**Chapter 2**

*Chapter Summary*

Archaeologists and paleoanthropologists have a wide array of methods and techniques to investigate the human past. This chapter is an introduction to some of the most important methods and analytical techniques. It begins with an overview of how sites are formed, preserved, and discovered. The data from archaeological and paleoanthropological sites, which are not limited to artifacts and tools, are systematically collected and carefully analyzed by many different techniques. Scientists can determine how people made and used objects, what they ate, at what age they died, and even the age of the sites where they lived. There are precise indicators for the age, sex, health, and geographic origin of ancient individuals. Evolutionary and cultural relationships between prehistoric people and modern human beings can even be determined. The ethics of excavating and studying living people’s ancestors can require consultation and collaboration. In the process, archaeologists and paleoanthropologists can produce a detailed and accurate chronicle of the human past. Pseudoscience, by comparison, is worse than speculation, as readers may be deceived and deprived of an authentic and much more wondrous understanding of the past.