

Teachers' Notes for Activities

Activity 1: Archaeologist Game

Aim: to provide a focus for discussion about the work of an archaeologist.

Many of the tools will be familiar to children from other contexts. Some of them are used on a site and others used occasionally on site or when the excavation is over, the finds are being studied and the report written.

Ask the children first to identify the tools that would be used during the excavation:

Ranging rods (red/white or black/white poles) for showing the scale on records and photographs.

Map used to find out as much as possible about the area before excavation and to show where there are any known archaeological remains.

Paintbrush to clean around small and delicate finds before photographing and drawing them.

Digger (JCB) often used to clear away topsoil before the excavation begins.

Trowel for excavating objects.

Tape measure for measuring the finds and features that have been excavated in order to record them properly and to help draw them to scale.

Bucket for removing the soil when it has been dug out of a trench.

Spade for removing soil where there are no finds.

Hard hat to protect the archaeologist when near heavy machinery or where there is a danger of falling objects.

Pencil for drawing finds and features and recording information.

Next ask children to identify four other things an archaeologist might use:

Computer for making data bases of the finds, drawing the site plans digitally and writing up the report of the excavation.

Saw occasionally used before an excavation to clear tree roots that are in the way of a trench (done with care to avoid damaging trees).

Toothbrush used with water to clean the mud from finds before they are examined by an expert.

Microscope for examining tiny objects, especially environmental evidence like seeds, charcoal and snail shells, which give information about the past landscape of the site.

Activity 2: Skeleton Game

Aim: to help children identify features of different materials and consider how some survive and others decay over time. Understanding this helps them appreciate the partial evidence an archaeologist has to work with.

First ask the children to imagine that *you* have been ceremoniously buried in what you are wearing. What will survive for an archaeologist to find in 1,000 years?

Next ask children to draw themselves as they are now and then as they would appear to an archaeologist in 1,000 years. They may need reminding of what sort of things might survive:

Might Survive

skeleton bones
 teeth and fillings
 plastic or metal buttons
 zips
 hair clips
 glasses
 earrings
 watch
 rings
 belt buckle
 rubber soles of shoes
 money, keys or plastic things in pocket

Might Not Survive

what's around the bones!
 hair
 nails
 material of clothes
 handkerchief
 leather of shoes
 leather of belt
 shoe laces (except metal/plastic ends)

Extra points for discussion:

Survival depends on the conditions of burial: wet conditions favour the survival of leather, fabric and wood (cf. The Mary Rose), dry conditions help metal objects survive.

How much would an archaeologist be able to work out about their appearance from the partial evidence that would remain?

What might the archaeologist get wrong?

Sometimes people in the past were buried with gifts or with some of their possessions. Ask the children to think of eight things they would choose. They could think of things that are precious to them or that would show an archaeologist the sort of person they are.

Activity 3: Dustbin Game

Aim: to encourage children to recognise evidence and use it to make deductions and draw conclusions. Archaeologists do actually use rubbish as evidence; the things that people once lost or threw away.

The activity is self-explanatory and can form the basis of either discussion or written work.

Extra point for discussion:

The oldest things will be at the bottom of the dustbin – the same applies in archaeology and is called 'stratigraphy'.

What sort of useful clues might we get from food packets? (ingredients, cost, where purchased, and even a (sell-by) date).

Encourage children to consider the question: 'What sort of things would we be unable to know about the families if this is all the evidence we had?'

Activity 4: Time Line

Aim: chronology is a difficult concept, and there are lots of practical approaches to making it easier to grasp. Every little bit helps, so here is another way of reinforcing the idea!

Print out the Time Line and the page of accompanying illustrations. Ask children to cut out the illustrations and put each in the appropriate period on the chart.

The illustrations are:

Modern: Concorde

18th & 19th centuries: Factory boy

16th & 17th centuries: Tudor house

Medieval: Salisbury Cathedral

Saxon & Viking: Sutton Hoo helmet

Roman: Roman boy

Prehistoric: Bronze Age pottery maker

Activity 5: Bronze Age picture

Aim: to be a focus for discussion about life in the Bronze Age which can also be used as a colouring sheet.

This is an artist's illustration of a scene from Bronze Age Britain. The figure on the right is melting bronze over a fire. The one behind him is pouring the molten metal into a mould, and beyond him, a mould is being opened after the metal has cooled. In the front left of the picture an axe is being finished and in front of the smith are spearheads, bracelets and a sword. On the ground, front right, are bits of scrap metal waiting to be melted down to be used again.

The picture can be used simply as a colouring sheet. It would be useful for children to consider first the colours and fabrics of the clothes and other unfamiliar materials in the picture.

It could provide a focus for a discussion on life in the Bronze Age. It could also be used as an activity, with children asked to circle the things that would survive for an archaeologist to find. If so little would survive, how much of the picture is guesswork? Can we be sure that the artist has got it right?

Activity 6: Match the Monument

Aim: to provide a means of familiarising children with some of the main types of heritage monuments and earthworks in Britain.

If the pictures and captions are printed as separate sheets, this can be played as a simple matching game to help children learn the names of the types of heritage sites. Alternatively, printed back to back, the cards can be used as an identification game, the players keeping the cards they can identify correctly.

There are six early sites and six later ones, so you can limit the game to either prehistoric and Roman, or medieval and later. Alternatively use them as one larger set.

The monuments are:

Castle (Rochester Castle, Norman) *This is the keep of the castle, the strongest point of defence. Stone-built castles appear in Britain from the Norman period and into the Medieval period.*

Henge (Stonehenge, Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age, 4000-1500BC) *Perhaps the best known henge of them all, Stonehenge was first built as a large circular earthwork, and the stones, some brought all the way from Wales, were added later.*

Hill Fort (Old Sarum, Iron Age, 700BC-AD43) *Hill forts are impressive defensive monuments. Archaeologists have found evidence of settlement inside the forts. Old Sarum is north of Salisbury and was later reused as a Norman Castle.*

Cathedral (Salisbury Cathedral, 13th century) *Medieval cathedrals were massive structures in their time, and dwarfed the buildings around them. They were often places of pilgrimage.*

Timber framed house (Medieval and Tudor) *Timber framed houses were the norm until brick became a cheap building material in the late eighteenth century/nineteenth century.*

Folly *This one was built as early as 1606, but most of them were built later, in the fashionable parklands of the eighteenth century, to provide a viewpoint from the great house.*

Round Barrow (Bronze Age, 2400-700BC) *barrows marked the graves of rich or important individuals. There are a variety of types: disk, bowl, saucer and pond barrows.*

Long Barrow (Neolithic, 4000-2400BC) *Long barrows are older than round barrows. This one at West Kennet contained the remains of a number of people.*

Abbey (Medieval): This is Tintern Abbey *Monasteries were dissolved by Henry VIII and survive as ruins or in the structure of the houses that were subsequently built on their sites.*

Bridge (eighteenth century) *This is Ironbridge in Coalbrookdale, the 'cradle' of the British Industrial Revolution.*

Round House (Iron Age, 700BC-AD43) *Round houses were built in the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Most were built of mud and wood, so all that remains are the marks in the ground where the wooden posts had been.*

Hadrian's Wall (Roman) *This extraordinary defensive boundary stretches 73 miles between Carlisle and Wallsend on the River Tyne. It was built at the command of the Emperor Hadrian between 120-128AD.*

Standing Stone (Avebury, Neolithic 4000-2400) *No one is sure how or why these massive stones were moved from their point of origin to the place where they were erected. Nor is it certain how they were raised to their upright position. Presumably the places where they stood were very special.*

War memorial (Twentieth Century) *Raised in villages and towns all over Britain these monuments witness the appalling loss of life in two world wars. Since they often bear the names of the people who died, they can form a useful starting point for children researching their local history.*

Activity 7: What did I look like?

Aim: to allow practice in using evidence, and be a focus for discussion on the different interpretations that are possible from the same collection of objects.

The picture on the left of the sheet shows a simplified illustration of a Bronze Age burial as it might look to an archaeologist. The task is to draw the same person as he/she would have looked when alive 4,000 years ago.

Things to think about

The placing of objects may give a clue as to how they were worn.

Some objects are incomplete because the rest of them has rotted away – e.g. the wooden knife handle, the straps which tied the wristguard, the shafts of the arrows and the leather of the belt which fastened with a carved stone loop.

There are many things the evidence cannot tell us – e.g. the shape and colour of the clothes, the length, colour and style of the hair.

Debriefing

There will be as many different versions as there are artists! Discuss why this is so. Show the class the artist's impression of the Amesbury Archer which was taken from this evidence (<http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/amesbury/appearance.html>). How does it differ from theirs?

Activity 8: What am I?

Aim: to give practice in the identification of prehistoric objects.

If the pictures and captions are printed as separate sheets, this can be played as a simple matching game to help children learn the names of the objects. Alternatively, printed back to back, the cards can be used as an identification game, the players keeping the cards they can identify correctly.

The objects are:

A Beaker pot (Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, 2600-1800 BC) *These are often found as grave goods. They were relatively fragile, special pottery, and the technology for making them may have come from abroad.*

Bone Toggle (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *This toggle was carved from animal bone and used for fastening clothes.*

Copper Knives (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *These are the blades of the knives. The handles were probably made of wood and have rotted away.*

Gold Hair Ornaments (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *Originally thought to be earrings, these are finely made from beaten gold and were more probably worn wrapped around a lock of hair. Only a few have been found in Britain, and those of the Amesbury Archer are amongst the earliest.*

Hanging Pot (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *This little Globular Urn has small lugs around the rim, by which it could be suspended with a cord. These pots are often found with a burial. Their use is unknown. They may have been used as lamps, or for warming sweet-smelling herbs or drink.*

Flint knapper's tool kit (Neolithic/Early Bronze Age 3000-1500 BC) *Below the barbed and tanged arrowheads are scrapers and part of a blade (on right). The long thin object might be an awl or a pressure-flaker, and the sandstone object is a whetstone.*

Barbed and Tanged Arrowheads (Neolithic/Early Bronze Age 3000-1500 BC) *Flint arrowheads were made in different shapes and sizes depending on the use for which they were intended. The barbs are projections that ensure the arrow stays in the prey. The tang is the bit between them which is fixed to the shaft of the arrow.*

Thumb pot (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *Like all prehistoric British pottery this little pot was made by hand, without a wheel.*

Flint knife (Neolithic 4000-2400 BC) *The workmanship on this flint tool is very fine indeed.*

Bone pin (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC). *Pins were made from sheep, goat, deer or cattle bones and were used for fastening clothes.*

Rope (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *This piece of rope was preserved because it was waterlogged.*

Rapier blade (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *Made of bronze, this blade has lost its wooden hilt. It was thrown or placed in a stream perhaps as an offering to the gods.*

Gold bangle (Bronze Age 2400-700 BC) *Gold objects are sometimes found in high status graves from the Bronze Age onwards.*

Hammer stone (Neolithic 4000-2400 BC). *Hard stones were used as tools to shape flint by knocking pieces off the core to create the desired shape.*

Antler pick (Neolithic 4000-2400 BC) *Deers' antlers are very hard, and were used as tools. This shape made an efficient pickaxe for digging pits and boundary ditches or even a monument as large as Maiden Castle or as deep as Grimes Graves.*

Shovel made from a cow's shoulder blade (Neolithic 4000-2400 BC) *When digging ditches or building banks, a cow's scapula made a good shovel.*

Activity 9: World Heritage Site Game

Aim: to give practice in the identification of some of the better known sites designated as of international importance.

If the pictures and captions are printed as separate sheets, this can be played as a simple matching game to help children learn the names of the World Heritage Sites. Alternatively, printed back to back, the cards can be used as an identification game, the players keeping the cards they can identify correctly.

You may also find it helpful to use these cards in conjunction with the wall map of World Heritage Sites available from UNESCO, or the interactive 3D map on their website. <http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=319>

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