

EVOLVE LEVEL 6, Unit Quiz 4B

- Host** Hello, and welcome to this week's episode of Science Matters, the weekly podcast dedicated to keeping you up to date on the latest developments in the scientific community. Today we're talking with Dr. Leslie Gellman, professor of archaeology at Eastern University, about the ways in which drones have revolutionized her field. Welcome, Dr. Gellman. Where should we start?
- Dr. Gellman** Well, first I would clarify that it's overstating things a bit to say that drones have revolutionized archaeology. They are, of course, an incredibly useful tool and they greatly improve our access to some sites, and the top-down perspective they can provide is often invaluable. But in most cases drones allow us to do the things we were already doing more easily and with less impact on a site, rather than allowing us to do things we simply couldn't do before.
- Host** Can you give us a for instance?
- Dr. Gellman** Well, take aerial site mapping for example. We've been doing aerial site mapping since... uh actually, I guess I should probably explain that term for your listeners, huh?
- Host** It probably wouldn't hurt.
- Dr. Gellman** Aerial site mapping is when we construct a 3-D map of an archaeological site using overhead photography. It allows us to create very elaborate maps of a site without actually having to step foot on the site itself. That's important because many sites are quite delicate and we try to limit our time on them to prevent damage. Anyway, archaeologists have been using aerial mapping since the invention of the airplane. But in an airplane you're limited to taking photographs from wherever the minimum safe flying altitude is – usually at least a couple hundred feet – and that reduces the detail possible in your photographs. With drones, you can fly ten, even five, feet above the surface without damaging the site. That obviously allows for a more detailed map. Another advantage of using drones for aerial mapping is financial. As archaeologists, our research funds are