bulk Sampling*

USE :Coarse Sieving

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## **Burnt**

UF : *Burnt Deposit*  
BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State  
NT : Calcined  
Charred  
Silicified

★ Use for material that has been burnt.

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## *Burnt Deposit*

USE :Burnt

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## **Burnt Flint**

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ A form of silica, similar to quartz. Commonly black or white in colour and used for tool manufacture. Flints heated in antiquity may be dated using thermoluminescence.

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# C

## C14 Dating

USE :Radiocarbon Dating

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## Calcined

UF : *Cremated*

BT : **Burnt**

TT : **Modification State**

★ *Material burnt at high temperature (above 700 degrees Celsius) leaving only the mineral component.*

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## Carbon 14 Dating

USE :Radiocarbon Dating

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## Carbon Dating

USE :Radiocarbon Dating

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## Carbonised

USE :Charred

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## Carved

BT : **Worked**

TT : **Aspect**

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## Caulking

BT : **Construction Materials**

TT : **Interpretations**

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## Cereal Processing By-Product

BT : **Processing**

TT : **Interpretations**

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## Cereal Processing Product

BT : **Processing**

TT : **Interpretations**

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## Cereal Thatching

BT : **Construction Materials**

TT : **Interpretations**

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## Charcoal

RT : **Charred**

BT : **Wood**

TT : **Material Type**

NT : **Micro-Charcoal**

★ *Wood that has been burnt and largely reduced to carbon as a result of burning in a reducing atmosphere below 500 degrees C (Celsius).*

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## Charcoal Production

BT : **Wild Plant Use**

TT : **Interpretations**

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## Charred

UF : *Carbonised*

RT : **Charcoal**

BT : **Burnt**

TT : **Modification State**

★ *Material that has been burnt and at least in part reduced to carbon as a result of burning in a reducing atmosphere below 500 degrees Celsius.*

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## Chemically Altered

BT : **Modification State**

TT : **Modification State**

★ *Material that has been altered as a result of chemical action.*

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## Chemical Techniques

BT : **Investigative Techniques**

TT : **Investigative Techniques**

NT : **Ancient Biomolecular Analysis**

**Multi-Element Analysis**

**Ph Determination**

**Soil Phosphorus Analysis**

**Spot Test**

**Stable Isotope Analysis**

**Gamma Spectrometry**

**Alpha Spectrometry**

**Peat Humification**

★ *Examination of a material using chemical means.*

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## Clast Lithological Analysis

BT : **Physical Techniques**

TT : **Investigative Techniques**

★ *The identification and grouping of stone types in stratigraphy.*

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## Coarse Sieving

UF : *Bulk Sampling*

BT : **Method Of Recovery**

TT : **Method Of Recovery**

★ *The method of retrieving animal remains, artefacts and other remains by dry or wet-sieving whole earth samples, typically over 100 litres, sieved through a 2mm or larger mesh.*

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## Cockfighting

USE :Animal Fighting

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## Colored

USE :Coloured

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## Coloured

UF : *Colored*

BT : **Worked**

TT : **Aspect**

★ *Material with evidence of the application of a pigment or dye.*

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## Companion Animals

UF : *Pets*

BT : **Animal Roles**

TT : **Interpretations**

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## Construction Materials

BT : **Interpretations**

TT : **Interpretations**

NT : **Caulking**

**Cereal Thatching**

**Non-Cereal Thatching**

**Packing Material**

**Turves**

**Structural Timber**

★ *Use where there is evidence materials have been used in construction, including decoration.*

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# C

## **Copper Alloy**

BT : Non-Ferrous Metal

TT : Material Type

★ Use for a combination (alloy) of two or more different metals where copper (Cu) is the principal component.

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## *Coppicing*

USE :Woodland Management

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## **Coprolite**

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ Waste material from the digestive tract of animals. The term coprolite comes from the Greek 'kopros' meaning dung and 'lithos' meaning stone, and is used for faecal matter that has been preserved by mineral replacement or dessication.

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## **Craft Working**

BT : Interpretations

TT : Interpretations

NT : Basketry

    Bone Working

    Skin Working

    Tanning

    Textile Production

    Wood Working

★ Use where there is evidence for the use of plants and animals in the manufacture of objects. Use more specific terms where known.

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## *Cremated*

USE :Calcined

# D

## Dairying

BT : Husbandry  
TT : Interpretations

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## Dating Techniques

BT : Investigative Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques  
NT : Amino Acid Racemisation  
Archaeomagnetism  
Biostratigraphy  
Dendrochronology  
Electron Spin Resonance  
Fission Track Analysis  
Fluorine, Uranium And Nitrogen Tests  
Lead Isotope Dating  
Mitochondrial Dna Dating  
Obsidian Hydration  
Oxygen Isotope Analysis  
Potassium Argon Dating  
Radiocarbon Dating  
Tephrochronology  
Uranium Series Dating  
Luminescence Dating

★ *Techniques applied to a material in order to date it or material associated with it. Use more specific terms.*

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## Decorated

UF : *Decoration*  
BT : Worked  
TT : Aspect

★ *Use where decoration is present.*

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## Decoration

USE :Decorated

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## Dendrochronology

BT : Dating Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The measuring of annual tree-ring growth shown by most tree species in temperated regions. Regional chronoliges are required to date any particular piece of wood, the longest of which, for Germany, works for the present to approximately 14,000 yrs ago.*

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## Deposition

BT : Interpretations  
TT : Interpretations  
NT : Kitchen Waste  
Stable Waste  
Structured Deposition  
Table Waste

★ *Use for the deposition of material that has a documented signature in the archaeological record.*

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## Desiccated

BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ *Material preserved due to very low humidity which inhibits decay by micro-organisms.*

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## Diatom Analysis

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The study of diatoms preserved in deposits.*

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## Disease

USE :Pathology

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## Diseased

USE :Pathology

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## Draught Animals

USE :Traction Animals

# E

## **Egg Production**

BT : Husbandry  
TT : Interpretations

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## **Egg Shell**

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ *Use for the remains of an egg whether from a bird, reptile or amphibian.*

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## **Electron Spin Resonance**

BT : Dating Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The measurement of trapped electrons by exposure to high-frequency electromagnetic radiation. A useful technique for dating tooth enamel, shells, coral and calcite from 5,000-1,000,000 years old.*

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## **Estuarine Deposit**

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ *An alluvial deposit laid down in an estuary.*

# F

## Falconry

USE :Hunting And Trapping

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## Feasting

BT : Social Behaviour

TT : Interpretations

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## Feather

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ Use for feathers, an epidermal growth found in birds consisting of a quill, shaft and two vanes of barbs.

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## Feldspar

BT : Geological Sediment

TT : Material Type

★ A group of aluminosilicate minerals with varying compositions. The most common mineral in igneous rocks, and common in other rocks and sediments.

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## Ferrous Metal

BT : Metal

TT : Material Type

★ Any metal principally composed of the chemical element Iron (Fe).

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## Fibre

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ Use for any thread-like material.

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## Fission Track Analysis

BT : Dating Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ A technique for the dating of damage tracks in volcanic materials caused by the fissioning of decaying radioactive uranium (U) isotopes. Useful in samples more than 50,000 years old.

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## Flax Retting

BT : Processing

TT : Interpretations

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## Flot

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ The material which floats during the floatation of samples as a means of recovering charred plant remains from an archaeological context.

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## Flotation

BT : Method Of Recovery

TT : Method Of Recovery

★ Method used for the recovering of material by floating large whole earth samples, usually between 40-60 litres per context (or 100% if context contains less than this).

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## Fluorine, Uranium And Nitrogen Tests

BT : Dating Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ A relative dating technique for assessing bones from the same deposit. Often used to check for contemporaneity of bones selected for radiocarbon dating or to check for hoaxes such as the Piltdown Man.

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## Fodder Production

BT : Husbandry

TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is clear evidence for the production of fodder. Use hay where this is indicated and stable waste where the remains of animal bedding and animal dung are present.

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## Food Preservation

BT : Processing

TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is evidence for the preservation of food, including salting, smoking, drying of meat or fish.

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## Foraminifera Analysis

BT : Physical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The study of foraminifera preserved in deposits.

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## Fossilised

USE :Mineral Replaced

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## Fuel Use

BT : Wild Plant Use

TT : Interpretations

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## Funerary Use

BT : Social Behaviour

TT : Interpretations

★ Use for pyre material, pyre goods, grave goods or components.

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## Fungal Damage

BT : Modification State

TT : Modification State

★ Material that has been damaged by fungal growth or secretions.

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## Fungal Infestation

BT : Infestation

TT : Interpretations

★ Use when ergot or other fungi are present and associated with a particular taxa.

---



# G

## **Gamma Spectrometry**

BT : Chemical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *A technique that uses the emission of gamma rays of specific energies to identify the presence and concentration of certain radioactive isotopes in a sample*

---

## **Gathering**

BT : Wild Plant Use

TT : Interpretations

★ *Use when there is clear evidence for gathered plants due to the taxon (taxa) being found in a particular context such as a container or in significant concentrations.*

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## **Geological Sediment**

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

NT : Quartz

Feldspar

Zircon

Polymineral

★ *A material composed of mineral grains derived from the breakdown of rocks by environmental processes.*

---

## **Gold**

BT : Non-Ferrous Metal

TT : Material Type

★ *A precious metal characterised by its yellow colour and resistance to tarnishing.*

---

## **Guard Animals**

BT : Animal Roles

TT : Interpretations

# H

## Hair

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ Use for hair, fur etc: filaments growing out of the outermost layer of mammalian skin.

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## Hand Retrieval

BT : Method Of Recovery  
TT : Method Of Recovery

★ The retrieval of material from deposits by hand, normally large objects visible with the naked eye, eg. Mammal remains and marine molluscs.

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## Hay

BT : Wild Plant Use  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use where the distinctive flora associated with traditionally managed hay meadows has been found in association, including *Rhinanthus minor*, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*, *Filipendula ulmaria* and various grasses.

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## Heavy Residue

USE :Residue

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## Horn Working

USE :Bone Working

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## Human Aspects

BT : Aspect  
TT : Aspect  
NT : Manufacturing Debris  
Worked

★ Aspects of a material which result from the modification or use of the material by humans.

---

## Human Osteology

UF : *Bioarchaeology*  
*Osteoarchaeology*  
BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The study of human remains preserved within archaeological deposits and palaeoenvironmental archives.

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## Hunting And Trapping

UF : *Falconry*  
BT : Social Behaviour  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is evidence that hunting or trapping reflects social factors.

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## Husbandry

BT : Interpretations  
TT : Interpretations  
NT : Dairying  
Egg Production  
Fodder Production  
Manuring  
Meat Production  
Nutritional Stress  
On-Site Breeding  
Selective Breeding  
Transhumance  
Wool Production

★ Use where the remains of plants and animals indicate husbandry regimes, including the care and raising of animals and the cultivation of plants for food and other uses. Use a narrow term where possible.

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## Hydrolysis

BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ The chemical breakdown of a material by water.

---

## Importation Of Goods

BT : Social Behaviour  
TT : Interpretations

★ *Importation of animals, animal parts, plants, plant parts*

---

## Impression

BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ *The negative trace left by an object type or material (eg. animal, plant or textile) on another object type or material, often on ceramics or metal corrosion products.*

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## Infestation

BT : Interpretations  
TT : Interpretations  
NT : Fungal Infestation  
Insect Infestation

★ *Use where there is clear evidence of the presence of pests or other detrimental organisms.*

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## Infra-Red Stimulated Luminescence

UF : IRSL  
IRSL Dating  
BT : Luminescence Dating  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The light emitted from sedimentary minerals or mineral inclusions in bricks when stimulated in the laboratory by infrared light. Used to date samples up to 250,000 years old; especially appropriate for geological sediments containing feldspars*

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## Inorganic Phosphorus Analysis

BT : Soil Phosphorus Analysis  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The analysis of inorganic phosphorus (P).*

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## Insect Infestation

BT : Infestation  
TT : Interpretations

★ *Use when either the remains of insect pests are present or there is clear evidence of their presence such as holes or frass*

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## Interpretations

NT : Animal Roles  
Construction Materials  
Craft Working  
Deposition  
Husbandry  
Infestation  
Processing  
Social Behaviour  
Wild Plant Use

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## Investigative Techniques

NT : Chemical Techniques  
Dating Techniques  
Physical Techniques

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## IRSL

USE :Infra-Red Stimulated Luminescence

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## IRSL Dating

USE :Infra-Red Stimulated Luminescence

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## Ivory

BT : Tooth  
TT : Material Type

★ *Use for a tusk or tooth of a mammal large enough to be carved or used to make objects such as those of mammoths, elephants, walrus and whales.*

# K

## **Kitchen Waste**

BT : Deposition

TT : Interpretations

# L

## **Lead Isotope Dating**

**BT : Dating Techniques**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

★ *A technique which uses the measurement of decay in radioactive lead (Pb) isotopes to determine a date. Useful for sediments and lead-based paints between 1 and 400 years old.*

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## **Leather**

**RT : Skin**

**BT : Material Type**

**TT : Material Type**

★ *Animal skin that has been tanned or tawed.*

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## **Loss On Ignition Determination**

**BT : Physical Techniques**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

★ *The weight loss from low-temperature burning of material. It correlates well with organic matter (material derived from living things) content.*

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## **Luminescence Dating**

**BT : Dating Techniques**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

**NT : Infra-Red Stimulated Luminescence**

**Optically Stimulated Luminescence**

**Thermoluminescence**

★ *A range of techniques that use the build up of charge stored within a crystalline material to estimate its age*

# M

## Magnetic Susceptibility

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The degree to which a material will become magnetised when placed in a magnetic field.*

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## Malting

BT : Processing  
TT : Interpretations

★ *Use for the remains of sprouted grain and/or detached coleoptiles (comings) after van der Veen 2007.*

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## Manufacturing Debris

BT : Human Aspects  
TT : Aspect

★ *Use where the material presents debris or waste from manufacturing.*

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## Manuring

BT : Husbandry  
TT : Interpretations

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## Material Type

NT : Antler  
Bone  
Coprolite  
Egg Shell  
Feather  
Fibre  
Hair  
Leather  
Metal  
Phytolith  
Pollen  
Shell  
Skin  
Tooth  
Wood  
Estuarine Deposit  
Tufaceous Deposit  
Peat Deposit  
Beach Deposit  
Brick  
Pottery  
Burnt Flint  
Geological Sediment  
Biogenic Carbonate  
Flot  
Residue  
Slag  
Plant Macrofossil

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## Meat Production

BT : Husbandry  
TT : Interpretations

★ *Use where meat production is interpreted as a primary economic focus for species which may have multiple functions or products e.g. sheep, rabbits, pigeons.*

---

## Medicinal Use

BT : Social Behaviour  
TT : Interpretations

★ *Use where plants or animal parts have been interpreted as used for medicinal purposes by the specialist, because of context or associated finds, or because of concentrations of a limited range of taxa with known properties.*

---

## Metal

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type  
NT : Ferrous Metal  
Non-Ferrous Metal

★ *Class of elements and alloys that are characteristically lustrous, ductile, fusible and malleable. These are extracted from ore minerals originally existing in nature and processed before becoming a recognisable metal.*

---

## Method Of Recovery

NT : Block Lifting  
Coarse Sieving  
Flotation  
Hand Retrieval  
Specialist Sampling

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## Micro-Charcoal

BT : Charcoal  
TT : Material Type

★ *Microscopic charcoal fragments that are concentrated and counted as part of standard pollen preparation techniques.*

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## Microfossils

USE :Phytolith

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## Micromorphology

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The microscopic analysis of thin sections of resin impregnated stratigraphy.*

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## Microscopy

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques  
NT : Polarised Light Microscopy  
Scanning Electron Microscopy

★ *The use of magnifying equipment to examine materials not visible to the naked eye.*

---

## Mineralised

USE :Mineral Replaced

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## Mineralogy

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The study of minerals.*

---

## Mineral Preserved

BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ *Preservation of material by toxic effect of corrosion products in the immediate vicinity, or within, the material.*

---

## Mineral Replaced

UF : Fossilised  
Mineralised  
BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ *Replacement of organic material by minerals, including calcium carbonate and calcium phosphate.*

---

# M

## Mitochondrial Dna Dating

BT : Dating Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *A dating technique for the founding of individual populations based on the assumption of steady rates of mutation in mitochondrial DNA. Sometimes used to produce dates for stratigraphic layers containing fossil specimens of populations.*

---

## Modification State

NT : Altered By Animals

Anoxic

Burnt

Chemically Altered

Desiccated

Fungal Damage

Hydrolysis

Impression

Mineral Preserved

Mineral Replaced

Plant Damage

Waterworn

---

## Moisture Content

BT : Physical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *A measure of the proportion of water within a sample.*

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## Mortar Analysis

BT : Physical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *Sampling and analysis of historic mortars to determine mortar composition. For radiocarbon dating of organic traces within the mortar (relict mortar fuel), use Radiocarbon Dating.*

---

## Multi-Element Analysis

BT : Chemical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

NT : X-Ray Diffraction

X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry

★ *Techniques investigating more than one element at a time.*

# N

## Natural Aspects

BT : Aspect

TT : Aspect

NT : Non-Metric Traits  
Pathology

★ *Aspects associated with the genetic make up and/or factors that affected the organism from which the material is derived during its life*

---

## Non-Cereal Thatching

BT : Construction Materials

TT : Interpretations

## Non-Ferrous Metal

BT : Metal

TT : Material Type

NT : Copper Alloy

Gold

Silver

★ *Any metal that does not contain the chemical element Iron (Fe) as a principal component.*

---

## Non-Metric Traits

BT : Natural Aspects

TT : Aspect

★ *Use for congenital (present at birth) abnormalities (absent/extra or morphologically unusual features) present in an individual or population.*

---

## Nutritional Stress

BT : Husbandry

TT : Interpretations



# O

## Obsidian Hydration

BT : Dating Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *A technique used to date obsidian (volcanic glass) of all ages and is thus not commonly used in the UK.*

---

## On-Site Breeding

BT : Husbandry

TT : Interpretations

---

## Optically Stimulated Luminescence

UF : OSL

*OSL Dating*

BT : Luminescence Dating

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The light emitted from sedimentary minerals or mineral inclusions in bricks when stimulated in the laboratory by light of a different wavelength. Used to date samples up to 250,000 years old; especially appropriate for geological sediments.*

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## OSL

USE :Optically Stimulated Luminescence

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## OSL Dating

USE :Optically Stimulated Luminescence

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## Osteoarchaeology

USE :Human Osteology

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## Oxygen Isotope Analysis

BT : Dating Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The use of oxygen (O) isotope ratios in ice or ocean sediment cores to date global environmental change.*

# P

## Pack Animals

BT : Animal Roles  
TT : Interpretations

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## Packing Material

BT : Construction Materials  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use where plant material is present in a container (context) or associated with artefacts that suggest it was used as packing.

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## Palaeoentomology

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The study of insect remains preserved within archaeological deposits and palaeoenvironmental archives.

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## Palaeoenvironmental Analysis

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The study of biological remains preserved within deposits, including peat.

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## Palynology

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The study of pollen and non-pollen palyomorphs preserved within deposits, including peat.

---

## Particle Size Analysis

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The analysis of the distribution and proportion of sand, silt and clay in a deposit.

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## Pathology

UF : Disease  
Diseased

BT : Natural Aspects  
TT : Aspect

★ Use for bone remodelling, new growth, loss or destruction caused by age, activity, disease or trauma during life.

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## Peat Burning

BT : Wild Plant Use  
TT : Interpretations

★ Use where peat or sods (turf) has been used as fuel.

---

## Peat Deposit

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ A naturally occurring deposit formed by the decomposition and partial carbonisation of vegetable matter in waterlogged conditions.

---

## Peat Humification

BT : Chemical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ A method of determining peat degradation; quantified as the percentage light transmission value of the extracted humic acids, measured at a specific wavelength.

---

## Pets

USE : Companion Animals

---

## pH Determination

BT : Chemical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The degree of acidity or alkalinity of a material.

---

## Physical Techniques

BT : Investigative Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques  
NT : Clast Lithological Analysis  
Loss On Ignition Determination  
Magnetic Susceptibility  
Micromorphology  
Microscopy  
Mineralogy  
Particle Size Analysis  
Stratigraphic Description  
Tree-Ring Analysis  
X-Radiography  
Moisture Content  
Palynology  
Palaeoenvironmental Analysis  
Diatom Analysis  
Archaeomalacology  
Zooarchaeology  
Archaeobotany  
Foraminifera Analysis  
Palaeoentomology  
Human Osteology  
Mortar Analysis  
Archaeometallurgy

★ The examination of material by physical means, including detailed observation.

---

## Phytolith

UF : Microfossils  
BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ Microscopic mineral body (usually silica) found in many plants.

---

## Plant Damage

BT : Modification State  
TT : Modification State

★ Material that has been penetrated or disrupted by the roots or rhizomes of plants.

---

## Plant Macrofossil

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ Use for seeds, fruits, buds etc. To describe the actual object use Plant Remains

---

# P

## **Polarised Light Microscopy**

BT : Microscopy

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *Light microscopy in which vibration directions of the light are constrained into single planes.*

---

## *Pollarding*

USE :Woodland Management

---

## **Pollen**

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ *Use for pollen and diaspores. Pollen consists of pollen grains which are the male gametes of flowering plants. Diaspores are the dispersive units of mosses, ferns, fern allies and some plants. To describe the actual object use PLANT REMAINS.*

---

## **Polymineral**

BT : Geological Sediment

TT : Material Type

★ *A general term to describe a sediment or sample that contains a variety of different minerals.*

---

## **Potassium Argon Dating**

BT : Dating Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The measurement of the ratio of a radioactive potassium (K) isotope and the argon (Ar) gas produced as a by-product of its decay. Useful for dating volcanic material older than 1,000 years.*

---

## **Pottery**

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ *Object produced commonly by firing clay, but can include coarser material to temper it.*

---

## **Processing**

BT : Interpretations

TT : Interpretations

NT : Brewing

Cereal Processing By-Product

Cereal Processing Product

Flax Retting

Malting

Bone Processing

Food Preservation

Roasting

★ *Use where there is evidence for the processing of plants and animals to produce different types of product. Use terms under craft working where manufacture of objects is evidenced.*

# Q

## **Quartz**

BT : Geological Sediment

TT : Material Type

★ *A mineral composed of SiO<sub>2</sub>. Commonly clear or milky in appearance. A common constituent of rocks and sediments.*

# R

## Radiocarbon Dating

UF : *C14 Dating*

*Carbon 14 Dating*

*Carbon Dating*

BT : *Dating Techniques*

TT : *Investigative Techniques*

★ *The measurement of the ratio of the radioactive Carbon 14 (C-14) isotope and non-radioactive carbon isotopes. Useful for dating organic materials such as wood and bone between 500 and 45,000 years old.*

---

## Residue

UF : *Heavy Residue*

BT : *Material Type*

TT : *Material Type*

★ *The material that does not float during the floatation of samples as a means of recovering charred plant remains from an archaeological context. Also, the material remaining following wet or dry sieving of coarse sieved samples.*

---

## Riding Animals

BT : *Animal Roles*

TT : *Interpretations*

★ *Use for the presence of animals interpreted as having been ridden e.g. horses.*

---

## Roasting

BT : *Processing*

TT : *Interpretations*

★ *Use for evidence of roasting meat, nuts etc.*

---

## Roundwood

BT : *Wood*

TT : *Material Type*

★ *Material comprising entire or partial transverse sections of stems. Bark may be present or not. Can include complete sections of tree trunk but generally comprises smaller (<20cm diameter) material.*

# S

## S.E.M.

USE :Scanning Electron Microscopy

---

## Scanning Electron Microscopy

UF : S.E.M.

SEM

BT : Microscopy

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ A process using an electron microscope in which the surface of the specimen is scanned by a beam of electrons which are reflected to form an image. Very high magnification is possible.

---

## Seasonality

BT : Social Behaviour

TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is evidence for activities happening at a particular time of year (season).

---

## Selective Breeding

BT : Husbandry

TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is evidence for change in size and shape or other characteristics (e.g. coat colour), through intended manipulation or introductions.

---

## SEM

USE :Scanning Electron Microscopy

---

## Shell

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ Use for any shell of an animal, principally, molluscs, crabs etc.

---

## Silicified

BT : Burnt

TT : Modification State

★ Use for material that has been burnt at high temperature in a good air supply such that only the silica component remains.

---

## Silver

BT : Non-Ferrous Metal

TT : Material Type

★ A precious metal of lustrous, white colour with great malleability and ductility.

---

## Skin

RT : Leather

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ Use for the remains of epidermis or outermost layer. Relates to both animals and plants. If describing the actual object use PLANT REMAINS, ANIMAL REMAINS or HUMAN REMAINS.

---

## Skin Working

BT : Craft Working

TT : Interpretations

---

## Slag

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

★ A by-product usually from the smelting process.

---

## Social Behaviour

BT : Interpretations

TT : Interpretations

NT : Feasting

Funerary Use

Hunting And Trapping

Importation Of Goods

Seasonality

Social Differentiation

Storage

Medicinal Use

★ Use where the remains of plants and animals can be interpreted as evidence for a specific social behaviour.

---

## Social Differentiation

BT : Social Behaviour

TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is evidence that allows the distinction of social status, e.g. elite, ecclesiastical, impoverished.

---

## Soil Phosphorus Analysis

BT : Chemical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

NT : Available Phosphorus Analysis

Inorganic Phosphorus Analysis

Total Phosphorus Analysis

★ The analysis of the amount of phosphorus (P) present in a soil.

---

## Specialist Sampling

BT : Method Of Recovery

TT : Method Of Recovery

★ The recovery of material from samples collected during field investigations, usually taken by specialists with a particular area of expertise. Normally processed in the laboratory. Also use for the processing of samples subsequent to investigation.

---

## Spot Test

BT : Chemical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ The application of a chemical test to a material, usually as a rapid approximation.

---

## Stable Isotope Analysis

BT : Chemical Techniques

TT : Investigative Techniques

★ Comparison of different proportions of natural occurring isotopes of lead (Pb), strontium (Sr), oxygen (O), carbon (C) and nitrogen (N).

---

## Stable Waste

BT : Deposition

TT : Interpretations

★ Use where there is evidence for a mixture of animal bedding and dung.

---

# S

## **Storage**

BT : Social Behaviour  
TT : Interpretations

---

## **Stratigraphic Description**

BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The careful observation and written description of the physical characteristics of stratigraphy. It will normally include information on texture, colour and the nature of the different components.*

---

## **Structural Timber**

BT : Construction Materials  
TT : Interpretations

---

## **Structured Deposition**

BT : Deposition  
TT : Interpretations

★ *Use where remains, including Associated Bone Groups (ABGs), in their own right, or in association with other remains indicate carefully considered placement, suggesting the act of depositing the material held significance to those involved.*

# T

## Table Waste

BT : Deposition  
TT : Interpretations

---

## Tanning

UF : Tawning  
BT : Craft Working  
TT : Interpretations

---

### Tawning

USE :Tanning

---

## Tephrochronology

BT : Dating Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The use of ash and tephra deposits characteristic of single known-date volcanic eruptions to date stratigraphic sequences.*

---

## Textile Production

BT : Craft Working  
TT : Interpretations

---

## Thermoluminescence

UF : TL Dating  
TL  
BT : Luminescence Dating  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The measurement of the light emitted from sedimentary minerals, mineral inclusions in bricks, burnt flint or unburnt calcite when they are heated. The signal relates to their prior exposure to radioactivity. Used to date samples up to 500,000 years old.*

---

### TL

USE :Thermoluminescence

---

### TL Dating

USE :Thermoluminescence

---

## Tool Marked

UF : Tool Marks  
BT : Worked  
TT : Aspect

★ *Use where evidence of tool marks is present*

---

### Tool Marks

USE :Tool Marked

---

## Tooth

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type  
NT : Ivory

★ *Use for teeth, hard structures found in the jaws of vertebrates used principally for chewing and eating.*

---

### Tooth Working

USE :Bone Working

---

## Total Phosphorus Analysis

BT : Soil Phosphorus Analysis  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The analysis of organic plus inorganic phosphorus (P).*

---

## Traction Animals

UF : Draught Animals  
BT : Animal Roles  
TT : Interpretations

---

## Transhumance

BT : Husbandry  
TT : Interpretations

---

## Tree-Ring Analysis

UF : Tree-Ring Studies  
BT : Physical Techniques  
TT : Investigative Techniques

★ *The use of annual incremental growth in temperate trees to investigate environmental, especially local, parameters and the history of individual trees.*

---

### Tree-Ring Studies

USE :Tree-Ring Analysis

---

## Tufaceous Deposit

BT : Material Type  
TT : Material Type

★ *A naturally occurring deposit of calcareous tufa ('shell marl') sometimes found in alluvial deposits.*

---

## Turves

BT : Construction Materials  
TT : Interpretations

---

## Twig

BT : Wood  
TT : Material Type

★ *Small (<2cm diameter) roundwood often complete with buds or leaf scars.*

---



# U

## **Uranium Series Dating**

**BT : Dating Techniques**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

★ *The measurement of the decay of radioactive uranium (U) isotopes. Particularly useful for dating calcite and sometimes bone, tooth and shell up to 70,000 years old.*

# W

## *Waterlogged*

USE :Anoxic

---

## **Waterworn**

BT : Modification State

TT : Modification State

★ *Material, especially rock, worn smooth by the passage of water.*

---

## **Wild Plant Use**

BT : Interpretations

TT : Interpretations

NT : Charcoal Production

Woodland Management

Fuel Use

Gathering

Hay

Peat Burning

★ *Use where there is evidence for the use of wild resources by people as opposed to evidence for the presence of a particular type of habitat or vegetation.*

---

## **Wood**

BT : Material Type

TT : Material Type

NT : Charcoal

Roundwood

Twig

★ *Hard, compact, unprocessed, fibrous cellulose substance. The roots, trunks and branches of trees and shrubs consist of this tissue.*

---

## **Woodland Management**

UF : Coppicing

Pollarding

BT : Wild Plant Use

TT : Interpretations

★ *Use where there is evidence of woodland management, including coppicing and/or pollarding.*

---

## **Wood Working**

BT : Craft Working

TT : Interpretations

---

## **Wool Production**

BT : Husbandry

TT : Interpretations

---

## **Worked**

BT : Human Aspects

TT : Aspect

NT : Coloured

Decorated

Tool Marked

Carved

★ *Use for any material that shows evidence of modification by humans.*

# X



## **X-Radiography**

**BT : Physical Techniques**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

★ *The production of an image on a photographic plate as a result of X-rays (very short wavelength electromagnetic radiation) being passed through an object.*

---

## **X-Ray Diffraction**

**UF : XRD**

**BT : Multi-Element Analysis**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

★ *A surface technique that uses the diffraction of X-rays to examine the mineral composition of a sample. Useful for identifying corrosion products, pigments etc. but of little use with organic compounds which consist largely of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen.*

---

## **X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry**

**UF : XRF**

**BT : Multi-Element Analysis**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

★ *A surface technique of spectroscopic analysis which relies on the interaction of primary X-rays with the sample to generate a range of secondary X-rays. These have energies characteristic of the elements present in the sample.*

---

**XRD**

**USE :X-Ray Diffraction**

---

**XRF**

**USE :X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry**

# Z

## Zircon

**BT : Geological Sediment**

**TT : Material Type**

★ *A mineral of the composition  $Zr[SiO_4]$ . Commonly brown or yellow in colour. May contain high levels of uranium and thorium. Can be used for dating using luminescence or fission track methods.*

---

## Zooarchaeology

**UF : Archaeozoology**

**BT : Physical Techniques**

**TT : Investigative Techniques**

★ *The study of vertebrate remains, excluding human remains, preserved within archaeological deposits and palaeoenvironmental archives. Use archaeomalacology for the study of mollus remains and palaeoentomology for the study of insect remains.*