



# Artifact Photography Guide

# Introduction

This Artifact Photography Guide is designed to assist the photographer when using the camera stations in the VCP labs. The first part of this guide will illustrate how to prepare, compose, focus, expose, re-name and save high quality images of a projectile point. The second part of this guide will show the most common artifact descriptions and material classes of artifacts photographed at the VCP labs. Each page will show the minimum required views for the artifacts on that page along with a description of how to orient the artifact for proper composition of each view. There are also Photo Tips along the way to assist the photographer in lighting and artifact positioning.

Top and bottom banners include Artifact Type and Material Class

Lithics

## Projectile Points

Lithics

This indicates the minimum required views for this artifact type.  
NOTE: Additional views must be approved by the manager.

Minimum Required Views

3

This describes each of the views in detail and the numbering configuration for them.

- .1a** Point always points (left) **NOTE: The side with markings on it is always the (.1a) shot**
- .1b** Flip the point over and position it just like the (.1a) shot.
- .1c** Point facing left select a side (profile) that has good edge detail and position it on the plexiglass using tacky wax to hold it upright.

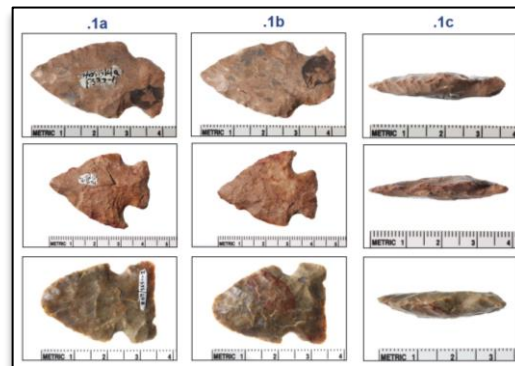
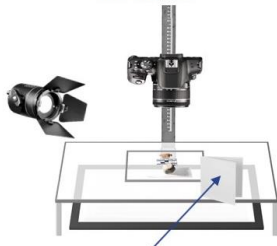
These are samples of the correct view, composition, and exposure for this artifact type.

Photo Tips are helpful details to assist the photographer for this artifact type.



Photo Tips

Move the studio light to the side and lower it to get more surface detail on the artifact.



### Page Sample

Lithics

## Projectile Points

Lithics

Minimum Required Views

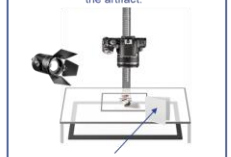
3

- .1a** Point always points (left) **NOTE: The side with markings on it is always the (.1a) shot**
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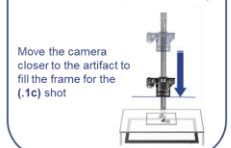


Photo Tips

Move the studio light to the side and lower it to get more surface detail on the artifact.



Place a white reflector on the right side to reduce shadows  
**NOTE: Do Not remove shadows totally.**



Move the camera closer to the artifact to fill the frame for the (.1c) shot

Lithics

## Projectile Points

Lithics

# Introduction

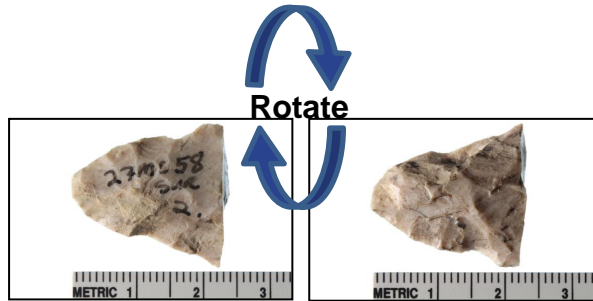
# Introduction

Below is additional information to assist the photographer when using this guide.

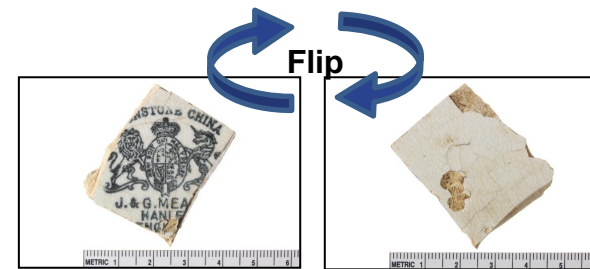
## Artifact Orientation

In the views description you will see the words **Rotate** and **Flip** to describe how to position the next view of an artifact. For consistency, the VCP has specific orientations for various views of artifacts that are regularly found in the collection processed in the labs. The best way to remember the difference for these two orientation commands is the following:

When instructed to **(Rotate)** an artifact imagine rotating and eating an ear of corn.

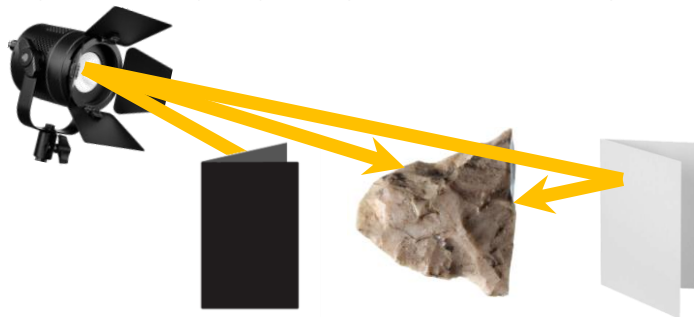


When instructed to **(Flip)** an artifact imagine turning a page in a book.



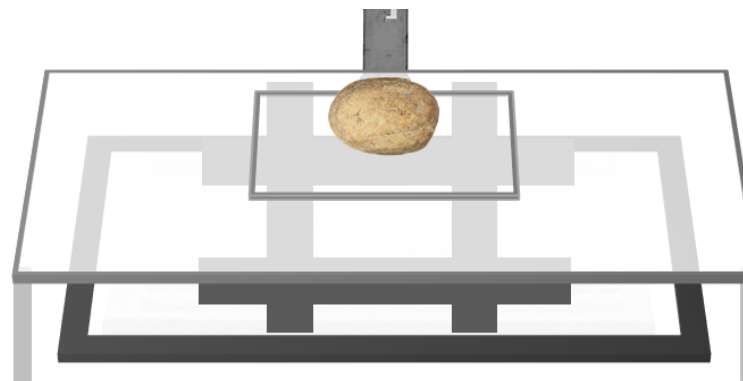
## Reflectors and Deflectors

Reflector are used to bounce a portion of the studio light onto a heavily shaded area of the artifact. Deflectors are used to block a portion of the studio light reducing bright edges closes to the light.



## Black Strips

Cut pieces of black construction paper are placed on top of the bottom light source under the plexiglass to reduce the light coming from under the artifact.



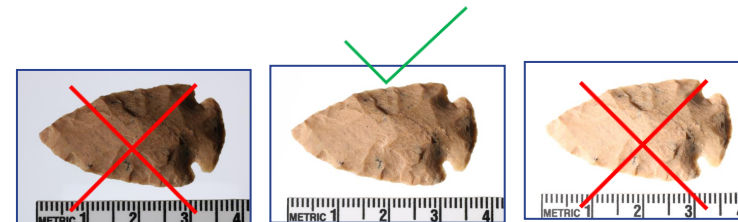
## Tacky wax

A tiny piece of Tack wax is used to hold artifacts up when shooting profile pictures.



## Exposure

A properly exposed image should look just like the artifact.  
(not too light / not too dark)



# Introduction

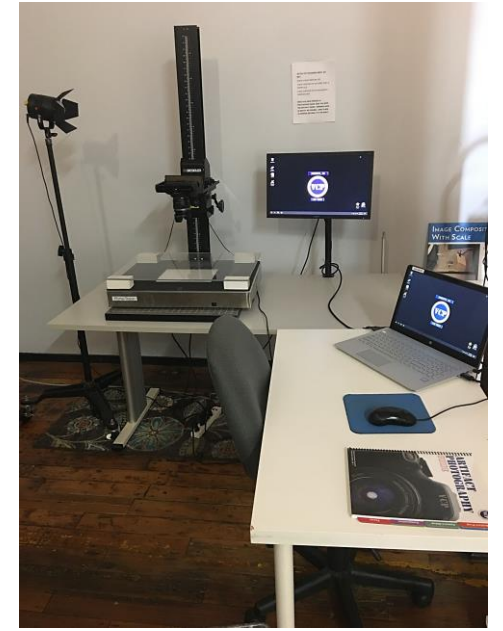
# VCP Camera Stations



Alexandria



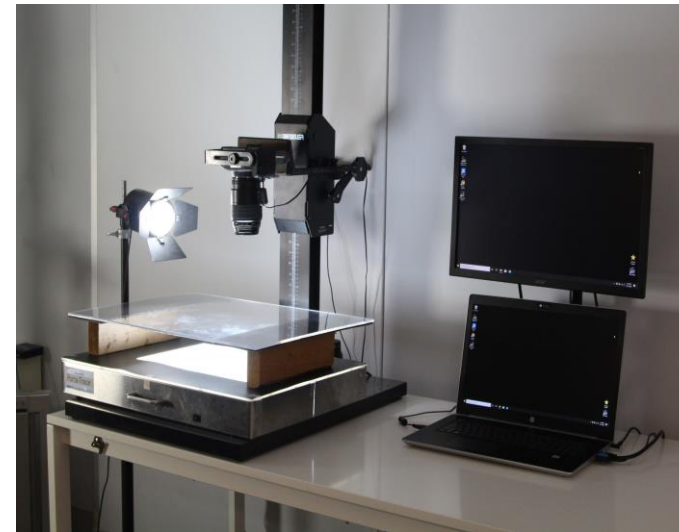
Augusta



San Mateo



St. Louis



# VCP Camera Stations

# Basic Equipment

Studio Light and Stand

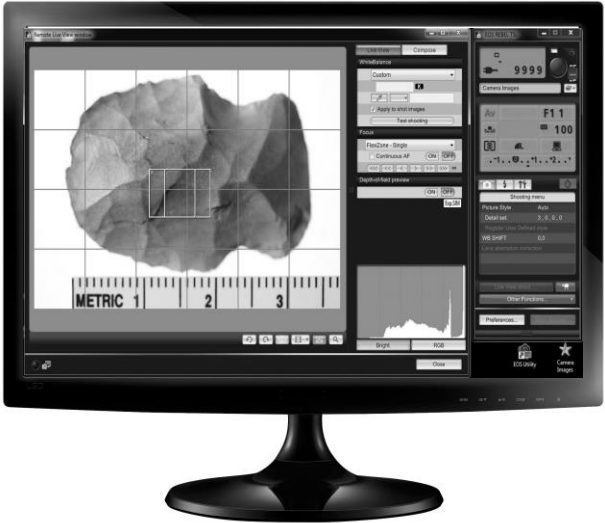


Camera Stand

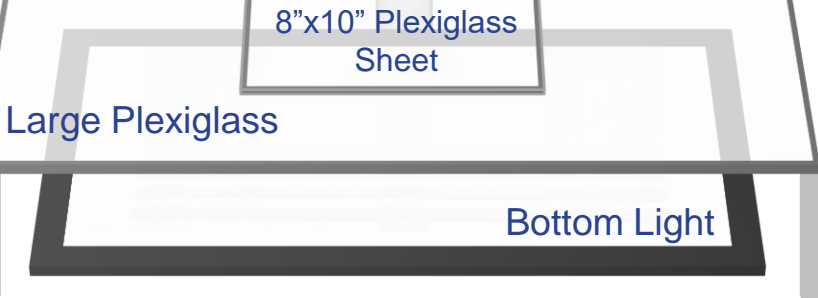


Canon Camera

Monitor



Keyboard and Mouse



8"x10" Plexiglass Sheet

Large Plexiglass

Bottom Light

# Basic Equipment

# Artifact Preparation

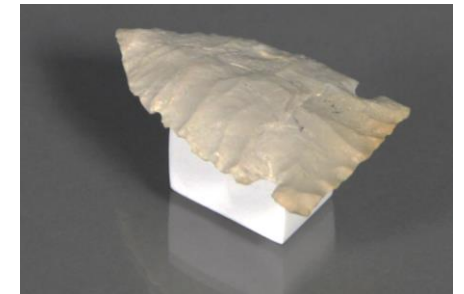
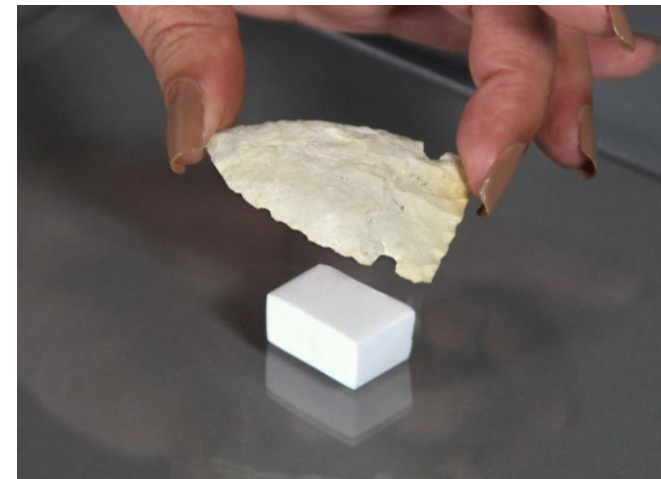
1

Clean a piece of clear plexiglass with a microfiber cloth.  
Note: (use felt tabs on the corners to prevent scratching on the plexiglass shooting table)



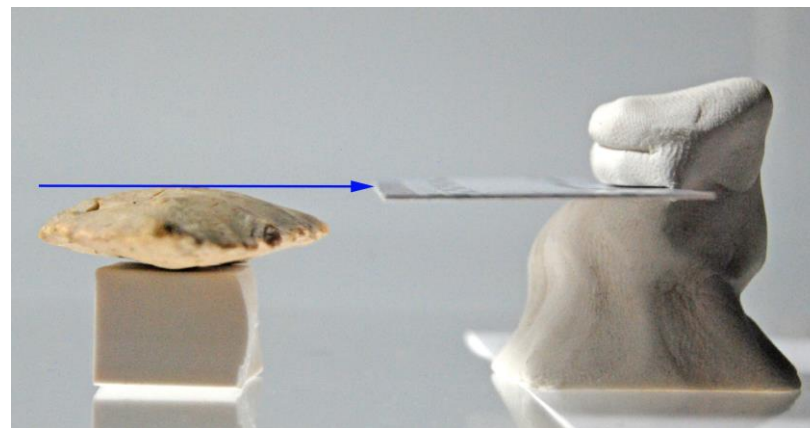
2

Position the artifact on the center of the plexiglass using a small pedestal (**eraser, clay, etc.**) to elevate it off the surface.

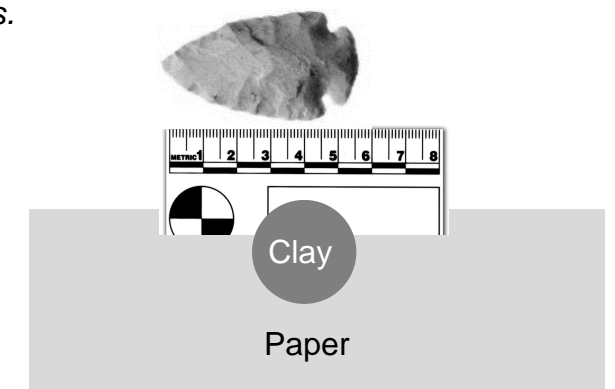


3

Use a piece of clay placed on a small piece of paper to hold a **Scale (ruler)** at the same elevation as the top surface of the artifact.



*Position the clay that's holding the scale on the edge of the paper so that the metric numbers extend over clear plexiglass.*



# Artifact Preparation

# Camera and Software

**4** Turn on the **Main Studio Light** and the **Bottom Light**.



**5** Turn on the camera.  
(Make sure the mode dial is set to AV)



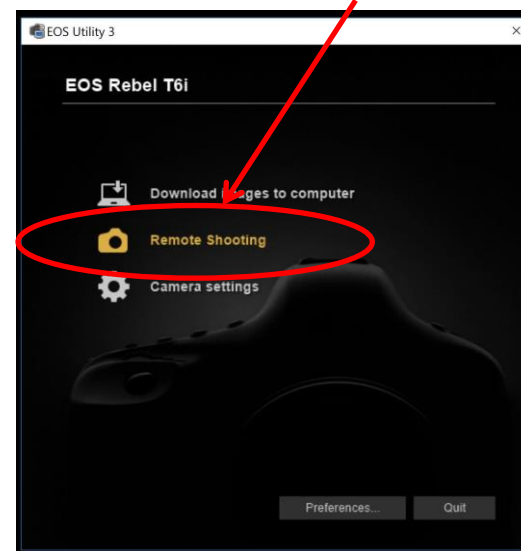
**6** Double click the **EOS Utility** icon to start the camera software.

Note: (Choose the EOS Utility for your camera model)

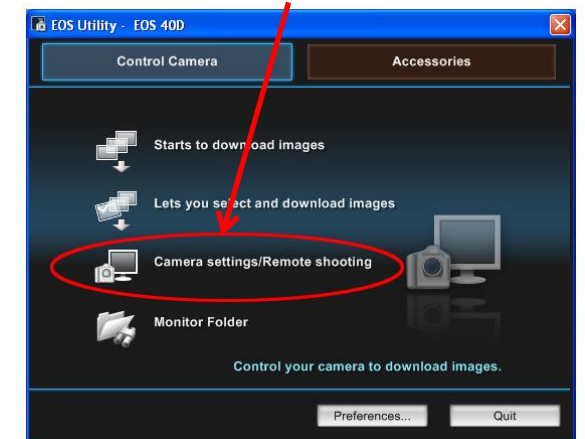


**7** Select "**Remote Shooting**" from the EOS Utility menu.

**EOS Utility 2 or 3**  
(newer model cameras)



**EOS Utility**  
(older model cameras)

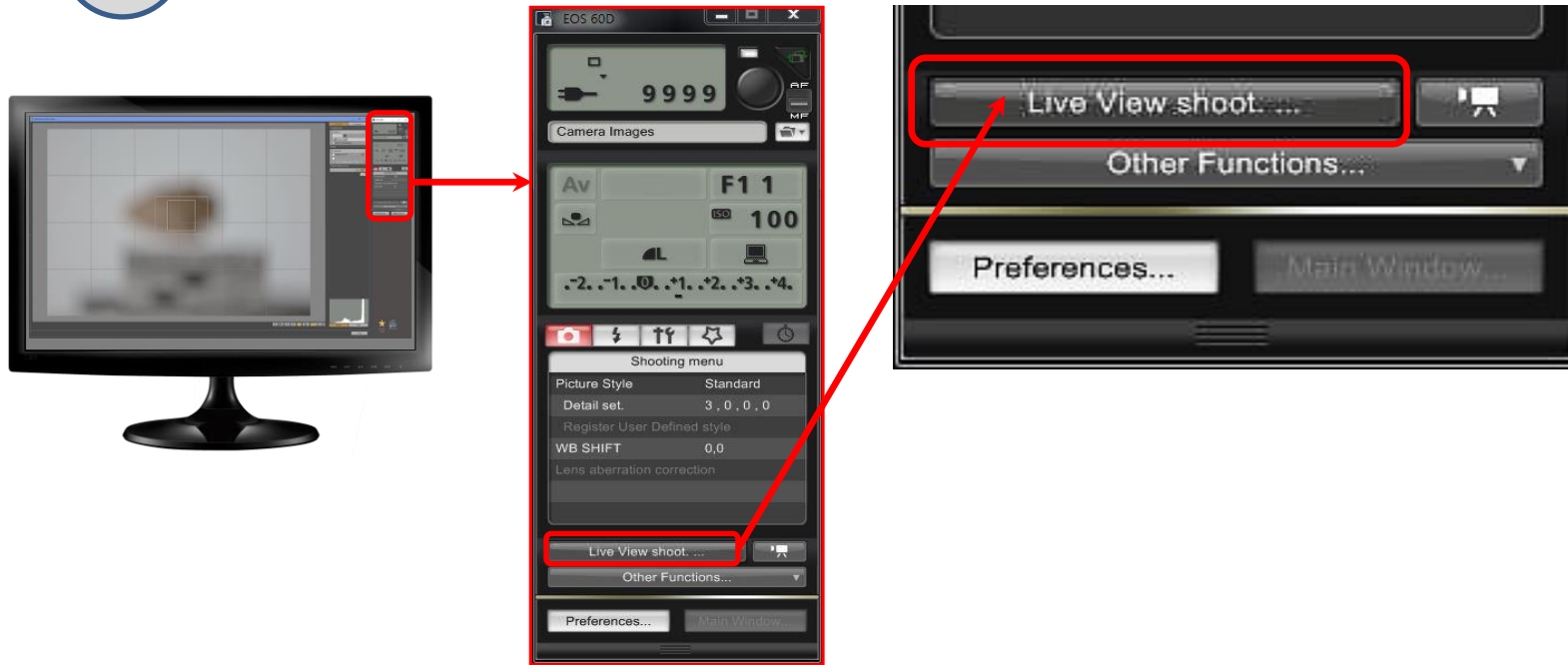


# Camera and Software

# Software Start-up

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Select "Live View Shoot" from the control panel menu.



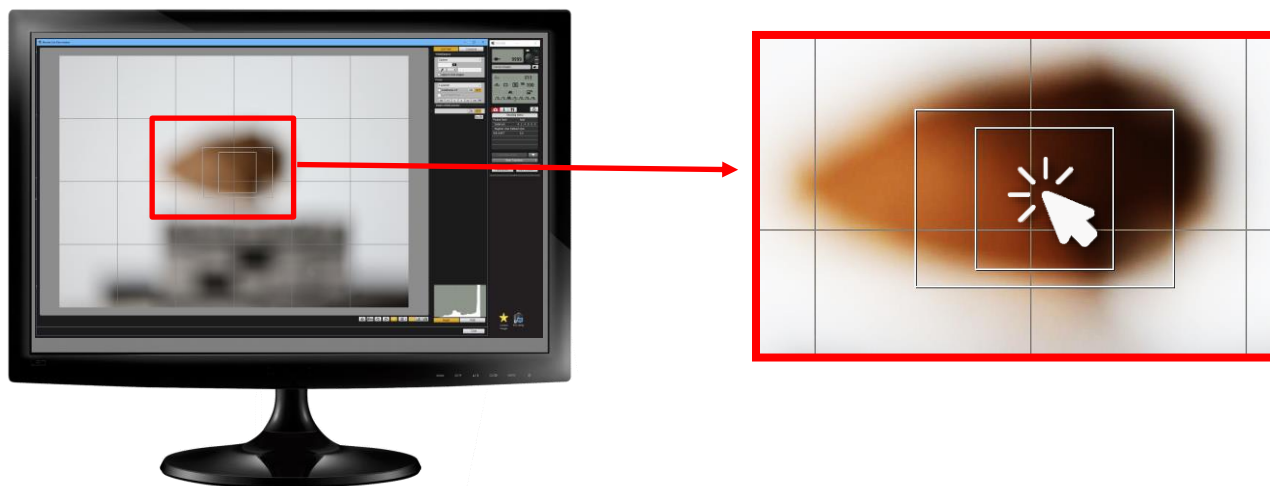
9

Place the plexiglass sheet with the artifact on it directly under the camera lens on top of the large plexiglass surface.



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- Position the white square on the screen over the artifact.
- Click in the center of the white square for auto focus.



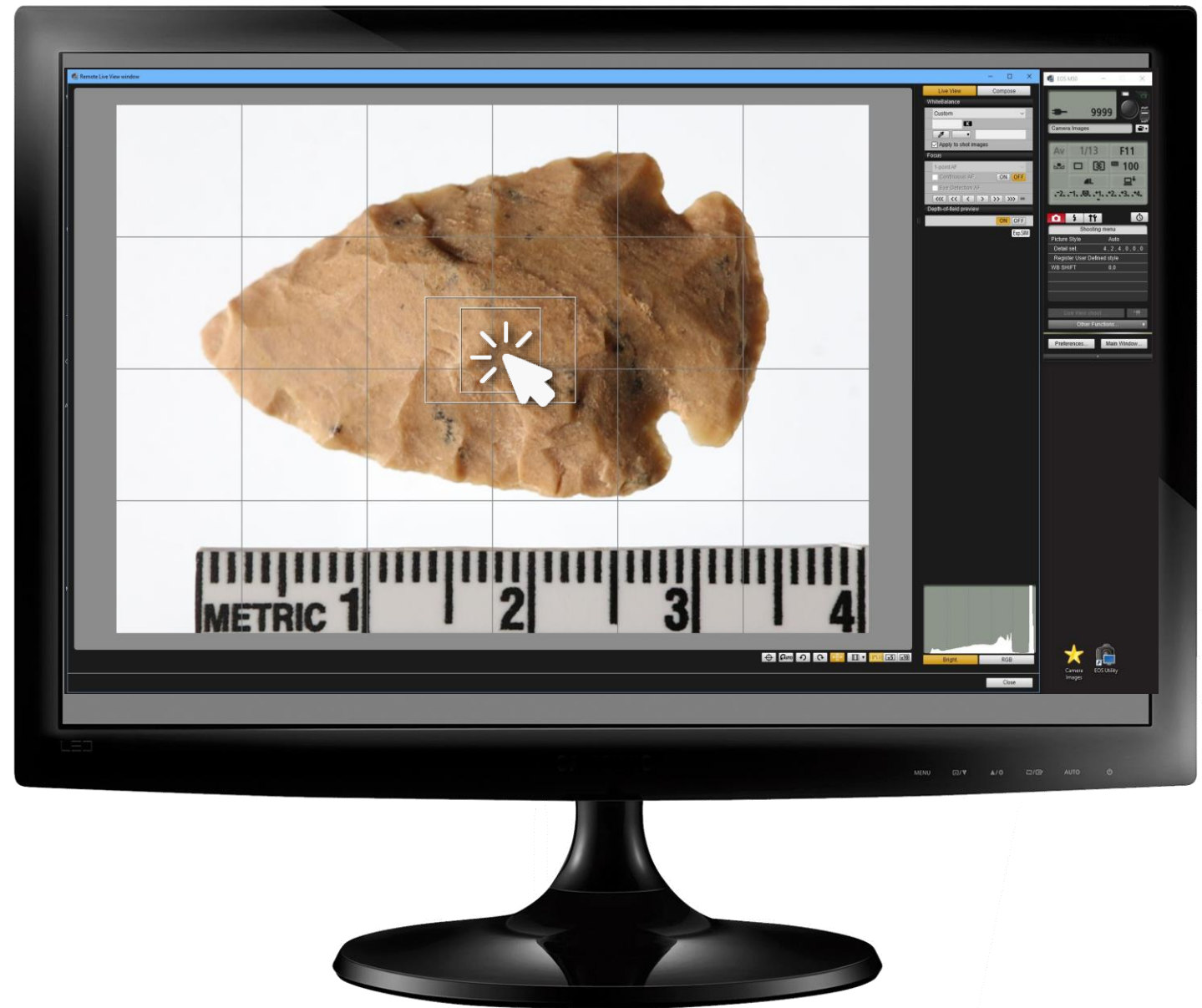
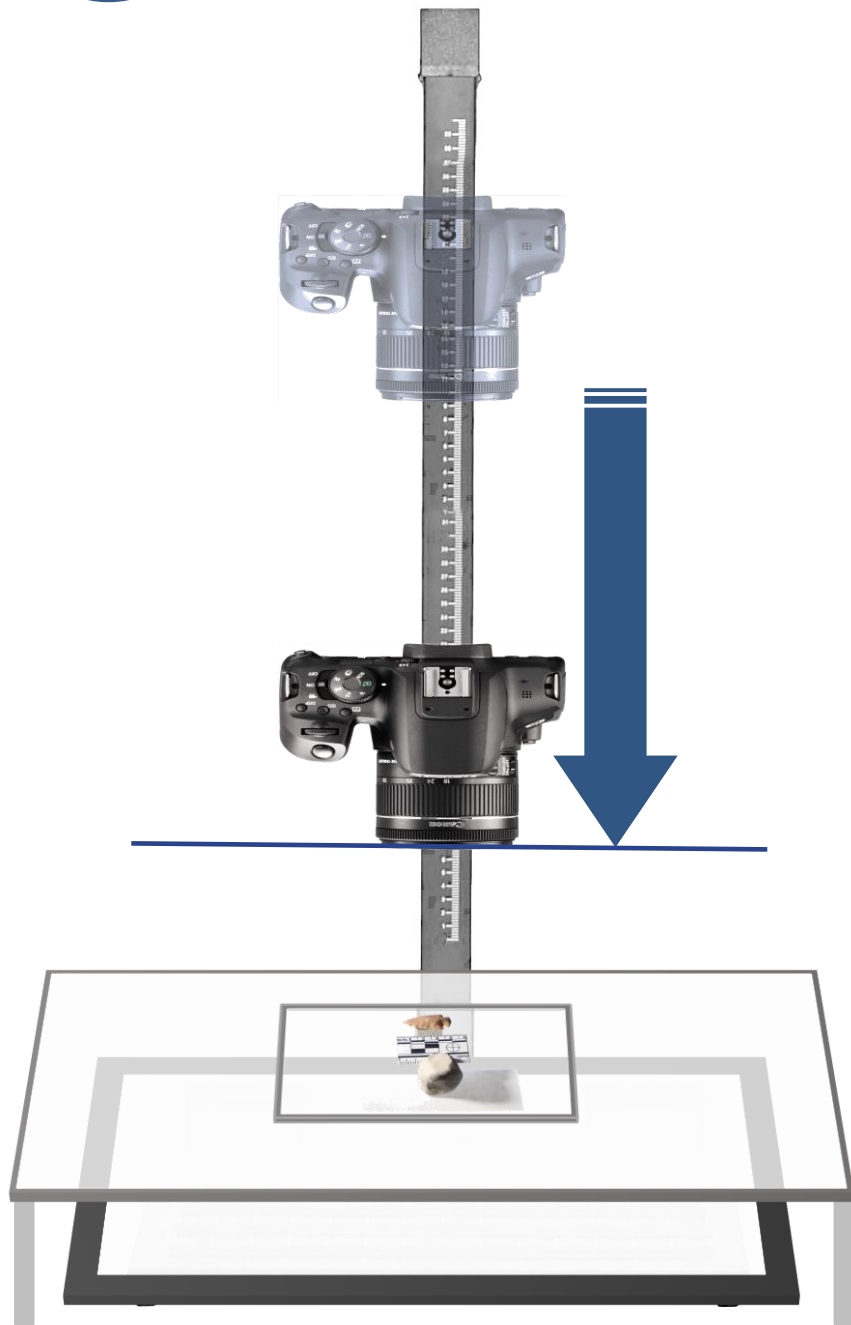
# Software Start-up



# Focus & Composition

11

- Move camera closer to artifact to enlarge the image and fill the frame on the screen.
- Click the white square again after enlarging the image to confirm focus.



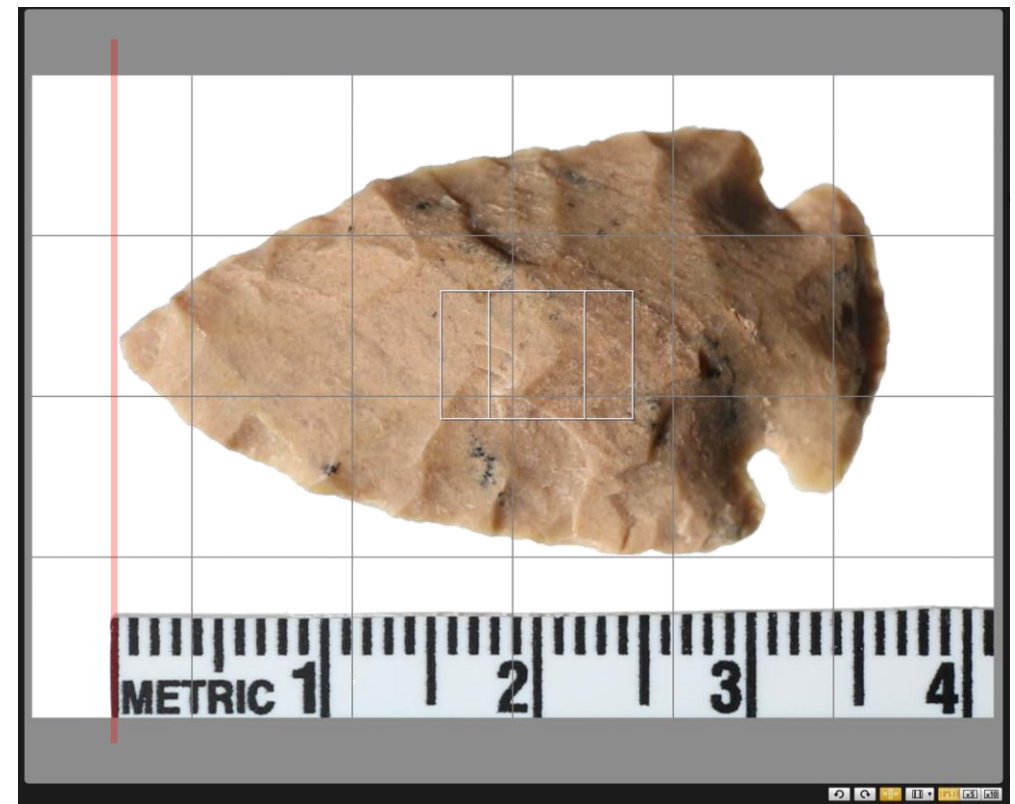
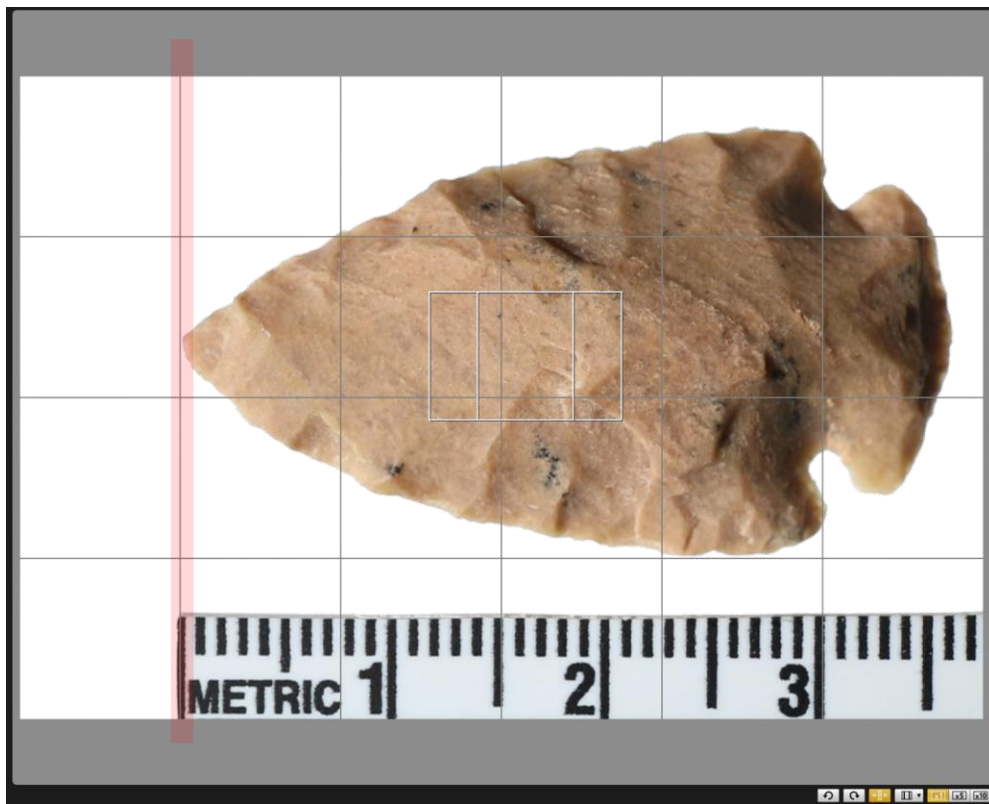
Focus & Composition

# Composition



## For proper scale alignment “Try This”

1. *Position the plexiglass so that the left edge of the artifact is touching one of the vertical grid lines (even if its off center).*
2. *Move the scale so that the zero mark is aligned with the same grid line using the paper that the scale is on.*
3. *Now move the plexiglass back to the center position with equal spacing around it.*



# Composition

# Composition

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The artifact should be as large as you can make it while still having room for the scale and equal white spacing around it.



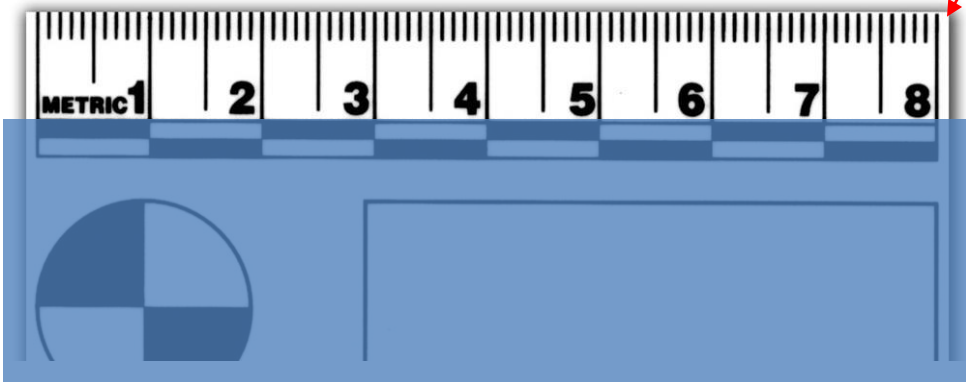
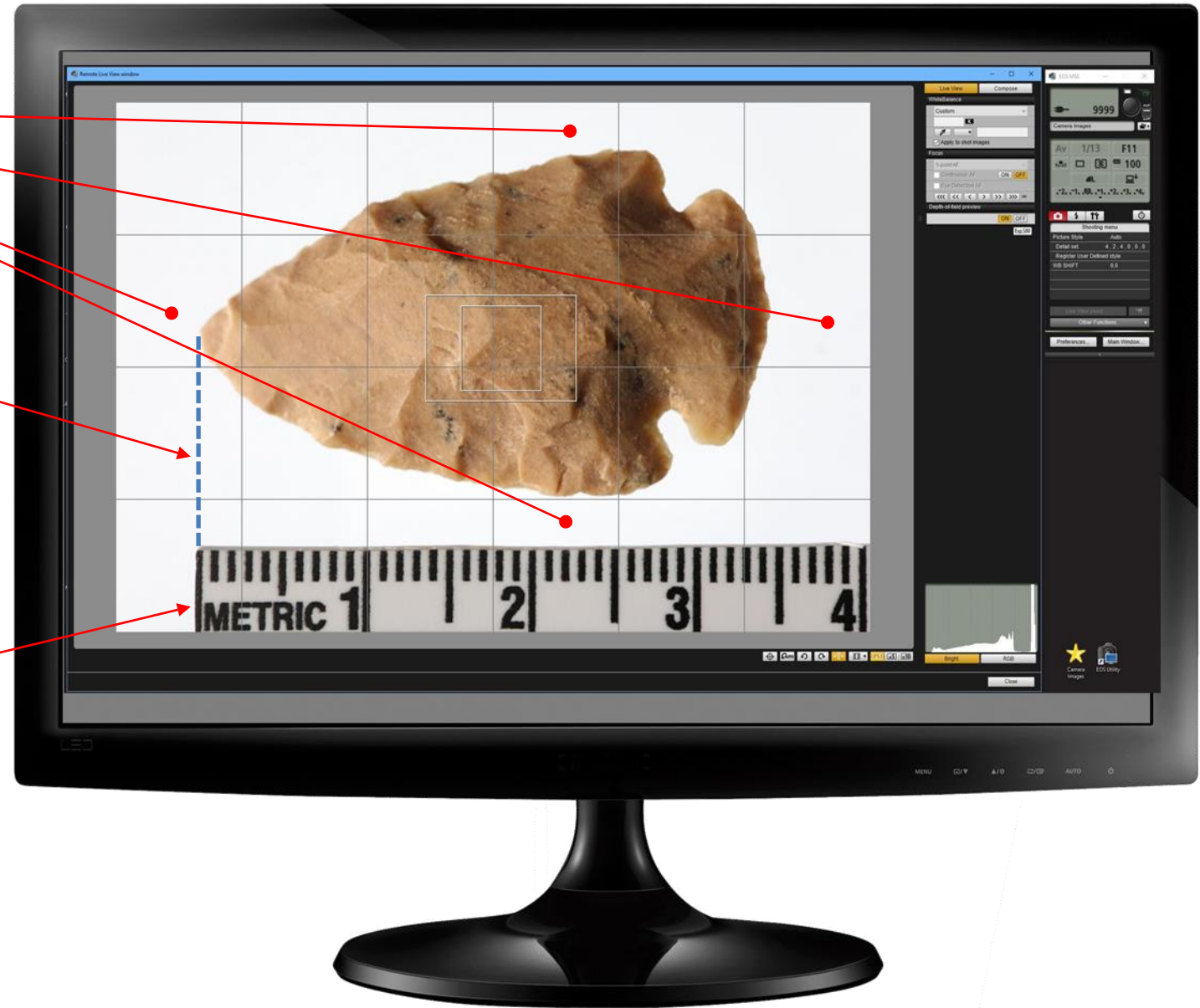
Equal spacing around artifact



Align the zero mark on scale with the left edge of artifact



Crop everything below the word Metric and the Numbers



# Composition

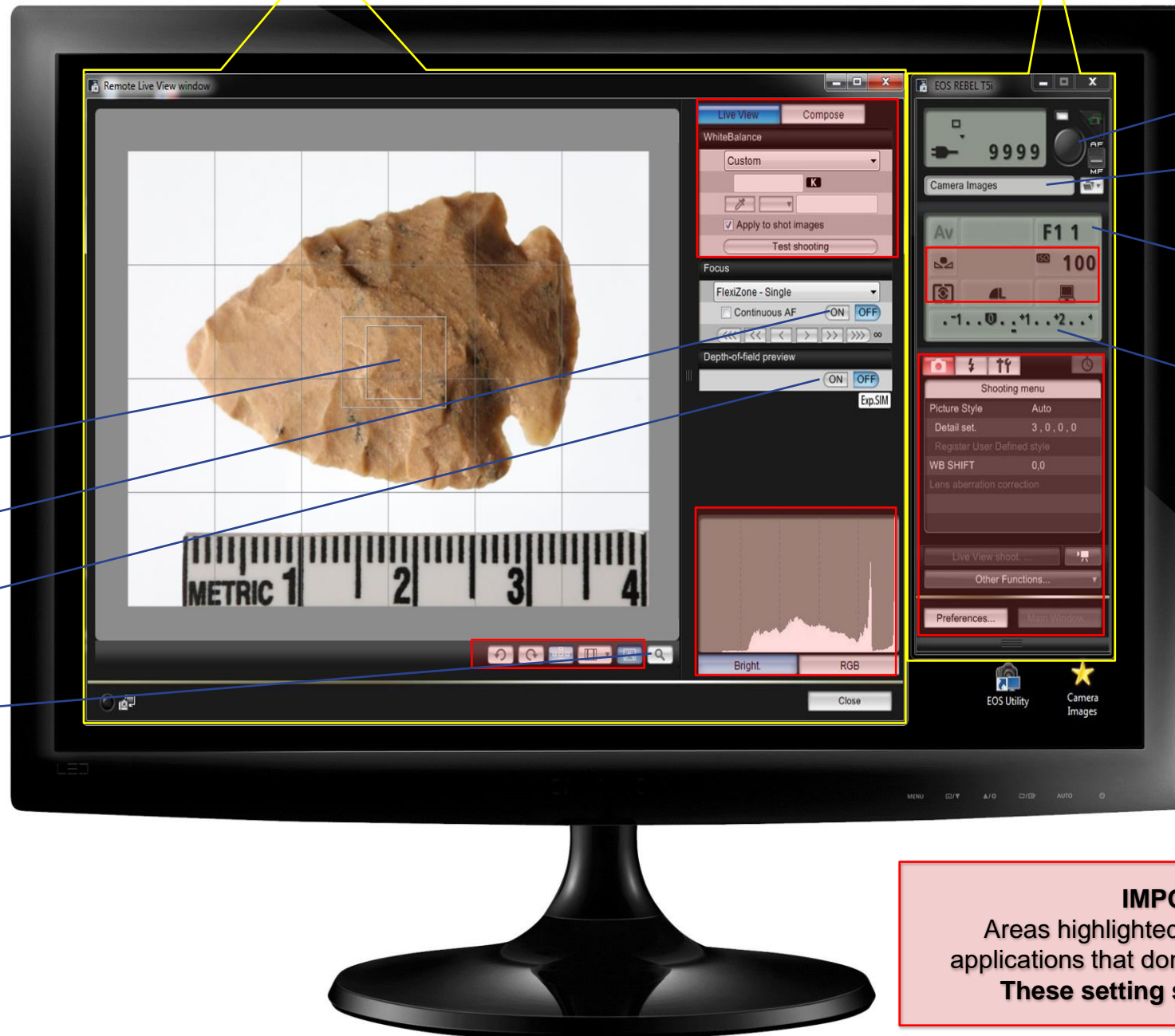
# Live View Screen & Control Panel

The Live View screen displays what the camera is seeing in real-time and is used to compose and focus the image.

Live View Screen

Control Panel

The Control Panel is used to fire the camera shutter and to make exposure adjustments.



Focus target box

Auto/manual focus

Depth of Field  
Preview button

Magnifier

Shutter Button

Image files default  
folder location

Aperture Setting  
Default (F11)

Exposure Setting

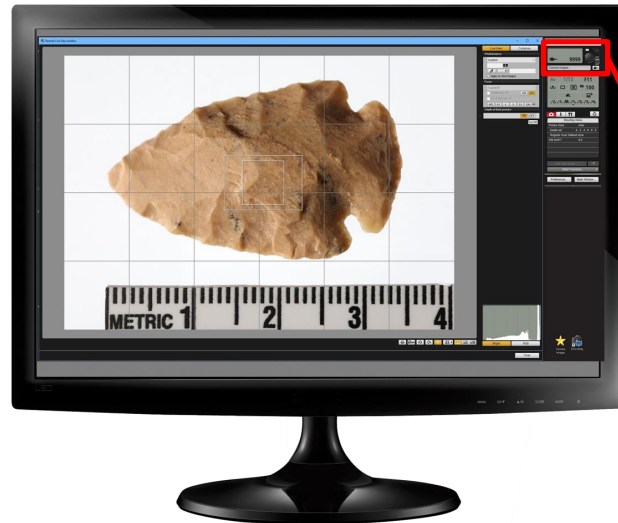
**IMPORTANT NOTE:**  
Areas highlighted in red are preset settings or applications that don't apply to artifact photography.  
**These setting should never be changed**

# Live View Screen & Control Panel

# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

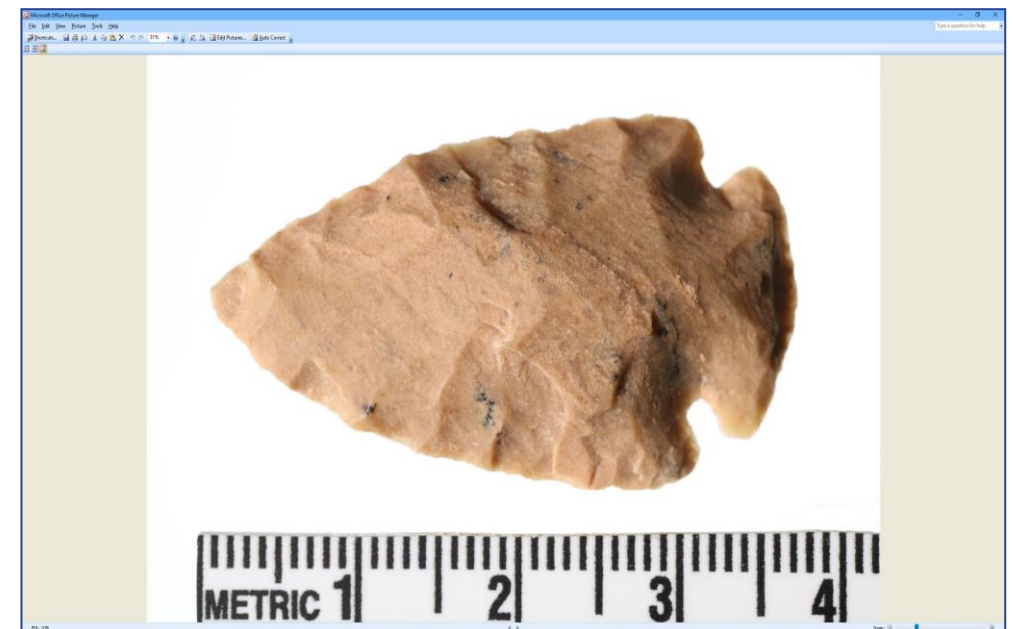
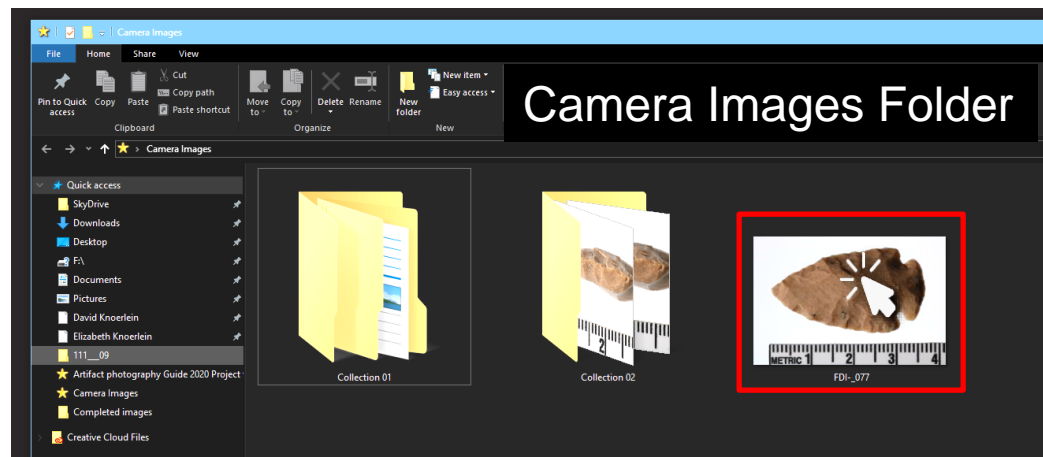
13

To capture an image click on the **(Shutter Button)** on the control panel or the **(Spacebar)** on the keyboard.



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- The image is saved in the **(Camera Images Folder)** located on the desktop
- Click on the thumbnail image to open it full screen.
- Review the image for **(dust, focus, composition and exposure)**.

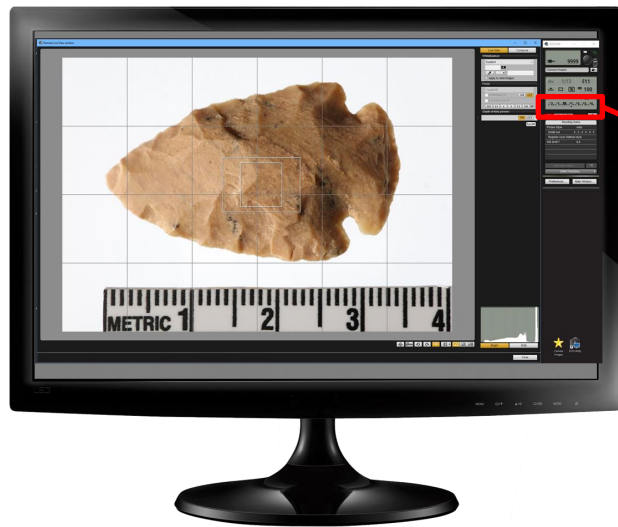


# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

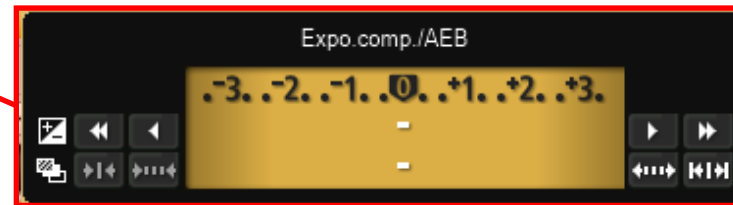
# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

15

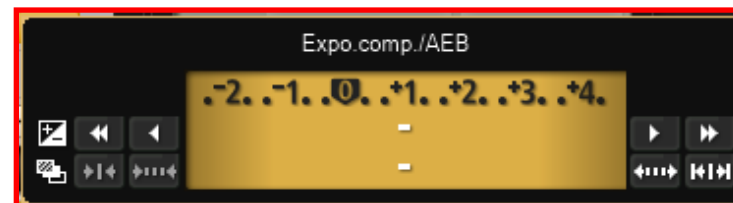
- If the image is too dark or too light use the exposure bar to correct it and shoot another image.
- Moving the exposure bar in the (+ plus) direction will **brighten** the image.
- Moving the exposure bar in the (- minus) direction will **darken** the image.



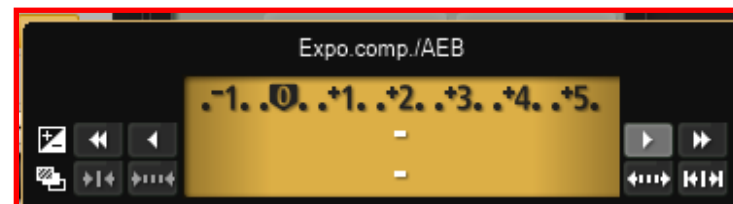
(0)



(+1)



(+2)



# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

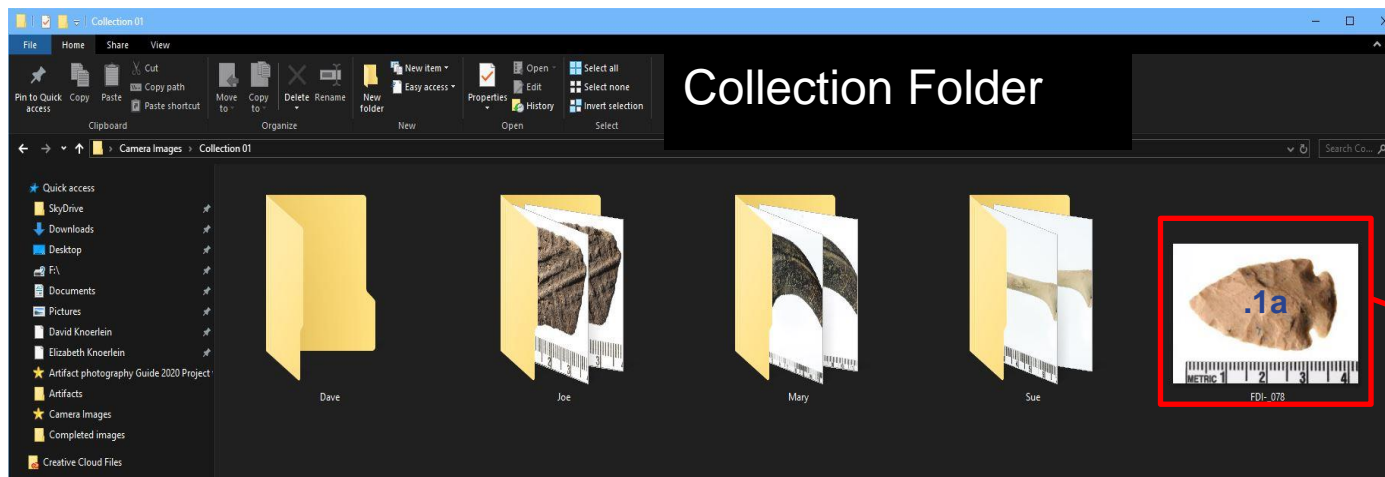
16

In the Camera Images Folder select the best image and move it into the appropriate collection folder for that artifact.



17

In the Collection Folder rename the image file with the (Artifact ID Number followed by .1a) Example: XXX-XXX.1a

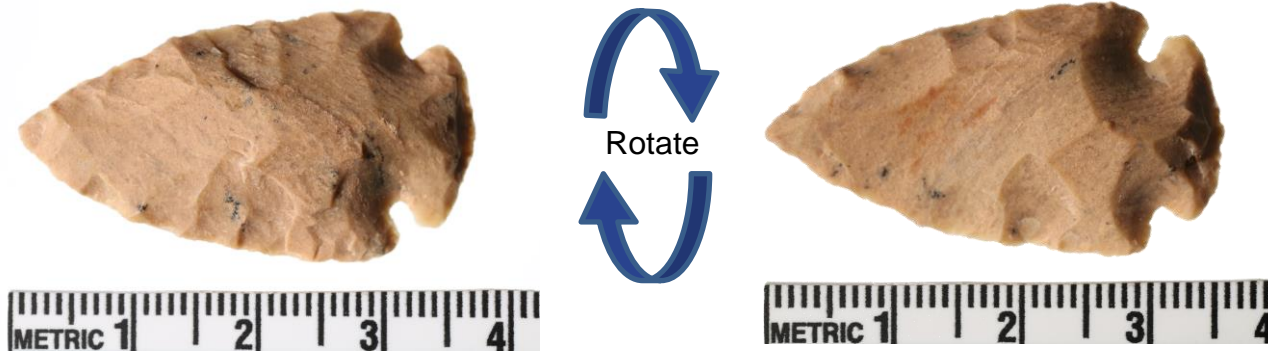


# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

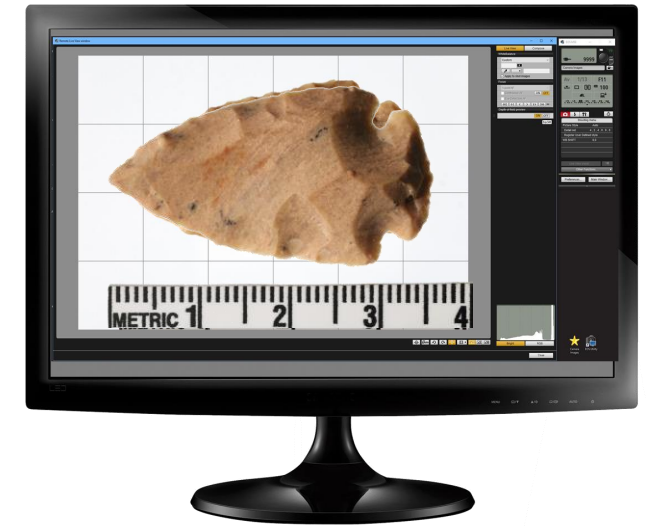
# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

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Rotate the artifact maintaining the point facing the left and reposition it onto the eraser.

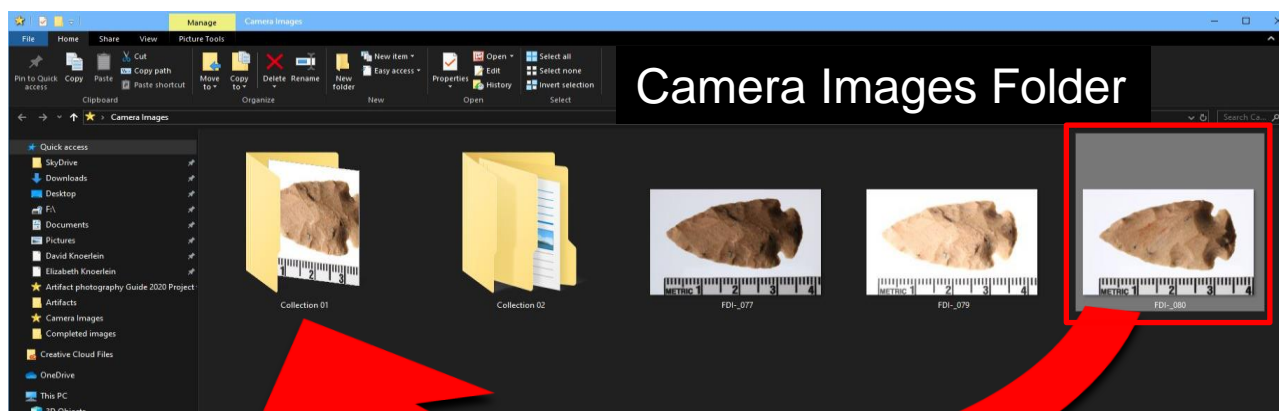
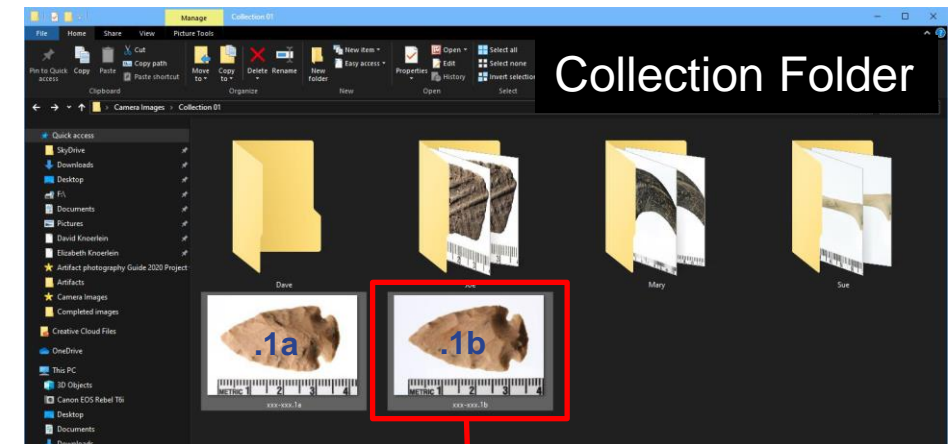


Capture image.



19

- Select the best image and move it into the Collection Folder
- In the Collection Folder rename the image file with the (Artifact ID Number followed by .1b) Example: XXX-XXX.1b



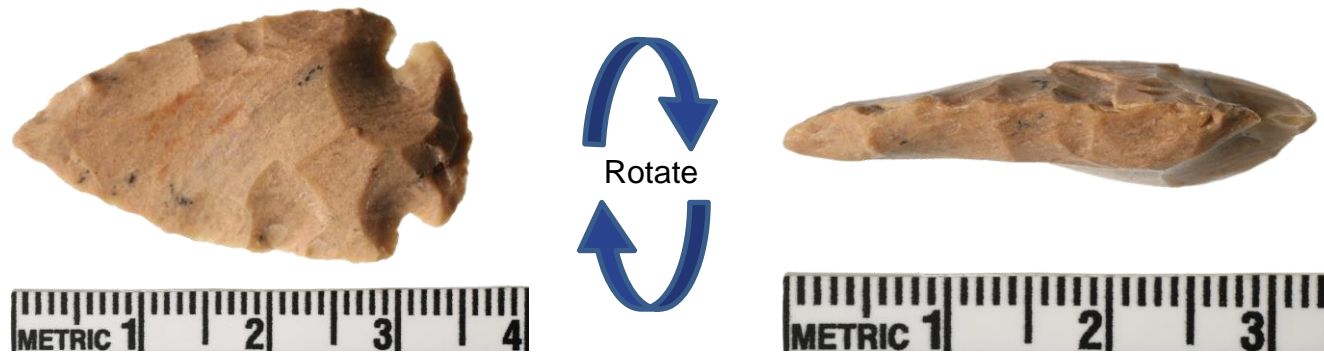
# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)



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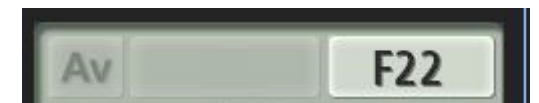
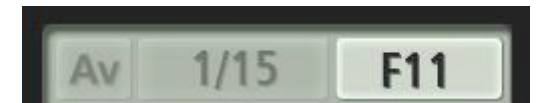
20

- Rotate the artifact onto one side maintaining the point facing the left.
- Use tacky wax to hold it upright.

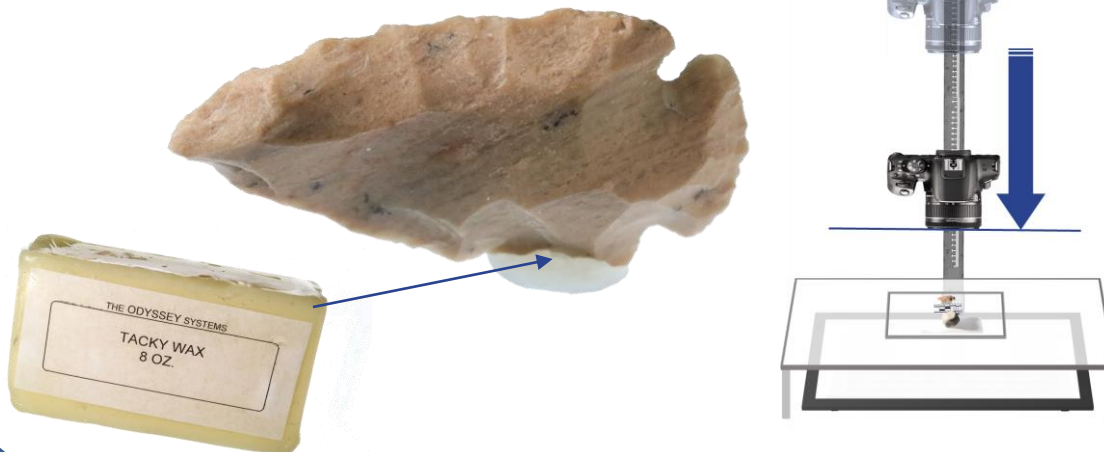


21

Change the Aperture from F11 to F22



- Use a small ball of tacky wax to hold the projectile point in position on its side.
- Use the thickest part of the artifact to hide the wax.
- Lower the camera to fill the frame.



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Capture Images

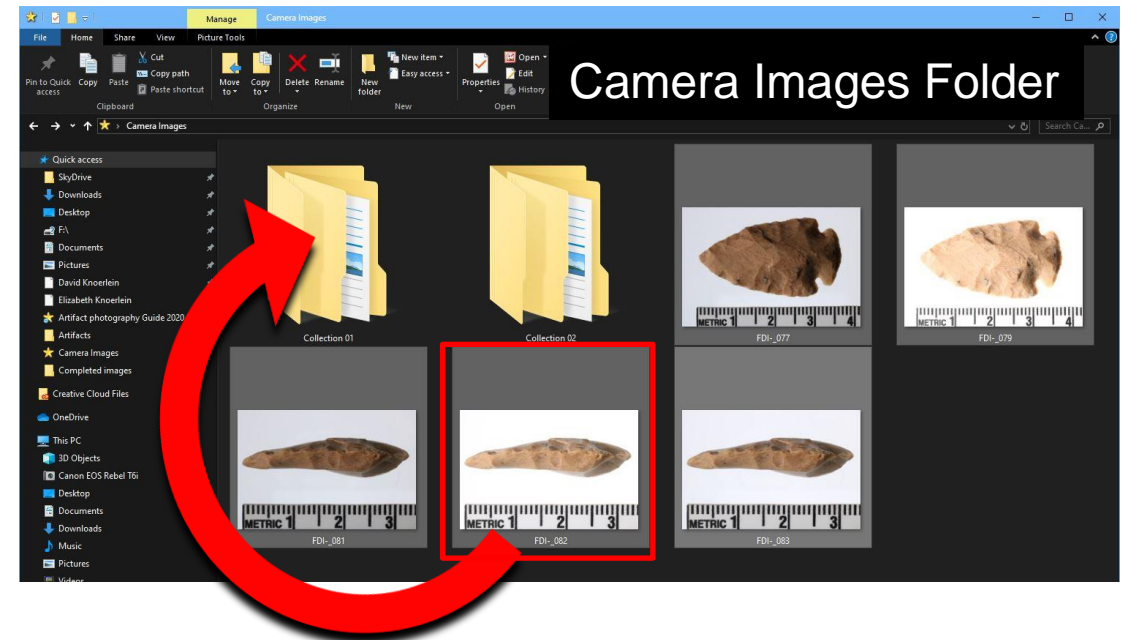


# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

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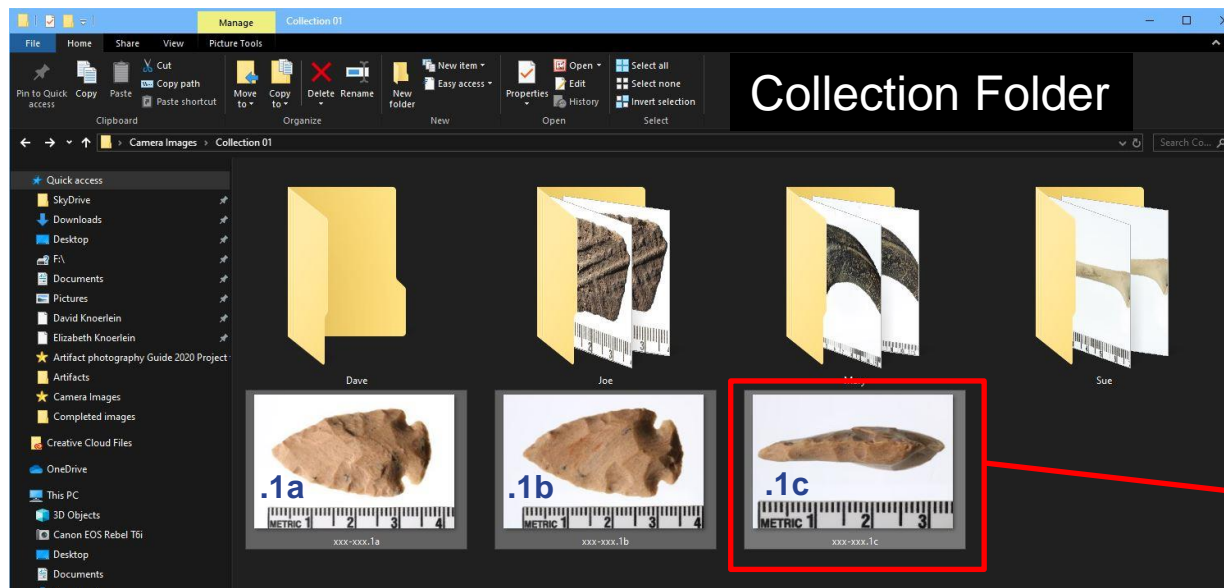
23

- Select the best image and move it into the Collection Folder



24

- In the Collection Folder Rename the image file with the (Artifact ID Number followed by .1b) Example: XXX-XXX.1b



# Capturing Images (Projectile Point)

# Manager Quality Control Review

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The lab manager will now review all the final (re-named) images in full screen mode.

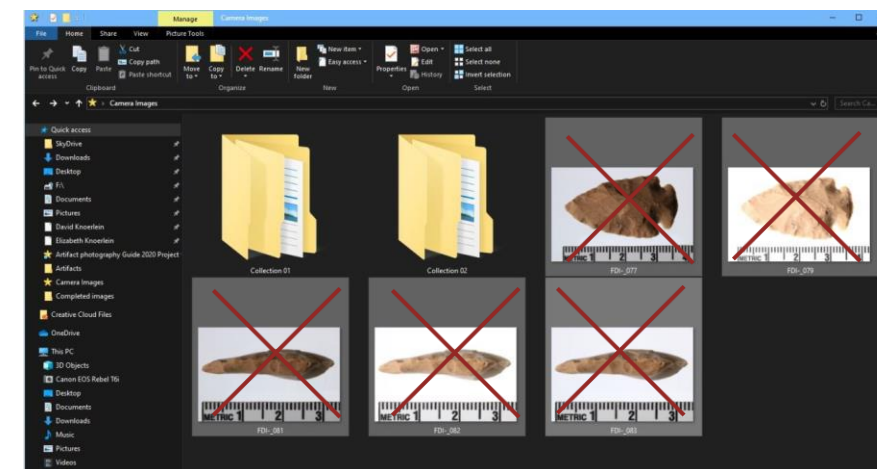
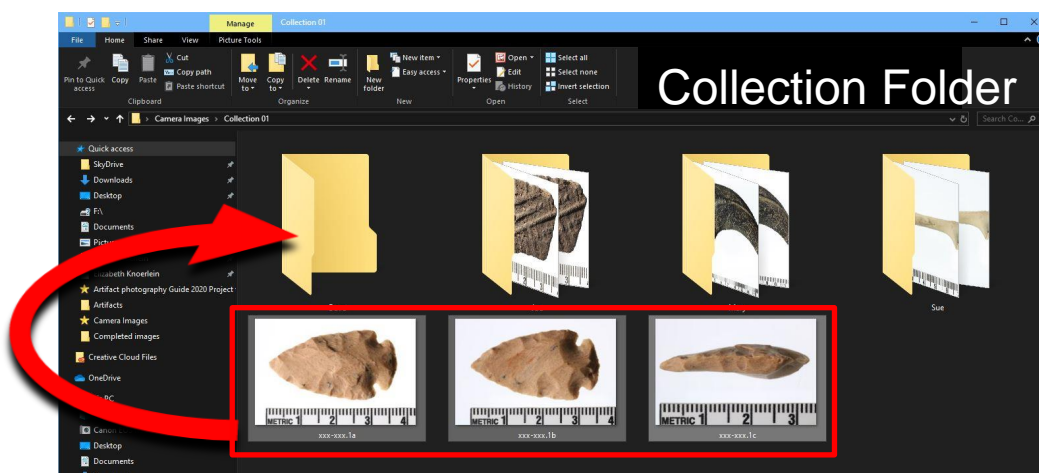


Photo Tips

Before calling the manager to review your images it's a good idea to enlarge them full screen and check for dust spots, focus, composition, and exposure.

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After manager approval move the images into the user's folder and delete all the test shots in the Camera Images Folder.



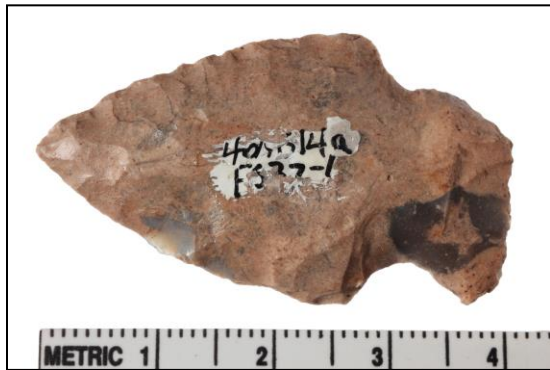
# Manager Quality Control Review

Minimum Required Views

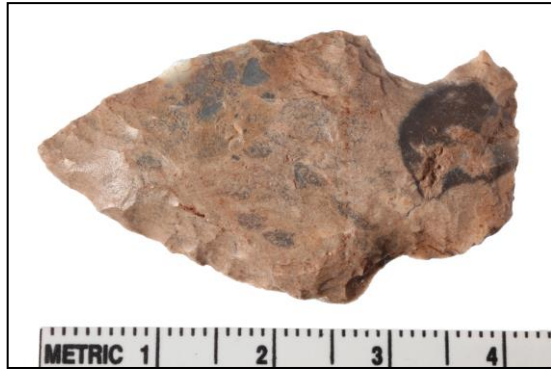
3

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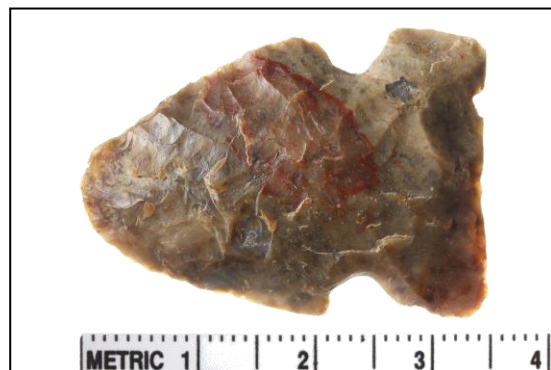
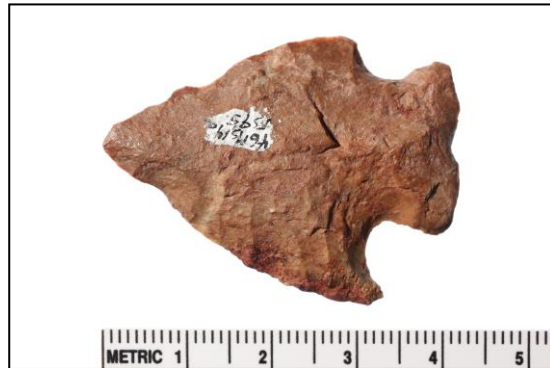
**.1a**



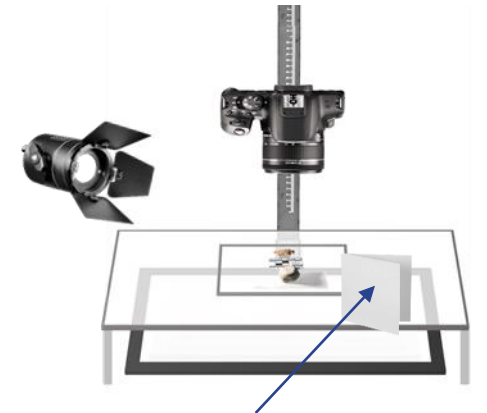
**.1b**



**.1c**



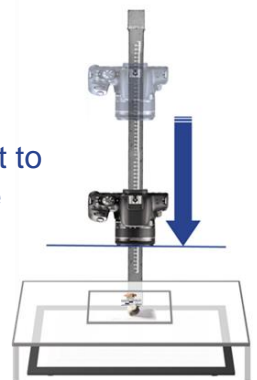
Move the studio light to the side and lower it to get more surface detail on the artifact.



Place a white reflector on the right side to reduce shadows

**NOTE: Do Not remove shadows totally.**

Move the camera closer to the artifact to fill the frame for the (.1c) shot



Minimum Required Views

3

- .1a** Point always points (left) **NOTE: The side with markings on it is always the (.1a) shot**
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**.1a**



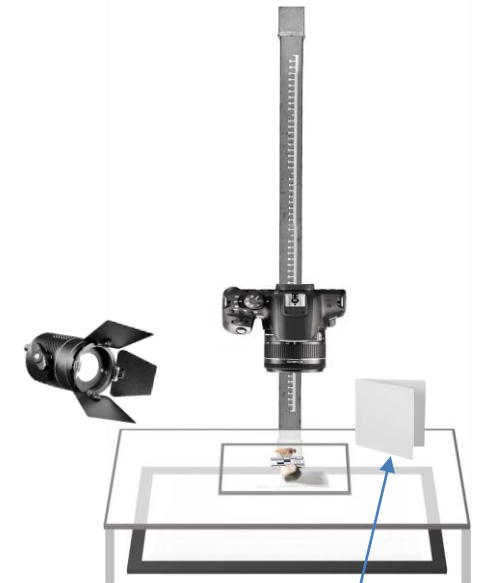
**.1b**



**.1c**



Move the studio light to the side and lower it to get more surface detail on the artifact.



Place a white reflector on the right side to reduce shadows  
**NOTE: Do Not remove shadows totally.**

Minimum  
Required Views

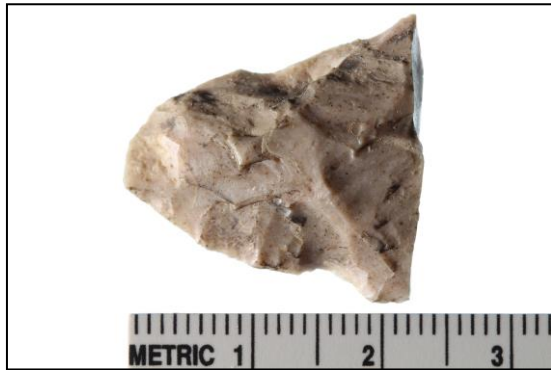
2

**.1a** Point always points (left) **NOTE: The side with markings on it is always the (.1a) shot**  
**.1b** Rotate the point over and position it just like the (.1a) shot.

**.1a**



**.1b**



**.1a**



**.1b**



Minimum  
Required Views

3

- .1a** Position the artifact with the exterior side (or decorated side) facing the camera lens. Rim is at the top of the frame.
- .1b** Flip the artifact to the other side with the interior facing the camera lens and the rim is still at the top of the frame.
- .1c** Using Tacky wax position the artifact on its side with the rim facing left and the exterior facing the top of the frame.

**.1a**

**.1b**

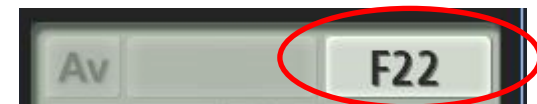
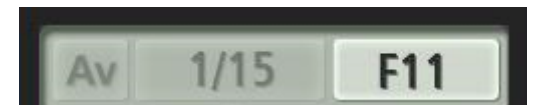
**.1c**



Place the focus target box on the leading edge of the profile view for the (.1c) shot.



Change the Aperture from F11 to **F22**



Minimum  
Required Views

2

- .1a Position the artifact with the exterior side (or decorated side) facing the camera lens.
- .1b Flip the artifact to the other side with the interior facing the camera lens.

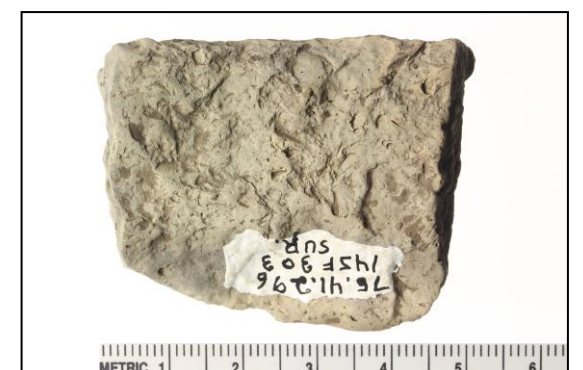
**.1a (Decorated)**

**.1b**



**.1a (Undecorated)**

**.1b**





Minimum Required Views

3

- .1a** Position the artifact with the (Handle) facing the camera lens.
- .1b** Flip the artifact to the other side with the interior facing the camera lens.
- .1c** Position the artifact on its side to show the profile of the handle.

(Prehistoric)

.1a



.1b



.1c



(Historic)



If the handle is attached to a rim (like the first example) follow the guidelines for shooting rims.



If the handle is not attached, position it lengthwise to fill the frame.



Minimum  
Required Views

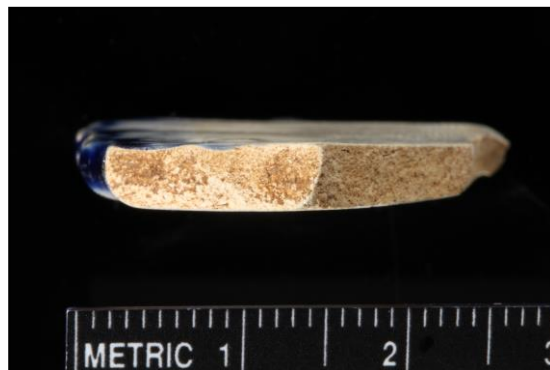
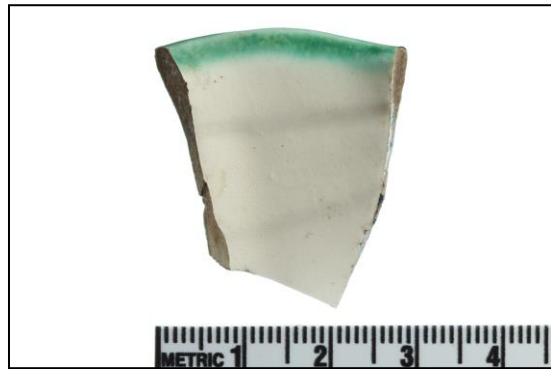
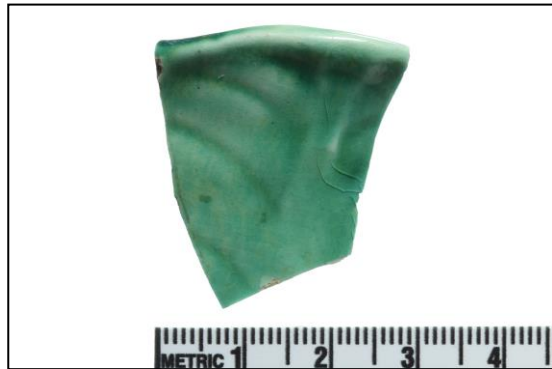
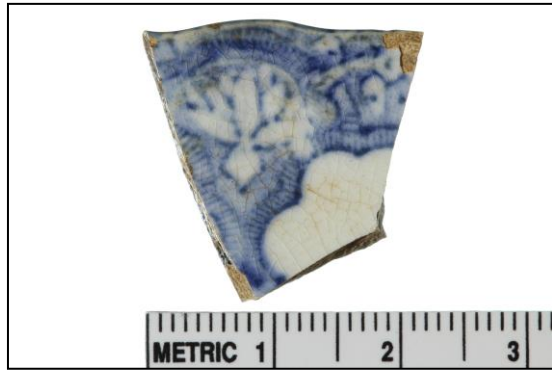
3

- .1a** Position the artifact with the exterior side (or decorated side) facing the camera lens. Rim is at the top of the frame.
- .1b** Flip the artifact to the other side with the interior facing the camera lens and the rim is still at the top of the frame.
- .1c** Using Tacky wax position the artifact on its side with the rim facing left and the exterior facing the top of the frame.

**.1a**

**.1b**

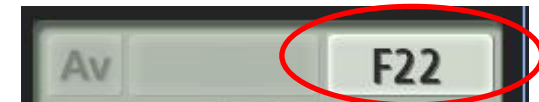
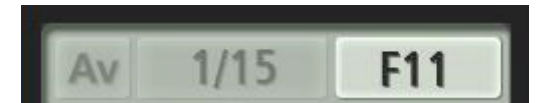
**.1c**



Place the focus target box on the leading edge of the profile view for the (.1c) shot.



Change the Aperture from F11 to **F22**



Minimum  
Required Views

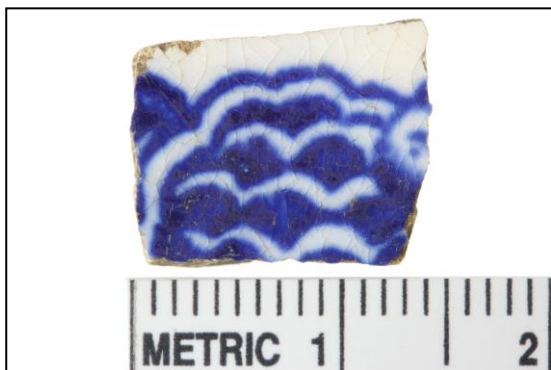
2

- .1a Position the artifact with the exterior side (or decorated side) facing the camera lens.
- .1b Flip the artifact to the other side with the interior facing the camera lens.

**.1a** (Decorated)

**.1b**

**.1a** (Undecorated) **.1b**



Minimum  
Required Views

4

- .1a Position the bottle horizontally on the plexiglass with the neck facing (LEFT) and the decorated side facing up towards the camera.
- .1b Rotate the bottle over and photograph the other side.
- .1c Rotate the bottle on one edge to show thickness and a manufacturing seam if there is one.
- .1d Position the bottle with the bottom facing up towards the camera to show any markings.

.1a



.1b



.1c



.1d



**NOTE:** Bottles come in all sizes and shapes. Below is a sample of a bottle that has markings on the side and on the base.

.1a



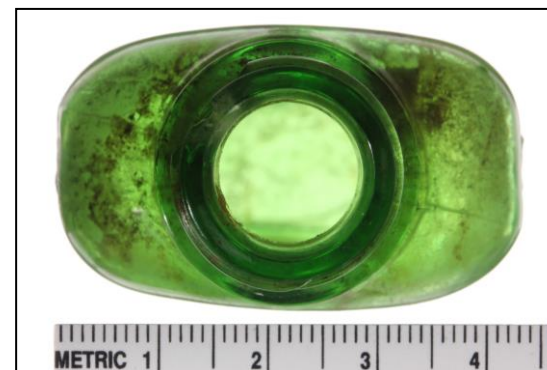
.1b



.1c



.1d



Minimum  
Required Views

3

- .1a** Position the bottle horizontally on the plexiglass with the neck facing (LEFT) and the decorated side facing towards the camera.  
**.1b** Rotate the bottle to see a seam (if one is visible).  
**.1c** Position the bottle with the bottom facing the camera lens.

**.1a****.1b****.1c**

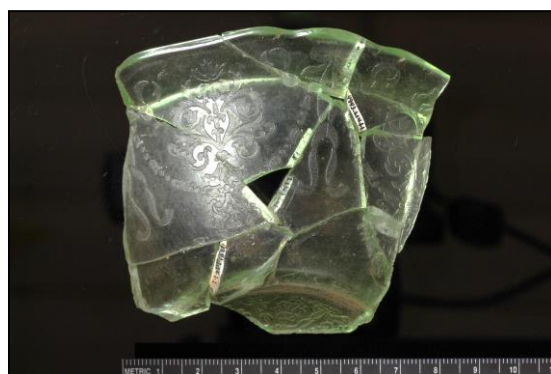
**.1a** Position fragment horizontally and fill the frame by moving the camera closer to the artifact

**(Glass Fragments)**

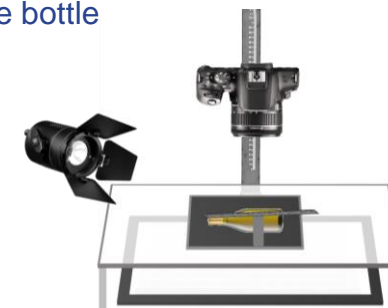
Required Views

1

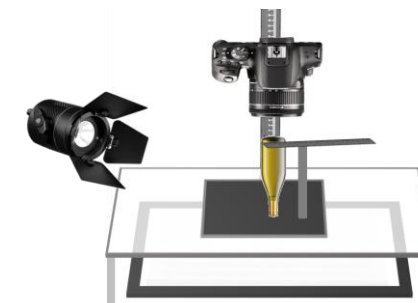
- .1a** Position the fragment so that it fills the frame. If it's a bottle neck (face left) if it's a rim (Rim is at the top of the frame).

**.1a****.1a****.1a**

- (Side views) Position the studio light to the side and lower it.
- Make sure the (Black) scale is level with the bottle



- (Standing) Move the studio light to the side and raise it up above the standing bottle.
- Make sure the (Black) scale is also raised and level with the bottle.



Minimum  
Required Views

2

- .1a Position the artifact lengthwise to fill the frame.
- .2a Rotate the artifact and shoot the other side.

.1a (Unmodified bone) .1b



.1a (Modified bone) .1b



Minimum  
Required Views

2

- .1a** Position the artifact lengthwise to fill the frame with roots facing right.  
**.2a** Rotate the artifact and shoot the other side.

**.1a**



**.1b**



**.1a**



**.1b**



### (Multiple Teeth)

Minimum  
Required Views

3

- .1a** Position the artifact lengthwise to fill the frame with teeth facing the top of the frame.  
**.2a** Flip the artifact and shoot the other side.  
**.3a** Position the artifact with the teeth facing the camera lens.

**.1a**



**.1b**



**.1c**



Minimum  
Required Views

**2+**  
Ask Manager

**.1a** Position the artifact lengthwise to fill the frame showing the surface detail.  
**.1b** Rotate the artifact and shoot the other side.  
**.1c, .1d, etc.** Ask manager for additional views.

**.1a**



**.1b**



**.1a**



**.1b**



**.1a**



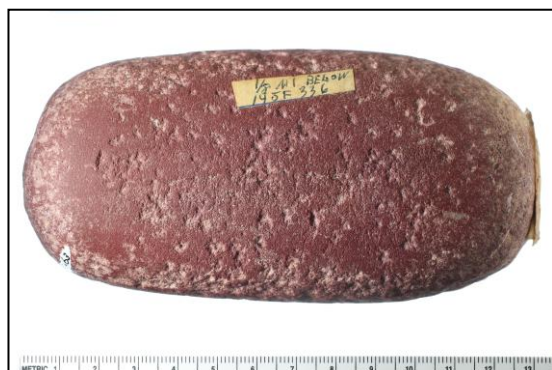
**.1b**



**.1c**



**.1d**





Minimum  
Required Views

2

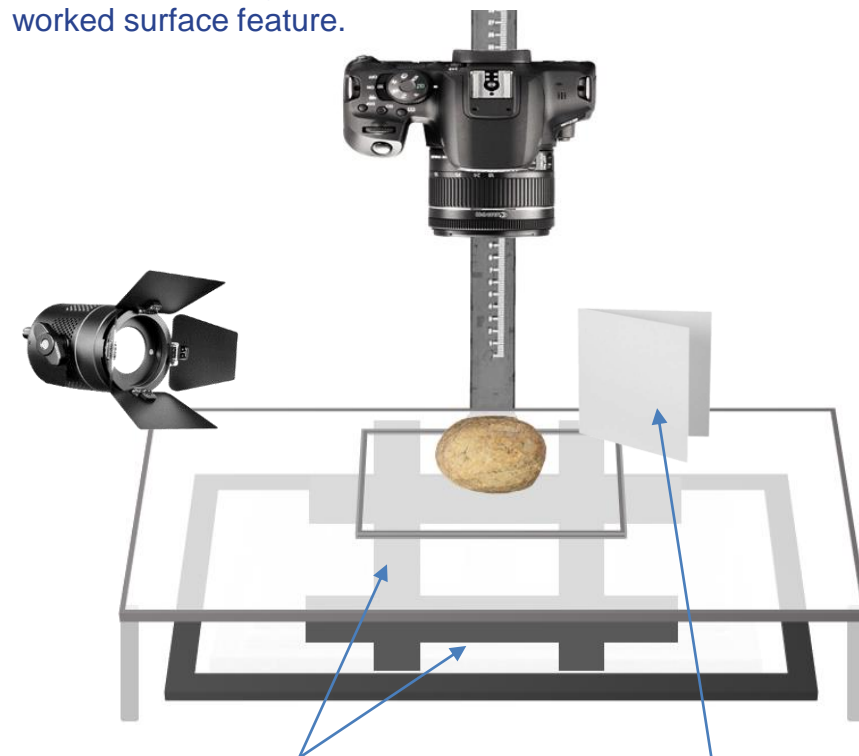
- .1a** Position the artifact lengthwise to fill the frame showing the worked surface.  
**.1b** Rotate the artifact and shoot the other side.

**.1a**

**.1b**



- Move the studio light to the side and lower it to show more of the worked surface feature.



- Place strips of black paper on top of the light table to reduce the light around the curved edges of the artifact.

Place a white reflector on the right side to reduce shadows

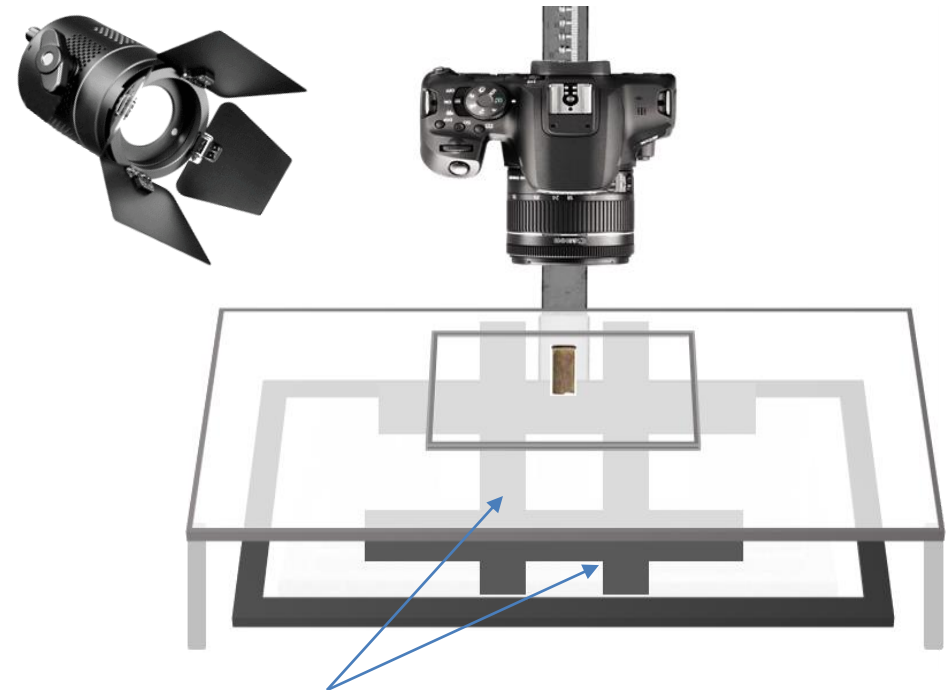
**NOTE: Do Not remove shadows totally.**

Minimum  
Required Views

2

**.1a** Position the artifact lengthwise to fill the frame with open end facing left.**.1b** Position the artifact with the open end down and the end cap facing the camera lens.**.1a****.1b**

- Move the camera down closer to the artifact.
- Move the studio light to the side and raise it up to light the end cap.



- Place strips of black paper on top of the light table to reduce the light around the curved edges of the artifact.

Minimum Required Views

2

**.1a** Position the button face up and centered on a raised pedestal.  
**.1b** Flip the button and shoot the other side.

**.1a**

**(Botanical)**

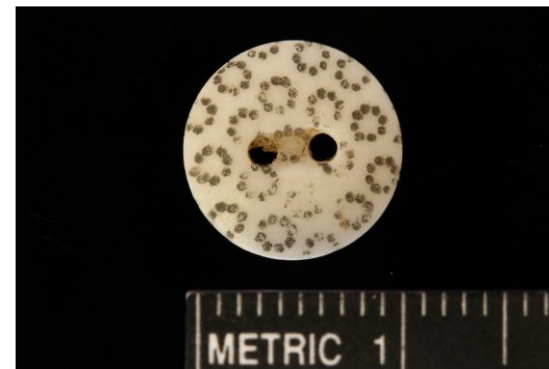
**.1b**



**.1a**

**(Plastic)**

**.1b**



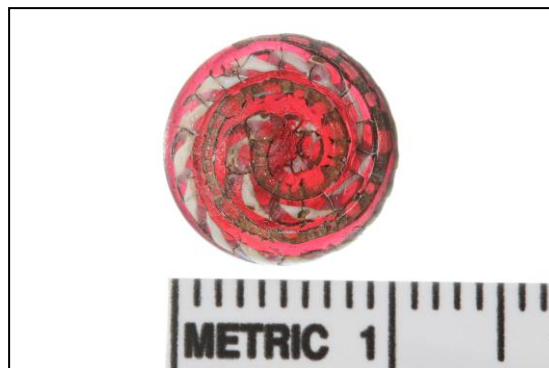
**(Metal)**



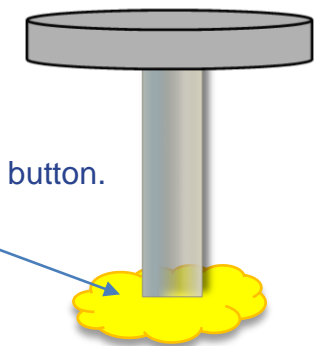
**(Shell)**



**(Plastic)**



- Use a cut piece of a drinking straw to elevate the button.
- Use tacky wax to hold the straw in place.



Minimum  
Required Views

2

**.1a** Position the coin face up and centered on a raised pedestal.  
**.1b** Flip the coin and shoot the other side.

**.1a**

**.1b**

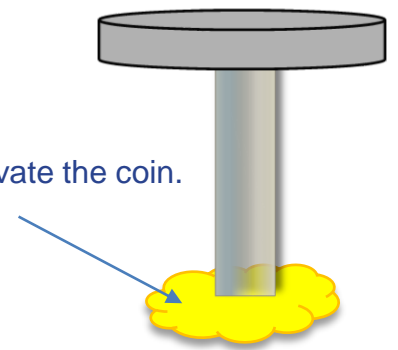


**.1a**

**.1b**



- Use a cut piece of a drinking straw to elevate the coin.
- Use tacky wax to hold the straw in place.



Minimum  
Required Views

2

**.1a** Position the artifact lengthwise to fill the frame (if the artifact has a point, opening, or a special feature on one side) orient it with that side facing left. **Example: knife blade, spoon, figurine, etc.**  
**.1b** Rotate the artifact and shoot the other side.

**.1a**

**.1b**



**.1a**

**.1b**



Minimum  
Required Views

**2+**  
Ask Manager

**.1a, .1b, .1c, .1d..... Ask Manager?**

**.1a**



**.1b**



**.1c**



**.1d**



Minimum  
Required Views

1

.1a Select the best view and position it lengthwise in the frame.

