



PAI

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG
PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY INSTITUTE

2025
HANDBOOK

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Introduction

The 2025 Public Archaeology Institute (PAI) is a unique program that invites students, entering grades 9-12, to work alongside archaeologists in the field and explore the connections between documentary and archeological evidence, and how they work together to convey a unified interpretation in a public history setting.

Participants of the PAI will receive approximately eight hours of “class time,” where they will tour active archaeological sites and learn about artifact types, including ceramics, architectural materials, faunal remains, and small finds. Students will spend the remainder of the week practicing archaeological field methods, site recording, and interpretation of findings through hands-on fieldwork and speaking with visitors. The week will conclude with a site tour showcase, in which each student will guide one archaeological site tour. Each tour will be 15-30 minutes in length and share the site’s history, project objectives, and observations made in the field with visitors, family members, and friends.

PAI Learning Objectives

- Discover the vital role of archaeological research at Colonial Williamsburg and other public history sites.
- Learn archaeological field techniques, including site excavation and recording methods.
- Gain a basic understanding of what archaeologists learn from artifacts and their contexts.
- Synthesize documentary and physical evidence to create a cohesive overview of the project.
- Speak with the public about the site’s history and project objectives on a one-on-one basis and as the leader of group tours of the archaeology site.



General Information

The 2025 PAI is offered to students entering grades 9-12. Dates for each session are as follows:

2025 PAI Session 1

Students entering Grades 9 and 10
Monday, June 23 through Friday, June 27, 2025
9:30am-4:30pm

2025 PAI Session 2

Students entering Grades 11 and 12
Monday, July 7 through Friday, July 11, 2025
9:30am-4:30pm



Directions

From Interstate 64:

- Take Exit 238 onto SR-143 toward Williamsburg
- Turn right onto SR-132 (this will become N Henry Street)
- Continue past Duke of Gloucester Street on S Henry Street
- Turn left at Newport Avenue
- After Nassau Street, take the next left into the parking lot east of the museum
- Pick-up/Drop-off is at the **NW corner** of the parking lot.

Location

Excavations will take place at Custis Square, located in the pasture across Nassau Street from the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg Art

Parking and Pickup/Drop-Off Location:

We will meet each day in the NW corner of the Newport Avenue parking lot, west of the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Free parking is available to students driving independently at the Newport Avenue Parking Lot. Please see the above map for the location.

*Schedule of Activities

Day One, Monday

9:30am-4:30pm

Day One	
9:30am	Start of Day Sign In
10:00am	Site Tour Custis Square
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Excavation Unit Setup/Site Recording Basics
4:15-4:30	End of Day Sign Out

Day Two, Tuesday

9:30am-4:30pm

Day Two	
9:30am	Start of Day Sign In
10:00am	Excavation
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Excavation
4:15-4:30	End of Day Sign Out

Day Three, Wednesday

9:30am-4:30pm

Day Three	
9:30am	Start of Day Sign In
10:00am	Archaeological Materials Practicum
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Excavation
4:15-4:30	End of Day Sign Out
Before Leaving	Tour Outline

Day Four, Thursday

9:30am-4:30pm

Day Four	
9:30am	Start of Day Sign In
10:00am	Excavation
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Materials Conservation
End of Day	Social Media Posts
4:15-4:30	End of Day Sign Out

Day Five, Friday

9:30am-4:30pm

Day Five	
9:30am	Start of Day Sign In
10:00am	Student-led Tours
10:00am	Excavation
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Excavation
4:15-4:30	End of Day Sign Out

*The schedule of activities is subject to change.

Summary of Events

Each morning, students will sign in upon arrival and proceed to the shade structure at the NE corner of Custis Square. Approximately one hour will be spent each day touring our archaeology sites or laboratory and learning basic field methods and artifact type identification. Students should come prepared each day with a packed lunch which will be eaten on-site. For the remainder of the time, students will practice field methods, excavation, screening for artifacts, recording site information, and other activities alongside archaeology staff members.

On Day 4, each student will submit a social media post consisting of 1-3 paragraphs and 1-4 photographs OR a short video up to 2 minutes in length to be posted on Colonial Williamsburg/ Colonial Williamsburg Archaeology social media pages.

Staffing

Staff-to-Student Ratio

Grade Level	Archaeology Staff	Number of Students
9-12	3	10

All PAI staff are 21 years of age or older and have, at a minimum, completed an undergraduate degree in anthropology or a related field.

Safety

Leaving the Site

Students are permitted to leave the site use restrooms at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, located across Nassau Street from the Custis Square Archaeological site. Students will not be permitted to leave the site at lunchtime and should come prepared to eat on-site each day with a packed lunch.

Emergencies

A first aid kit is available on-site for the treatment of minor scrapes or cuts. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to administer medical treatment. In the event of an emergency, staff will contact Colonial Williamsburg Security and call 9-1-1 for assistance. Parent/legal guardian will be notified immediately of illness or injury requiring emergency assistance.

Inclement Weather

In the event of a weather emergency, PAI students, staff, and volunteers will relocate to the Museum Café, located inside the south entrance of the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. In case of rain, the PAI will be suspended and reconvene the following day.

Please note: Participants will be exposed to high humidity with temperatures likely exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Students should take precautions against high temperatures by:

- Staying hydrated
- Eating salty snacks throughout the day
- Wearing clothing that is lightweight, loose-fitting, and light-colored

****Always alert instructors if you feel sick, dizzy, or weak.****

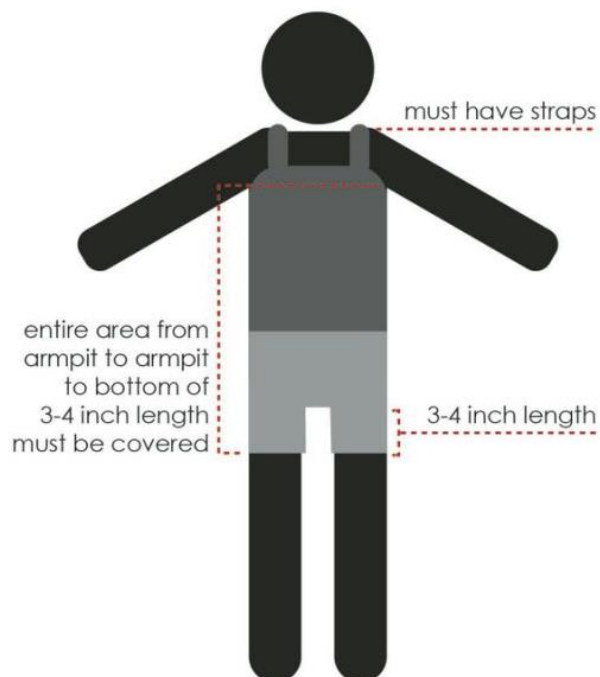
Recommendations and Requirements

Required

- Pre-packed lunch
- Personal water bottle (refills available on site)
- Gardening gloves
- No clothing that conveys messages that may be construed as disrespectful by Colonial Williamsburg visitors
- Closed-toe, comfortable shoes
- Participants must meet minimum dress requirements (shown below)

Recommended

- Hand Sanitizer/Sanitizing Hand Wipes
- Mosquito Repellant
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Notebook
- Pen/Pencil
- Snack (Strongly Recommended)
- Gardening Knee Pad
- Comfortable clothes that you don't mind getting dirty!





Colonial Williamsburg
Department of Archaeology