



McGregor Museum Kimberley

Archaeology Department: Glossary of Terms

A glossary of mostly archaeological terms and concepts

- A - B - C - D - E - F - G - H - I - J - K - L - M -

- N - O - P - Q - R - S - T - U - V - W - X - Y - Z -

- **A** -

Accelerator dating – Radiocarbon dating technique for small samples, useful for dating objects directly rather than assuming their association with other datable material, e.g. charcoal, within a given archaeological layer or context.

Acheulean – In Africa, stone tool industries called Acheulean date from about 1.5 million years ago, consisting of irregular flakes, cores that were sometimes prepared for pre-determining flake shape, and intentionally shaped tools called handaxes and cleavers. Acheulean sites in this region are typically found along rivers and at the margins of pans. The Acheulean was succeeded in the interior of South Africa, about 0.6 million years ago, by a stone tool making tradition known as the Fauresmith, typified by cleavers and handaxes as well as the intentional shaping of flakes as blades and convergent points.

AD – Anno Domini – the Year of the Lord. See CE.

Adze – A Later Stone Age adze is a stone tool: a chunk or flake with steep step-flaking and battering scars on one or both sides of the dorsal surface. The working edge can be straight or curved.

Aeolian process – The erosion, transport and deposition of material due to the action of the wind at/near the earth's surface. Aeolian processes are at their most effective when the vegetation cover is reduced or absent.

Amino Acid Racemization – Method used in dating of both human and animal bone. Its specific significance is that with a small sample (10g) it can be applied to material up to 100 000 years old – beyond the range of the radiocarbon dating technique.

Agriculturist – refers to societies practising cultivation. In Southern Africa such societies also practised animal husbandry (and are sometimes called agropastoralists). On the west-southern highveld and in the Northern Cape agriculturists may have relied more extensively (and sometimes exclusively) on pastoralism, thus smudging economic (and sometimes cultural) boundaries between themselves and Khoe-San herders. (See Pastoralist)

Analogy – Method of reasoning where similarities are inferred in one situation when comparable similarities can be shown in another. Ethnographic analogy is often used in archaeology but is not unproblematic. The comparative ethnographic method of assembling contemporary observations to interpret ancient remains came into its own in the late nineteenth century when it was widely held that existing primitive societies represented examples, as living fossils in an evolutionary sense, of past stages of human life and culture. The most notorious example of the genre was Sollas's *Ancient hunters: and their modern representatives*, published in 1911. Yet, the nineteenth and twentieth century histories and ethnographies in Southern Africa do represent a voluminous body of information which, with due circumspection, has been drawn upon in ways that have greatly enhanced interpretations of the archaeological record and rock art in the subcontinent.

Andesite – Fine-grained volcanic rock (named after the Andes Mountains, S. America, where it was first described). Acheulean artefacts at sites such as Canteen Kopje are made from this rock. Engravings at Wildebeestkuil, Driekopseiland and Nooitgedacht, and at many sites north and north east of Kimberley are on koppies or exposures of andesite. (See dolerite).

Anthropology – broadly, the study of humanity in its social, cultural, and physical aspects, past and present. Tim Ingold recently suggested that "the task of anthropology is to help dismantle the intellectual barriers that currently separate the humanities from natural science"; that "social/cultural anthropology, biological anthropology and archaeology form a necessary unity"; and that "anthropology deals, in the first place, not with entities and events, but with relations and processes". If, historically, there was a tendency for anthropology to be a study of "the other" in colonial situations by western academics, Ingold argues that in anthropology today "we study ourselves" – "the future of anthropology lies in changing our conception of who "we" are, from an exclusive Western "we" to an inclusive, global "we". He ends by suggesting that "Anthropology is philosophy with the people in."

Archaeology – As a sub-discipline of anthropology, it is the study of the material traces of past human activity. It may be defined as a set of methods and techniques used for writing history based on the material record that humans leave behind or that may be relevant to that record. It covers the span of time from our earliest ancestors, and in principle extends to within moments of the present. It is most commonly applied to periods for which there is little record except the material one.

Archaeometry – refers to applications of methods in physics and chemistry to questions in archaeology.

Archaeozoology – see Zooarchaeology.

Arrowhead, tanged and barbed – (See Point, Bone Point and Segment). A particular, rare form of arrowhead found in very small numbers at some late Holocene LSA sites in the central and east central interior of Southern Africa.

Artefact – Portable object used, modified or made by humans, e.g., stone tools, pottery and metal weapons.

Assemblage – A group of artefacts occurring together at a particular time and place and representing the sum of human activities.

Australopithecine – Literally "Southern Ape" from the Latin australis (southern) and the Greek pithekos (ape). From 3 – 1.5 million years ago (Pliocene to early Pleistocene). An early hominid genus.

Australopithecus africanus – "The Taung Child", the original Australopithecine, named by Raymond Dart in 1925 after it was blasted from a mine at Buxton, Taung, 150 km north of Kimberley. A species of Australopithecine, since found at many sites including Sterkfontein where the famous specimen known as "Mrs Ples" (probably a male) was found in 1947.

[TO TOP](#)

– B –

Bat guano – Bat faeces/droppings dug out of caves (often resulting in enormous destruction of archaeological resources) and used as a nutrient-rich fertilizer. In some cases (eg Wonderwerk Cave), what was thought to be bat guano was in fact mainly organic-rich archaeological deposit. In the southern Cape numbers of LSA burials were disturbed/destroyed during efforts to extract "guano". Exposure to bat guano has led to some archaeologists contracting a bacterial lung infection known as Histoplasmosis.

BC – Relates to dates prior to the birth of Christ (should not be confused with BP). See BCE.

BCE – "Before Common Era" = BC

Biface – See handaxe.

Biostratigraphy – A branch of stratigraphy that refers to the use of fossil plants and animals in the dating and correlation of a stratigraphic sequence in which they occur. Used for estimating the age of the Taung child (see *Australopithecus africanus*), for example.

Bioturbation – Disturbance of sediment by organisms, either as a complete churning of the sediment or in the form of discrete and clearly recognisable burrows, trails and traces.

Blade – A blade in Stone Age archaeology is defined as a flake that is more than twice as long as it is wide. However, there is a larger distinction between blades and flakes – parallel – sided flakes made by direct percussion and "true" blades made by indirect percussion. This distinction

has been seen as very important in European archaeology. Flake blades struck from prepared cores are associated with Neanderthals and true blades struck from cores shaped like an inverted pyramid using a bone punch, are associated with Cro-Magnons – modern humans.

Bleek, W.H.I. & Lloyd, L. [and D. Bleek] – Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek (1827–1875) was a German-born philologist, scholar and librarian, whose most important work was on the /Xam language of the Southern San of the Upper Karoo. He and his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd transcribed San myths, legends and ritual accounts, running to some 12 000 pages, with English translations. Some of this work was published in 1911 as "Bushman Folk Lore", while Bleek's daughter Dorothea Bleek published further of the material in the 1920s–30s, as well as a Bushman dictionary. Additional material from the Bleek and Lloyd notebooks has been published since then.

Bone points – Ground and smoothed round bone shafts, forming what are presumed to have been arrowheads and linkshafts.

Border cave – Located on the border between South Africa and Swaziland, this site is believed to have been used at intervals as a living site by human groups for about 200 000 years. It is also the site where perhaps the earliest evidence for deliberate burial in Africa was found. An infant skeleton was excavated in 1942. This four-to-six-month old child known as 'Border Cave 3', was found in a shallow grave; the body had been buried with a *Conus* shell as an ornament. Some of the bones seemed to be stained reddish-brown implying the possible ritual use of reddish pigment (haematite?). (See *Homo sapiens sapiens*).

BP – Initials which stand for "before the present" in radiocarbon dating – the "present" being 1950, when the radiocarbon method was developed.

Bulb of percussion – In the flaking of stone for stone tool manufacture, this distinctive "bulb" is formed below the striking platform as a result of shock waves travelling through the core.

[TO TOP](#)

– C –

¹⁴C-dating – see Radiocarbon dating.

Carbon – The fundamental chemical element that is the basis of all life; a non-metallic element occurring naturally as diamond, graphite and charcoal, and in all organic compounds.

CE – "Common Era", refers to dates, as an alternative to "AD".

Clasts – Particles of broken-down rock within a sediment. These fragments may vary in size from boulders to silt-sized grains.

Cosmogenic dating – a technique based on changes in a rock surface following its exposure: the principle behind it is that cosmic ray bombardment produces cosmogenic nuclides in

minerals, which can be measured and calibrated to yield maximum possible ages. Its value was demonstrated in the Cōa valley debate when it showed that the rock was geomorphologically stable enough to support engravings of Palaeolithic age – in the face of arguments to the contrary.

[TO TOP](#)

– D –

Dendrochronology – The science of dating by means of tree rings; all aspects of the study of annual growth layers in wood.

Dolerite – A dark-coloured, medium-grained igneous rock, widespread in the Karoo, especially on the tops of koppies, on which LSA people made rock engravings. Rock gongs in that region are made on slabs of dolerite naturally pivoted so as to resonate when beaten.

Driekopseiland – Follow the link to [Driekopseiland](#).

[TO TOP](#)

– E –

Earlier Stone Age (ESA) – A division of the Stone Age, including Oldowan and Acheulean Industries. Approximately 2.5 million years to 250 000 years ago.

Earth – The third planet from the star known as the Sun and the fifth-largest planet in the solar system. It is the only planet that is known to sustain life, with its protective atmosphere, free water, oxygen and critical distance from the sun.

Ecofacts – non-artefactual organic and environmental remains with cultural relevance, e.g. plant food remains.

Elephas recki recki – Reck's Elephant. This extinct mammal species existed during the Late Pleistocene until circa 800 000 years ago. Fossil fragments found in archaeological context at Kathu in the Northern Cape.

Equus capensis – The Giant Cape Horse. This extinct mammal species existed during the Late Pleistocene.

[TO TOP](#)

– F –

Fauresmith – The Acheulean (Early Stone Age) stone tool industries were succeeded, about 0.6 million years ago, by a tool-making tradition known as the Fauresmith, typified by handaxes and the intentional shaping of flakes as Levallois points; also including blades and sometimes backed items. It may be considered as a phase of the Early Middle Stone Age, ending about 0.25 million years ago.

Fissility – The ability of rocks to split.

Flake-blade – A flake more than twice as long as it is broad, with either parallel or convergent sides; particularly characteristic of the Middle Stone Age. (See blade).

Flake – A stone flake struck from a core. A flake may be discarded as "waste" or used, either retouched or not.

Flowstone – Also known as dripstone. Calcium carbonate rock that is deposited in caves by precipitation of calcite from water as excess dissolved carbon dioxide is diffused into the atmosphere. Stalactites and Stalagmites are examples of flowstone.

[TO TOP](#)

– G –

"Garbology" – see Junk.

Glacial period – A cold phase in the Pleistocene when glaciers advanced. Interglacials are warmer phases within the Pleistocene. The last Glacial ended about 10 000 years ago.

Glaciers – Large masses of ice, resting on or adjacent to a land surface and typically showing movement.

[TO TOP](#)

– H –

Haematite – Iron ore. Used also to refer to ochre or iron oxide.

Handaxe – Sometimes referred to as a biface – A flake or core tool made by fashioning a cobble.

Holocene – A Geological timespan that covers the last 10 000 years. It may be referred to as Recent or Post-Glacial.

Hominid – The term used to describe those species, both living and extinct, and including ourselves, that use/used only rear limbs for moving about. The earliest hominids are often collectively known as Australopithecines.

Homo sapiens sapiens – Modern humans as we are today. In fossil records these are represented by evidence of modern humans in Africa dating back more than 100 000 years, found at the Border Cave and Klasies River sites; and in the form of Cro-Magnons in Europe from about 35 000 years ago.

[TO TOP](#)

– I –

In situ – In place, undisturbed.

Interglacial – A period of warmer climate that separates 2 glacial periods.

Iron Age – In Africa, this term is often applied to the period of and sites reflecting the farming way of life and associated with metal and ceramic technology.

[TO TOP](#)

– J –

Junk – William Rathje, of "garbology" fame, says frontiers, both physical and theoretical, are "junk magnets" – "we worry about our immediate goal – settling an "untamed" land, "conquering" Mount Everest, or "harnessing" nuclear power – and not about clearing up the mess we leave behind." See Twentieth century rubbish dumps; Space junk.

[TO TOP](#)

– K –

Khoekhoe – Meaning "Men of Men", a collective term (also Khoikhoi) for (essentially) indigenous herder communities of southern Africa, including !Kora (Korana), Einiqua, Namaqua in the Northern Cape. See Khoe-San and Khoisan.

Khoe-San – a collective term used here for various pre-colonial groups of foragers, hunters with sheep, and herders who were speakers of click languages – see Khoisan.

Khoikhoi – see Khoekhoe (modern orthography)

Khoisan – A term coined by Schulze in the 1920s and popularised by Schapera to refer to San and Khoikhoi [Khoekhoe] people as sharing many cultural similarities. The habit of bundling together economy, language, physical type, and material culture (including the rigid equation of

pastoralism=Khoekhoe; hunter-gatherer=San) was called into question from at least the 1960s. A form that is now accepted by the people themselves is Khoe-San.

Khwe, !Xun – Two communities of San living at Platfontein and Schmidtsdrift near Kimberley, having come from Namibia in 1990, and previously of Angola.

Knapping – Means stone flaking for tool manufacture.

Kraal – Cattle enclosure, historically used – erroneously – for African towns and villages.

kyr – kiloyears. Also ka – kiloannum.

[TO TOP](#)

– L –

Later Stone Age (LSA) – A division of the Stone Age. Approximately 30 000 years ago to historic times. Stone tool traditions of what archaeologists term the Later Stone Age are mainly characterised by a diversity of "microliths" – small stone tools, some used as parts of composite tools, as barbs, or points for arrows. Hunting and gathering people of the Later Stone Age were ancestral to the historical San.

Layer – A stratigraphic unit in an archaeological deposit and revealed during excavation.

Lens – A discontinuous unit in an archaeological excavation.

Lithic – Of stone: used adjectivally for the stone tool and waste component of a Stone Age assemblage.

[TO TOP](#)

– M –

Manuport – A manuport is an object brought to an archaeological site by humans and not necessarily fashioned into artefacts.

Materials analysis – Various techniques can be used to find out the compositions of metal, pottery and glass objects from archaeological sites, and the ways in which these were made. Such information can help in deducing where items came from, and possible trade routes.

Micro lamination dating – Layering on rock engravings that results from rock varnish deposition under differing palaeoclimatic conditions is the subject of a new technique that distinguishes orange-yellow (Manganese-poor) layers, reflecting drier periods, relative to black ones (Manganese-rich) that signal wetter regimes. Correlated with palaeoenvironmental data for a given region, these microlaminations over engravings – visible in ultra thin sections under a transmission light microscope – have been used to separate out rock art of Pleistocene and

Holocene age in the western USA, while the identification of a mid-Holocene wet pulse in Tunisia shows further promise for this low-cost technique (pers.comm. David Whitley). It may well have future applicability in the Northern Cape.

Microwear analysis – the study of use-wear patterns on stone tools – helps archaeologists to understand how or for what purpose stone tools were used.

Middle Stone Age (MSA) – A division of the Stone Age. By around 250 000 years ago handaxes and cleavers were no longer made (See Fauresmith). Middle Stone Age technology from this period to about 40–30 000 years ago is characterised by the presence of convergent points, with innovations including the use of pressure flaking in stone tool production, shaping (and rare decoration) of stone (e.g. Blombos Cave), bone and wooden items, and use of stone grindstones.

Miocene – Subdivision of Geological Time – 25 to 5.1 million years ago

Myr – Millions of years.

[TO TOP](#)

– N –

Nooitgedacht – Geological and archaeological site near Kimberley with rock engravings in glacial pavements. Follow the link to [Nooitgedacht](#).

Northern Cape – A province officially created in 1994, but expressing something of its own identity from at least 1943, when it appeared for the first time on a map as a distinct region so named. The post-1994 Northern Cape consists of approximately a third of the land surface (361 830 sq km) of South Africa, but having a population of only 0.84 million people. Vryburg and Mafikeng, formerly considered as "Northern Cape" are excluded, while substantial areas in Namaqualand have been incorporated. New municipal demarcation straddles boundaries in places (Kuruman/Mothibistad; Hartswater/Taung). The official languages of the province are: Afrikaans (69.3%), Setswana (19.9%), IsiXhosa (6.3%) and English (2.4%). Setswana-speakers are concentrated mainly in the north east, while major Xhosa-speaking enclaves are in Kimberley, Upington and De Aar. The majority of Afrikaans-speakers are descendants of the indigenous Khoe-San of the western interior of South Africa. (Afrikaans owes something of its historically emerging distinctiveness to the language use of frontier Khoe-San people). Nama and N/u are spoken by small numbers of people in the west and north west of the province.

[TO TOP](#)

– O –

Ochre – Soft form of haematite stone or natural earth containing ferric oxide and silica, used as a pigment.(See Haematite).

Oldowan – The earliest known stone tools are found in Africa, dating from about 2 to 1.5 million years ago. Called Oldowan (after Olduvai Gorge), they consist of simple irregular stone flakes with sharp cutting edges, and the matching stones from which they were struck, known as cores. They were made by our earliest ancestors of the genus *Homo*. Examples of these tools have been found at Sterkfontein.

[TO TOP](#)

– P –

Palaeolithic – A division of the Stone Age in the European "Three Age" system of Stone, Bronze and Iron. It means "Old Stone Age" and refers to stone tool technologies employed prior to the origins of agriculture. The term was used in South Africa in the days before a South African classificatory system was devised in the 1920s.

Palynology – The study of pollen grains and spores from plants and ferns, sometimes preserved in archaeological or related ancient sites. Pollen from different species can be distinguished under a microscope. Pollen evidence can reflect changes in vegetation and/or human activities such as farming.

Plant remains – Plant remains from archaeological sites may reflect diet and lifestyle, or the materials used as fuel or for making equipment. Wood or charcoal can be used for tree ring dating (dendrochronology). Plant remains also provide clues about past environments.

Pleistocene – A Geological timespan conventionally believed to have lasted from approximately 2 million years ago to the beginning of the Holocene about 10 000 years ago.

Pliocene – A Geological timespan conventionally believed to have lasted from approximately 5.1 million years ago to the beginning of the Pleistocene about 2 million years ago.

Provenance – The source or origin of an artefact, sample or feature. Knowledge of provenance is crucial to description and use of material in research: unprovenanced items in museum collections, having no context, are often meaningless.

[TO TOP](#)

- Q -

Quaternary – Part of the Cenozoic, a sub-division of geological time, that includes the Pleistocene and Holocene and spanning the last 2 million years.

[TO TOP](#)

- R -

Radiocarbon dating – A technique of absolute dating based on the known rate of decay (half-life 5730 years) of radioactive Carbon-14 isotopes (taken up by all living organisms) and originally assumed constancy in the past of the ratio of these isotopes to stable Carbon-12. Fluctuations in Carbon-14 isotopes now known to have occurred are corrected for by comparison of radiocarbon dates with other dating methods.

Rock Art – Southern Africa has a rich heritage of rock art in the form of engravings and paintings. It is believed that there are more than 30 000 sites. The art is sophisticated in its detail and depth of meaning. Engravings are usually in the open on hills or rocky outcrops. Paintings are found in caves and shelters in more mountainous areas. In a few places both paintings and engravings were made. Style and content vary from region to region and through time. However, many similarities link much of the art as part of a single broad Khoe-San tradition. In addition to the art of Khoe-San hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, there are "late white" paintings, and engravings of settlement plans, made by Bantu-speaking farmers. Follow the links to engraving sites near Kimberley: [Wildebess Kuil](#); [Driekopseiland](#); [Nooitgedacht](#).

[TO TOP](#)

- S -

San – Name applied to living and historical hunter-gatherer people in southern Africa, otherwise known as "Bushmen". Communities named themselves /Xam, N//n, /=Auni, etc in the Northern Cape. "San" gained anthropological currency and acceptance by indigenous people in the late twentieth century, even though it was originally a pejorative term used by herders for people without domesticated stock. See Khoe-San; Khoekhoe.

Scraper – Stone tool with a working edge that has been reworked to so as to be useful for preparing animal skins.

Sediment analysis – Study of soil or sediment samples, which can tell us how, and under what climatic conditions, deposits formed. Features in sites such as hearths or post-holes can be detected through sediment analysis.

Shamanism – Southern African rock art has been described as being "essentially shamanistic". A shaman is a ritual specialist or shaman who makes use of altered states of consciousness (e.g. trance) to access the spirit world and/or apply supernatural power. It has been suggested that

rock art not merely depicts experiences of the spirit world but is itself powerful and a point of access into the spirit world.

Sherd – A piece of broken pottery.

Space junk – The "mess" in space – as "garbologist" William Rathje puts it – is a staggering buzz of hurtling man-made detritus. There is an estimated 10 000 "resident space objects", only 5 % of which were functioning spacecraft in 1997. Orbiting artefacts include over 1500 empty upper stage rockets, and masses of assorted explosive bolts, clamp bands, springs, even lens caps, discarded from payloads propelled out from earth. 150 satellites have blown up or fallen apart – whether deliberately or accidentally – leaving a trail of some 7000 fragments big enough to be tracked from earth. In addition, space stations generate real garbage – more than 200 bags of which drifted away from Mir in its first decade. Messier by far are the estimated 400 000 space artefacts that are too small to detect, and the million or so flakes of paint and other tiny spots – or droplets – of debris. A satellite recovered in 1990 was found to be speckled with urine and faecal matter – another discard from American and Russian space missions.

Space artefacts – items from space that make it back to earth are highly collectable (the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum already holds legal title to Viking I, a robot probe still stuck on Mars after two decades). And, says William Rathje, there will be gold out there for whoever figures out how to recapture, renovate, reuse and recycle the other stuff we've left in space.

Specularite – specular haematite, used as cosmetic and in ritual contexts (e.g. in burials). Specularite mines exist in the Northern Cape, eg Tsantsabane (near Postmasburg), while evidence of trade in this commodity extends back at least to Fauresmith times.

Species – A group of living organisms, which share detailed common characteristics. Members of a species can breed together to produce fertile offspring.

Spit – An excavation unit that is arbitrary and horizontal removed as a sub-division within a stratigraphic layer, or for sub-dividing an archaeological deposit where no such stratigraphy can be discerned.

Stone Age – See Palaeolithic.

Stratigraphy – The layering within an archaeological sediment that is the result of processes of site formation, including natural events and human history. The principle of relative dating based on stratigraphy follows from the assumption that the lower of two strata (sing. stratum) will be the older. Strata may be inverted if material has at any point been dug out and re-deposited.

Stratum – See Stratigraphy.

Style – While tools are made for specific functions, they may also convey "meaning" in their style. When Kalahari San artefacts were studied in the 1970s, it was found that style variation carried social meaning.

[TO TOP](#)

– T –

Th/U – see Uranium series dating.

Trance – see Shamanism.

Tufa – Sedimentary rock formed by the deposition or precipitation of calcium carbonate.

Twentieth century rubbish dumps – The Fresh Kills rubbish dump outside New York is over twenty five times the size of the Great Pyramid of Giza. Growing at the rate of some 50 000 tons per week, it is one of the largest human-made features in the world. Like the pyramids, too, twentieth century rubbish dumps have become a focus of archaeological enquiry. "All archaeologists study garbage", said project director, William Rathje; "my refuse is just fresher than most." The archaeology of modern rubbish dumps explodes many of the myths commonly entertained about the contents of, and processes inside, these sprawling, smelly relics we bequeath as our archaeological record to future generations. "To compare our castoffs with those of our ancestors is sobering," says Rathje, "in no other civilization has garbage ever been more grand – or grandiose – or had more to say about its creators". It is commonly believed rubbish dumps are 20–30% fast-food packaging; another 30–40% polystyrene foam; and some 25–45% disposable nappies. Not before Rathje and his team actually dug, sorted, analysed (and smelled!) were the surprising truths revealed (eg. they are 50% paper, which does *not biodegrade* significantly; that foodstuffs dumped in the early seventies were still well preserved when excavated in the late eighties). Rathje's renowned "garbology" project is outlined in *National Geographic*, May 1991. Up to 45% of each dump could be recycled; and millions of dollars could be saved annually in terms of edible American kitchen refuse. The same scenario surely pertains at twentieth century big city dumps anywhere.

The average big city midden contains:

- Paper: 50% – packaging, newspapers, telephone directories, glossy magazines, junk mail. Almost entirely recyclable.
- Organic: 13% – food scraps (9% of residential garbage is edible), garden refuse, wood. Edible, compostable or otherwise reusable.
- Plastic: 10% – bottles, food packaging (just 0,29% of total), garbage bags, polystyrene foam (only 0,9% of total). Much could be recycled.
- Metal: 6% – iron, aluminium cans. May be recycled.
- Glass: 1% – bottles, cosmetics jars, etc. Largely recyclable.

- Miscellaneous: 20% – construction and demolition debris, tyres, textiles, rubber & disposable nappies (only 0,8% of total). Many items could be recycled.
- "What most defines our humanness is our indefatigable urge to create garbage, which turns into archaeology's bounty" – William Rathje.

Type site – An archaeological site that has yielded a definitive range of material described as typical of part of a regional or temporal pattern.

[TO TOP](#)

– U –

Uranium Series Dating – An absolute dating technique based on the natural radioactive decay of Uranium isotopes

[TO TOP](#)

– V –

Victoria West – An Earlier Stone Age industry first described in 1926 by Jansen at Victoria West in the Karoo, Northern Cape. It exhibits one of the most developed uses of the prepared core method in the African Acheulean. By core preparation is meant a method to pre-determine of the shape of one or more flakes.

[TO TOP](#)

– W –

Wilton – a microlithic stone tool industry in the Later Stone Age.

Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre – Rock art site near Kimberley. Follow the link to [Wildebeestkuil](#).

Wonderwerk Cave – Stone Age site near Kuruman. Follow the link to the article on [Wonderwerk Cave](#).

[TO TOP](#)

– X –

/Xam – See San.

!Xun, Khwe – Two communities of San living at Platfontein and Schmidtsdrift near Kimberley, having come from Namibia in 1990, and previously of Angola.

XRF – X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy is an analytical method that can be used to determine the chemical composition of a sample, particularly for geochemical analysis of rocks and ceramics. Has been used in study of pottery from the Northern Cape.

[TO TOP](#)

– Y –

Younger Dryas – a period of climatic fluctuation at the end of the Pleistocene and immediately preceding the Holocene. Levels corresponding with the Younger Dryas have been identified at the rear of Wonderwerk Cave.

[TO TOP](#)

– Z –

Zooarchaeology (or Archaeozoology) – the study of bones of animals from archaeological sites. Animal bones from sites can tell us much about people's diet, the skills they used in obtaining meat or other animal products, and their lifestyle, whether scavenging, hunting, or farming. Bones of small animals such as mice can be good indicators of changing climate. Where certain species are present in a site they may be showing the season of occupation. Age of animals at death may reflect deliberate herd management, for example, in herder societies. Past diets of animals and humans can be deduced from the isotope values in bone samples.

[TO TOP](#)