Today you will be mapping part of an archaeological "excavation." Mapping is not simply an afterthought in archaeology; rather, it is just as important as careful digging. Without accurate and thorough maps, the site might as well not have been excavated at all. To help with record keeping and mapping, archaeologists almost always use a grid system to specify where in an excavation an artifact or other item came from. Most, but not all, such grids use one meter squares as their basic unit. Each group will map one such unit for today's lab.

To begin, mark off a square on the graph paper provided that will represent your excavation unit. We are using ten-squares-per-inch graph paper, so you will want to make your map 5 inches on a side, which means each small square on the graph paper will represent 2cm. Once you have drawn your square, mark North (toward the top of the page) and put cm values along at least two sides of the square (that is: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100 along at least the bottom and left sides). It is common to measure from the Southwest corner of the unit, and absolutely critical that all mapping for a given site be done in the same manner. Finally, label your map sheet with the unit designation for your excavation square (for example, G12).

Every item, no matter how unimportant it may seem, should be drawn and labeled on your map. Thus, everything drawn on the map should have a small number next to it, and that number should be listed (the back of this sheet of paper is fine) along with a notation of what the item is (be as specific as possible--ask the instructor if necessary). (In the real world, each mapped item would be placed in a separate bag which also has this number on it.)

Draw each item as accurately as possible. This will often require multiple measurements, so as to 'dot-in' the outline of the object before its shape is finally drawn. (Obviously, very small items will not be as accurately drawn.) The best way to do this is to have one member of each group measuring the location of each point on the edge of the item while their partner makes the appropriate mark on the map. It is very important to check regularly to make sure the map matches the reality!

No take-home write-up is required this week. (Make sure all group members' names are on the map when you turn it in.)