

**Virtual Field Trip: Exploring Oaxaca (*Structured Inquiry*)**  
***Why do archaeologists do fieldwork?***  
**For use with Dr. Gary Feinman's Oaxaca expedition**  
**[www.fieldmuseum.org/expeditions/gary4\\_expeditions/about.html](http://www.fieldmuseum.org/expeditions/gary4_expeditions/about.html)**

**Concepts:** Primary sources, research

**Skills:** Inferring, Interpreting Data, Communication: Recording Data

**Materials:** Computer with Internet access, writing utensils, inquiry sheets (follow)

**Grades:** Intermediate (6-8)

**Duration:** Research time – 2, 50-minute periods plus presentation time.

**Objectives:**

1. Promote use of technology to investigate questions.
2. Display reading comprehension.
3. Use multiple sources to gather information.

**Instructional Activities & Methods:**

This activity can be used as an introduction to the Oaxaca expedition, or as a continued exploration in conjunction with the previous lesson plans. The idea is to have students explore the site on their own, but be directed with a set of inquiry-based questions. This activity can be assigned as homework in parts, or as a long-term research based project. Students can be divided into research groups and assigned to a theme that corresponds to the set of structured research questions below. For older students, groups could develop a set of questions on their own and use the expeditions website to gather, process and interpret this information. Choose the method of grouping that best suits the class and the school's technological capabilities.

1. Discuss the question “why do archaeologists do fieldwork?” with the class. This will likely spark a more questions than answers but this is fine and these can be used to guide the assignment and added to the list of inquiry questions.
2. Divide the students into research groups who will use each section of the expeditions@fieldmuseum@ (Feinman) website as their primary source to investigate the following sections.
3. Groups will present their research to the class when finished in a “Conference Style” just as real archaeological researchers do, and the class will have time to comment and ask questions.
4. Time Permitting: Have the groups compile their research into a written or videotaped piece to share with other classes or the school. Use Dr. Feinman's dispatches as highlights to show that research continues at this important site.

Name/Group \_\_\_\_\_

**Setting the Stage: Deciding to do Fieldwork**  
(About the Expedition)

1. How long ago did the Zapotecs reside on the hilltop at El Palmillo?
2. What are hillside terraces typically used for in other parts of the world?
3. How is this different from the way that Dr. Feinman and his team interpret the site at El Palmillo?
4. What has the team discovered to make them think that people lived on top of El Palmillo?
5. How can Dr. Feinman tell from excavating the site that people lived there for a long time?
6. What is craft specialization and what are some examples?

Name/Group \_\_\_\_\_

**Putting Together a Team of Talents**  
(Meet the Scientist and Tools)

1. Dr Gary Feinman is the leader of the excavation at El Palmillo, but he also has a special role within the group. What is his principal job?
2. The site tells us that Linda Nicholas is a talented cartographer. What does this mean? What types of tools might she need to complete this job?
3. Why is it important to use screens during an archaeological excavation? (Try looking through the Interactive Map 2005 for a video that will help you.)
4. Many photos in this section show Dr. Feinman and others using small tools to remove soil from excavated areas. What are some of these tools and why is it important to use them rather than removing the artifact itself?
5. In 2003, the crew found and excavated a stone tomb. Locate this on the map and describe the tomb in a few sentences. How long had it been closed?
6. In 2000, there are pictures of the maguey plant. What are some of the products that can be made from this important plant species?

Name/Group \_\_\_\_\_

**Around Oaxaca**  
(Expedition Map/Interactive Map)

1. Rank these sites in order from largest to smallest:

Monte Alban  
Mitla Fortress  
Jalieza  
Guirin  
Ejutla  
Mitla

2. Why are there different levels of excavation for each year?

3. In the 2005 season, the crew found a new temascal on the excavation. What makes this one unique from others in this area of Mexico?

4. Also in 2005, there was an obsidian projectile point found at the site. Locate this find and tell what you think it might have been used for.