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Teaching and learning activities introduction

These session notes and activity mats will support teachers to explore:

- Layers of time (an overview of Prehistory)
- Home, farming and early settlements
- Celebrations and rituals
- Fiskerton Causeway (art, culture, festivals, religion, ritual and trade)
- Future archaeologists (archaeology and evidence, how we know what we know).

The approach is active learning, allowing pupils to make full use of the resources and expertise available locally. They will explore:

- The evidence from today
- The evidence from the past
- How we investigate both.

The development of the resources benefits from the strong links between HER and The Collection Museum in Lincoln. The resources also benefit from partnership working with local schools and colleges.

These teaching and learning resources are divided into five sessions and each session has its own folder of resources including activity mats.

Teachers can use the Background information as a set text. Here are some ideas:

- Create a shape poem using key words and phrases from the text
- Create a game of matching pairs by collecting or drawing pictures to describe key information in the text
- Cut ten sentences from the text and order them according to: most to least important; most to least interesting; most to least ‘known’.

Upper Key Stage Two pupils could:

- Summarise the text in 50 or 100 words
- Highlight key vocabulary and create a dictionary of definitions for each theme
- Create a quiz for younger children
- Create a short news story for a local radio station based Lincolnshire’s Prehistoric past.
Curriculum areas
The resource is cross curricular embracing:
History, Geography, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths.
Within these subject areas there is potential to explore:

Languages and literacy: Oral tradition, storytelling, recording or preserving stories, creative writing inspired by prehistory.

History: History Stone Age to Iron Age
How our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
Both the long arc of development and complexity of specific aspects of the content
Develop a chronologically secure knowledge of British, local and world history, establish clear narratives within and across the periods they study

Geography:
Interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
Communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.

Design Technology:
Design and make strong structures. Design and make log boats.
Using reconstruction drawings as a starting point. Linking into objects at The Collection Museum

STEM Science (materials and their properties)
- Floating and water resistance
- Design, make, test and review
- Forces
- Working scientifically – taking measurements, recording and presenting results
- Negative numbers and ratio
Session 1 Layers of time

Aim of session

- To provide an overview of Prehistory, from Stone Age to Iron Age.
- To identify the main changes marking the transition from Stone Age to Iron Age.

Curriculum links

History Stone Age to Iron Age

- How our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
- Both the long arc of development and complexity of specific aspects of the content
- Develop a chronologically secure knowledge of British, local and world history, establish clear narratives within and across the periods they study
- Devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference, and significance.

Resources

- PowerPoint presentation: Prehistoric Illustrations
- PowerPoint presentation: Ancient Evidence
- Background information
- Layers of Time Activity Mat
- Objects Old and New.
Session 1 Layers of Time (Activity Mat)

**Start** by sharing the illustrations. **Explain**, these illustrations were specially commissioned by HER to show the same imagined piece of Lincolnshire landscape at different times in Prehistory. There are five versions showing what the land might have looked like from Palaeolithic times through to Iron Age.

The illustrations can be used to look at the main similarities and differences and to provide context over a vast time period. Depending on the level of the children, share some of the background information, being careful to stress that the time periods are approximate and change happened gradually.

**Chronology**

Ask pupils to work together in small groups.

Give them a copy of the five illustrations.

Ask them to put the illustrations in chronological order.

When they think they have them in the correct order, ask them to explain their decision.

Use the PowerPoint presentation: Prehistoric Illustrations to show the correct order and identify and discuss the main changes from one period to the next.

A potential second activity is to put the illustrations in order of the most important changes or events that happened. This is useful in showing the difference between chronology and significance.

**Similar or different**

Now ask pupils to do some detective work. Look at the illustrations very carefully. What are the main similarities and differences.

Encourage them to look carefully for:

- Signs of human life
- Signs of animal life
- Trees
- Changes in the landscape.

**Useful info for teachers**

**The Palaeolithic illustration** shows a tundra-like landscape with very few trees and little indication of human life. There are animals gathered at the river’s edge.

**The Mesolithic illustration** shows that with a change in temperature, the land is now covered with a variety of conifers and broadleaved trees.

There is a shelter with a fire burning in a clearing. The clearing appears to be sheltered by a bank and trees. An important point to make is there were no caves in Lincolnshire and so no cave dwellings.

**The Neolithic illustration** shows that people cleared the area of trees. There are three or four houses together, with what appears to be a fire heating the one of the dwellings. Across the river there is another fire which may be a sign that people are clearing land to make more room for their community, for farming or for livestock. Animals are being moved from one
area to another suggesting they are domesticated. In the bottom left hand corner there appears to be a long barrow, a tomb. Long barrows are Neolithic. They are rectangular and tombs for several people, possibly a whole community. There is also evidence of people making their mark on the landscape in the form of a henge, a circular mound and ditch.

The Bronze Age illustration shows the land had been cleared of trees to the left of the river. There are much larger dwellings on the opposite side of the river from the previous settlement, with an area of animals.

There are earthworks: a henge with wooden posts and three round barrows, each burial chambers for one important person.

The Iron Age illustration shows a landscape largely cleared of trees, there are round houses together near what appear to be fields of crops. There are two further large round houses. Smoke is coming through, suggesting fires inside the houses.

There are signs of earthworks and the eagle-eyed may spot a bridge and log boat.

A day in the life
Ask pupils to choose a period in Prehistory (suggest narrowing it down to Neolithic through to Iron Age). Ask them to put themselves in the shoes of people living at one of these periods. Invite them to think about:

- How they might communicate
- How they might make a shelter or a home
- What materials could they use to make a shelter or a home? (Use the illustrations for clues).

How might they make sure their shelter was strong, safe and watertight?

What might you eat?

- How they might find or hunt food
- What predators might be watching you?
- What might you do for entertainment?

Now, create a story about a day in the life of someone from a chosen Prehistoric period.

Round the campfire
Ask children to use their evidence to create a story about a dramatic event in their imagined Prehistoric life to share around the campfire.

The story should have an introduction to set the scene and introduce the main characters. The story is to be told around a campfire, so they might build tension by describing an event on a stormy night, or with an element of mystery.

It should include a dramatic event that changes things either mid-way through the story or a twist in the tale at the end of the story.

A conclusion that brings the story together.

Challenges

- Challenge pupils to design a shelter.
Session 1 Layers of Time (Make)

**Objects old and new: ceramics**

In this session, pupils design and make a ceramic object. This replicates the types of objects that are stable and so often found in archaeological excavations.

**Curriculum links**

- Design, make and evaluate

**Materials**

- Air dry clay (available from craft shops and on-line sources)
- Modelling tools such as spatulas, spoons, cocktail sticks (sharp ends cut off)
- PowerPoint Presentation: *Objects old and new.*

**Presentation**

Use the *Objects old and new* presentation to introduce pupils to some of the ancient artefacts found during archaeological excavations in Lincolnshire. Have pupils consider what types of objects will survive for long periods in the ground. This can be linked to the decomposition investigation described in the *Future Archaeologists* section of this resource.

Pupils can consider objects that were functional, decorative and even produced as votive offerings in ancient belief-system. What do these types of objects tell us about ancient societies?

The presentation concludes with some modern objects. How are these similar or different? What type of materials are used? How complex is their construction? What functions do they serve? How will they appear to archaeologists in 1,000 years’ time?

**Activity**

Ensure that the children work safely at all times and follow the instructions for use of the air-dry clay. Note, it is recommended that air-dry clay should not be used to make vessels to hold liquids or unpackaged foods for consumption. If a plate or beaker is made, it should be for decorative use rather than to hold food.

Give the children a design brief by challenging them to make an ‘ancient’ object using the air-dry clay.

Children should be given time to first decide on a design and make a drawing of their design. They are then able to make their design using the air-dry clay. This could include adding decorative features such as the markings pressed into the Bronze Age beaker.

Once the object has dried, it can be further decorated by painting if required before it is evaluated. Has it met the design brief? Their ‘ancient’ object can be compared to modern equivalents.
Session 2 Home, farming and early settlements

Aim of session

- To explore homes and shelters
- To design and make a shelter.

Curriculum links

History Stone Age to Iron Age

- How our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
- Devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference, and significance.

Design technology

Design and make strong structures

Resources

- PowerPoint Presentation: Prehistoric Illustrations
- PowerPoint Presentation: Ancient Evidence
- Home, farming and early settlements Activity Mat.
Session 2 Home Farming and Early Settlements (Activity Mat)

From the Neolithic through to Iron Age people began to have more settled lives, they moved around a lot less and lived in dwellings and eventually communities or tribes.

The ideal home

This Activity Mat focuses on a Neolithic home. Again, pupils can use the illustrations for clues to help them create the perfect Neolithic home. In the illustration the houses or dwellings appear to be square with thatched roofs. Why might this be? What shapes would be best for their design? What materials might be available to them?

Where will you live

Look at different locations. Dwellings are already in two places, but land is being cleared to the right of the river. This land appears to be higher. (The Bronze Age illustration shows development in this area).

Invite pupils to think about where they might live and where livestock might live (potentially in the dwellings with people).

More than one family group may have shared a dwelling at this point. Invite children to think about what is similar and different in the way people lived during the Bronze Age and now.

Design a home

Invite pupils to explore strong structures with modelling straws. Get them to experiment by making different shapes and devising a test to see if their structure will stand the test of time. Triangles tend to be the strongest structures and are often used in houses (A frames).

Present your ideas

When pupils are happy with their design, invite them to prepare a short presentation to show why their building will survive. Can the rest of the class suggest ways to improve the design? Suggestions should be constructive and positive.
Session 3 Celebrations and ritual (art, culture, festivals, religion, ritual and trade)

**Aim of session**
- To recreate an Iron Age henge gathering
- To explore aspects of Iron Age life through festival
- Create a dramatic setting for a tribal gathering
- Creative responses to a Prehistoric festival in song, drama and story telling
- (Make) pottery (see :ayers of history)

**Curriculum links**
History Stone Age to Iron Age
- How our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
- Devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference, and significance.

**Resources**
- Background information West Ashby Henge
- PowerPoint Presentation Neolithic home
- Air-dry clay
- Simple song structures such as this old man, ten green bottles to use as the basis for creating songs
- Celebrations and ritual Activity Mat.
Section 3 Celebrations and ritual (art, culture, festivals, religion, ritual and trade) (Activity Mat)

The information we have about the Fiskerton Causeway and West Ashby Henge is fascinating but clearly we don’t know the full story of either site.

**Celebration**

Use the Activity Mat to plan a gathering of local tribes at West Ashby Henge. The celebration might be at the winter or summer solstice (shortest or longest day) or at the vernal or autumnal equinox to celebrate the arrival of spring or autumn.

It is possible that stones around henges were highly decorated.

Create a dramatic setting for the gathering by designing images to paint on to stones or animal skins (acting as canvasses) around the henge.

**Drama**

Create a short drama to share an important part of your tribe’s year. It could be building a new dwelling, sharing a successful hunt, or celebrating a new tool or invention.

**Pottery compare and contrast**

The Collection Museum in Lincoln has two sets of pottery displayed next to each other. It is Neolithic. One set of burial urns was made in Britain and the other is grave goods found in a tomb in Egypt. What are the differences and similarities?
Burial urns, razor and beads from Stainsby barrow

These tiny beads were a powerful status symbol 4,000 years ago. They were made of a glass-like substance called faience and were probably traded from makers in Central Europe. These beads may have been magical talismans to take to the land of the dead.

Investigate
What is faience?
Why do you think it was so precious?
It was traded over long distances – why do you think that was?
Why do you think they may have been seen as magical talismans?
Label

Egyptian Burial

4,000 years ago, in Lincolnshire, some people were buried in barrows. The Collection has a display which shows visitors how they were often built.

In Egypt this period is called the Middle Kingdom. Royal burials were made in Pyramids while other important people had tombs cut into rock. These objects are examples of grave goods from these tombs.

Investigate

What are the main differences in the pottery in this display at The Collection?

What are the main differences in how people were buried in different parts of the world at this time?

How might you find out?
Dispute

Archaeologists think that at gatherings around a henge, people would have traded, shared stories, perhaps married, but they may also have settled disputes. How would you settle this dispute?

Group 1

You don’t know for certain, but you think a local tribe has been stealing your livestock. They are near neighbours and you don’t want to fall out with them. In a group decide how to approach the subject. How can you be certain which livestock belongs to you and which to the other tribe?

Group 2

Because your settlement is on poor quality land, your livestock struggled to survive. Your tribe was desperate for food so ‘borrowed’ some livestock for milk from your neighbour with the intention of returning them in the future. You were too proud to ask for help.

A votive offering is a gift to the gods. What might tribes wish for in the next year? What sort of votive offerings might they make.
Session 4 Fiskerton Causeway

Aim of session

- To explore the evidence of an important Iron Age site in Lincolnshire Site
- Log boat challenge
- Create a strong structure: a replica of the Fiskerton Causeway

Curriculum links

History Stone Age to Iron Age

- How our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
- Devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference, and significance.

Design technology

Design and make strong structures

Science

Floating and sinking
Magnetism
Strong structures

Resources

- Background information Fiskerton Causeway
- PowerPoint presentation: Fiskerton log boat
- HER reports
- Reconstruction at The Collection Museum
- Fiskerton Causeway Iron Age Detectives
- Fiskerton Causeway Iron Age Detectives Teachers Notes
- Fiskerton Causeway Activity Mat
- Mobile device with Tesla meter installed
- Buried treasure (magnets)
- Sand and spoons
- Shallow tray with any holes sealed up.
- As an alternative to the sand, simply place a piece of paper over the magnets so they are not visible.
- Plasticine
- Water
- PowerPoint Presentation: Causeway Construction.
Fiskerton Causeway (Activity Mat)

Hand out the photographs of some of the items found in the River Witham.

**Everyday items**

Can you sort the items into similar types, perhaps high value items, weaponry, horse tack, tools, jewellery, votive items etc.

Choose an item and draw it.

**How would you make this item?**

How might you make a replica or copy of this object today?

What is it made from?

What do you think Iron Age people made have found difficult when making this object?

**Designing a Iron Age Outfit**

Invite pupils to design an outfit for a Iron Age teenager going to a festival. Discuss the materials that would have been available: wool (we know people at this time would weave woollen clothing because of the weaving weights that have been found), animal skin, leather.

Awls are used to make holes in leather.

Experts also believe Iron Age people would have had access to dyes so the clothes could be colourful. The outfit could be decorated and even accessorised with jewellery. Jewellery might be made from precious stones or metal. It could even be made from animal teeth.
Session 4 Fiskerton Causeway

**Log boat challenge, floating and sinking**

The Collection Museum has two log boats found in the River Witham. One is in very good condition, the other is not.

There is a paper (*Lincolnshire Museums Information Sheet Dug out boats from Lincolnshire*) explaining how the boats were found and how they were made.

In this session, children investigate basic boat designs, such as the dug-out log boats found in Fiskerton and Brigg. These have been dated to be from around 1000 BC (Bronze Age). They are constructed from tree trunks. This is the actual log boat as found:

![Fiskerton log boat after excavation, prior to lifting](image)

In the activity, children shape plasticine to replicate a dug-out boat and test their design to see which can support the most weight.

**Curriculum links**

- Floating and water resistance
- Design, make, test and review

**Materials**
- Plasticine
- Shallow tray containing water to a few cm in depth
- Small ballast weights (dried peas or beans are suitable)

**Activity**

Children work individually to design, make and test their plasticine boats.

Give each child a fist-sized ball of plasticine. Ask them to test if it floats when in a ball shape. It will sink.

Give children little guidance other than the instruction to shape their plasticine into the shape of a vessel that floats. This allows children to explore their own designs and test how effective they are. After about 15 minutes, go around the class to see which designs had been successful. Which ones seemed to pass through the water the most efficiently when pushed? What are the common features?

Have children refine their design to see which one can carry the most dried peas (or other ballast) before sinking.

For success, the plasticine needs to be squashed as thinly as possible and shaped into a broad, flat, saucer shape.

Once children have been able to make a boat that floats, challenge them further to make a boat that are long and thin, like the ancient log boats. Can they make one to float? Can they make it stable or does it easily tip over? How could a long and narrow boat be made more stable? Ancient designs, still in use today in areas such as Polynesia, have outriggers to stabilise their vessels (below).
Section 4 Fiskerton Causeway Modelling a metal detector

In this session, children investigate how a compass can be used to detect the presence of a hidden magnet. This is intended to model the action of a metal detector.

**Metal detectors**

Metal detectors work by transmitting a radio signal into the ground and detecting any signals that are returned by metal objects. Sophisticated detectors can analyse the returning signal and give an indication of the type of metal that is present.

**Modelling a metal detector**

In this activity a tablet or smartphone app is used to model the action of a metal detector. It mirrors the idea that an object can be detected even though it is not visible.

There is a range of apps that describe themselves as metal detectors. They really detect a magnetic field and so are better referred to as Tesla meters. To obtain a suitable app, search on the appropriate app store for a Tesla meter and choose one which is suitable and compatible to your device. One which has been found to be useful on an iPad is *Tool Box – Smart meter tools by Skypaw Ltd.* However, teachers should review other options before deciding which to install on their device.

The device will need to be equipped with a ‘magnetic field detector’ as part of its hardware, so once installed it is best to check that it works. If a magnet is not readily available, they are found in items such as loudspeaker cabinets so scanning these should show an effect. When a magnet is detected, the meter reading increases.

Note that some tablet and mobile phone covers contain magnets to hold them closed. The covers should be removed or held open from the device so that they do not affect the reading.

If it is not possible to use a mobile device and app, the area can be scanned using a North-South-East-West compass. The location of the magnet is shown when the needle moves from pointing North.

**Curriculum links**

- Magnetism

**Materials**

- Mobile device with Tesla meter installed
- Buried treasure (magnets)
- Sand and spoons
- Shallow tray with any holes sealed up.
- As an alternative to the sand, simply place a piece of paper over the magnets so they are not visible.

**Activity**

Children use the ‘metal detector’ to scan an area for the hidden treasure (magnets). The meter reading will increase when the device passes over the magnet.

Place one or two magnets into a shallow tray. Space them out so that they are well-separated. Add sand until the objects are covered to a shallow depth. Have children scan the
area to locate the ‘hidden treasure’ before excavating it with the spoons. They may need to scan the device quite close to the surface of the sand.

Children can be challenged further to investigate the maximum depth that the treasure can be detected or how different types of soil affect the detector. They can also try different materials to see if the detector can find wood or ceramics. Remember though that these detectors will not detect metal objects that are not magnetic.
Session 4 Fiskerton Causeway Construction: building strong structures

Building strong structures

In this session, children investigate strong structures before designing and building their own version of the Fiskerton Causeway.

The Fiskerton Causeway was built out into the River Witham in around 600BC. It was constructed of vertical wooden posts with horizontal timbers, which formed a firm walkway over the boggy ground. It is thought the causeway did not cross the whole river.

Artist’s impression of the Fiskerton Causeway

Curriculum links

- Forces
- Design, make and evaluate

Materials

- Sticky tape
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Lolly-ice sticks (available from craft shops)
- Causeway construction worksheet
- PowerPoint Presentation: Causeway construction
- Test weight – any suitable and safe weight. For example a 200ml drinks bottle filled with water and with top attached.

Activity

Ensure that the children work safely with the scissors and other materials.

Children work in pairs or small groups.
First set the scene by using the presentation that describes the causeway and some features of its construction. Archaeologists do not believe the causeway crossed the whole river. Ask children to consider if the structure wasn’t a bridge, what it might have been.

Using the worksheet (below), children first investigate some features of strong structures. This will help them in their design of the causeway.

Then children are set the challenge to build a low causeway that will support the test weight. Give children plenty of time for design, testing, evaluation and remodelling before testing the design.
**Testing strong shapes**

Use the sticky tape and lolly-ice sticks to make these structures. Which one is the strongest?
Causeway construction

The Fiskerton causeway was a low walkway that Iron Age people used to access the River Witham.

Can you make a model causeway or walkway?
Use the materials you have been given to make a causeway that is at least 30cm long, 5cm wide and stands at least 5cm high.
Session 5 Future archaeologists

Aim of session

- To explore the evidence available to archaeologists
- To look at why some materials survive and some don’t
- To consider what we might leave behind for future archaeologists and why this evidence might be very different from the evidence left by our ancestors.

Curriculum links

History Stone Age to Iron Age

- How our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
- Devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference, and significance.

Resources

- PowerPoint Presentation: Fiskerton log boat
- Two-litre plastic bottle
- Sand or soil
- Multicoloured sand
- Objects
- Seed tray
- Activity Mat.

Fiskerton log boat during excavation
Session 5 Future archaeologists

Digging into the past: layers and timelines

In this session, pupils will investigate how the landscape has changed over many thousands of years and become familiar with the idea that archaeological remains are discovered by digging down through different layers. The older layers being deeper than the younger layers.

It may be helpful to use the PowerPoint Presentation: Fiskerton log boat to introduce the process from excavation to museum.

The activities consist of:

- Considering how the landscape has changed over time (presentation and discussion)
- Interpreting a section of layered soil, using a sample made using a 2 litre drinks bottle (presentation and practical activity).
- Excavation of artefacts from a shallow tray of sand (practical activity)
- Investigating the decomposition of buried materials.

Landscapes and timescales

The Changing Landscapes PowerPoint presentation shows images of the same location and overlays them to show how they have changed since Palaeolithic times.

Challenge children to consider the changes and the influence of human activity on the landscape. How can archaeologists investigate features and structures that were in place many thousands of years ago? What are the types of evidence they may be able to find? What are the types of evidence that will have disappeared?

Digging down into time

In this activity, children consider how different time periods can be seen in layers of soil. Deeper layers represent older time periods. Archaeologists dig down to reveal artefacts and features from ancient times.

In this activity, years are given as AD or BC. AD stands for Anno Domini, which is Latin for ‘the year of our Lord’, referring to the birth of Christ, so for example, the year 2018 is 2018 years after Christ was born. BC stands for Before Christ. It may be necessary to explain to children that years AD are positive numbers and BC are negative numbers. The bigger the number BC, the further back in time. This gives an opportunity to revisit positive and negative numbers and a number line. Sometimes CE is used instead of AD. It stands for Current Era. Before Present (BP) is another term used by scientists to describe dates. So, for example, the Neolithic period started at around 6,000BP (or 4,000BC).

Curriculum links

- Working scientifically – taking measurements, recording and presenting results
- Negative numbers and ratio

Materials

- Ancient evidence PowerPoint presentation
- For each group, prepare a 2 litre clear plastic drinks bottle as shown in the diagram below. This represents the layers of soil in which archaeologists have found artefacts.
The six layers represent the Palaeolithic to modern times.

Cut top off 2litre plastic bottle

Cover cut edge with tape to avoid sharp edges

6 layers of soil and sand or coloured play sand.

Care should be taken when cutting off the top of the plastic bottle and any remaining edges should be smoothed and covered to avoid leaving any remaining sharp edge.

The different layers can be made using alternating layers of soil and sand (obtained from a garden shop) or layers of different-coloured play sand. The depth of each layer is not important as the different time-spans are not necessarily represented by different thicknesses of soil or sand.

To prevent spillages of soil, enclose the open top of the bottle by securing a piece of plastic bag or similar over the top with sticky tape.

- Copies of the children’s sheet (below) with timeline labels and artefact labels.
- Graph paper and plain paper
- 30cm rules
- Scissors and paper glue stick

Activity

Use the presentation *Ancient evidence*, to introduce the idea that archaeologists find objects from the past and that these can give us clues about how people lived at the time. The presentation revisits the landscapes and shows finds from different periods. The penultimate slide shows the landscapes arranged in chronological order. This can be used to introduce the idea that archaeological digs reveal older time periods as they go deeper down.

For the practical activity, children can work individually or in small groups.

Give each group one of the prepared soil sections. Challenge the children to make a ‘to scale’ drawing of their soil section. This requires children to measure the depth of each layer and use the graph paper to draw the layers to the appropriate scale.
Children then use the cut-out labels and the section they have drawn to produce a timeline that relates the different layers to the appropriate periods (see below and associated labels sheet).

Children will need to interpret the date ranges to get the time periods in the correct order. They can then position the discoveries labels with their appropriate period. For today’s find label, have children draw an example of an artefact from today, that they may leave behind, for an archaeologist to find in 1,000 years.

Years BC are like negative numbers, with the larger the number, the further back in time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Palaeolithic</strong></td>
<td>450,000BC to 10,000BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mesolithic</strong></td>
<td>10,000BC to 4,000BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neolithic</strong></td>
<td>4,000BC to 2,350BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romans</strong></td>
<td>42AD up to today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bronze Age</strong></td>
<td>2,350BC to 800BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iron Age</strong></td>
<td>800BC to 42AD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 5 Future Archaeologists

Digging to discover

Children replicate an archaeologist working on a site dig by discovering and recording artefacts in a shallow, sand-filled tray.

Curriculum links

- Working scientifically – recording and presenting results
- Using coordinates

Materials

- Prepare a shallow tray (seedling tray or similar with holes blocked up) with sticky labels as shown below. The labels should allow children to describe the position of their finds using letter-number coordinates.

```
  |   |   |   |
1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
2 | 2 | 3 |   |
3 |   |   |   |
4 |   |   |   |
```

- Adjust the number and position of labels to give an appropriately-sized grid for the tray and finds being used.
- Several ‘finds’ in the bottom of a shallow tray. Finds could include coins, small model items etc. Care should be taken to ensure they are not sharp or could cause injury.
- Play sand or sand/soil from a reputable source to ensure no contamination with hazardous materials.
- Spoons for digging.
- Suitable receptacle for removed sand
- Graph paper

Activity

Children can work individually or in small groups.

Prior to the activity, place the finds in the bottom of the tray and cover with several cm depth of sand. Should an extra level of complexity be desired, use two different types of sand / soil (coloured play sand is ideal) to form two distinct layers. Each layer can be assigned an age, so that the finds can be dated as well as their location recorded.

Have children use spoons to carefully excavate the sand and place it in the container for the spoil. As they discover each find, have them produce a record of its position using their own squared graph paper. They should also make a detailed drawing of each find.

Recording the location and detail of finds is important so that other researchers (maybe in many years’ time) can understand exactly what has been found and also the context it was found in. Have children consider what other information archaeologists would record when undertaking a dig.
Session 5 Future Archaeologists

Investigating decomposition

In this investigation, different materials are buried in the school grounds and left for a long period of time (weeks or months) before re-examining them to see how they have decomposed or remained stable.

Curriculum links
- Working scientifically – making predictions, observing outcomes

Materials

Range of materials to be buried in a suitable location. Materials may include:
- Metal objects such as coins
- Wood, paper and card
- Plastic such as a crisp packet
- Fabrics
- Food items such as slices of carrot, small pieces of soft fruits, chicken leg bone

Context

Archaeologists find objects from the past, but they can only find ones that have not decomposed and rotted away. The first challenge is for children to think of the types of objects and materials that will remain in the ground over a long period of time without breaking down, and those that will decompose and disappear over time.

Could this explain why only certain types of objects are found by archaeologists? For example, there are few remains of the Fiskerton Causeway as this was a wooden structure. While at the same time, stone axes that are much older are found more-or-less intact.

What types of modern materials will still be seen after thousands of years in the soil? This question can stimulate a discussion about litter, waste disposal, recycling and environmental pollution by materials such as plastics.

Activity

Care must be taken when handling materials and digging. It is best if this is carried out by an adult. Make sure children clean their hands and any other soil from them following the activity. Wear rubber gloves if necessary (latex free). Do not choose materials that will decay and cause problems in the soil.

Choose a range of materials and have children predict if they will decompose or remain stable. How could this be tested when the objects are re-examined?

Bury the items being tested in a location where they can be left undisturbed for several weeks. An extension to the investigation could be to try different locations with different soil conditions.

After several weeks, or longer if possible, return and re-examine the buried items. Take care with cleanliness when handling the objects. Latex-free rubber gloves can help to prevent any contamination from the soil. See how the different materials have changed and see which ones have decomposed the most. How do these observations compare with their original predictions?
Session 5 Future archaeologists (Activity Mat)

Ask pupils to think about the items they have with them today. Which would survive for 1,000 years? Why? This should lead to a discussion about materials.

Ask pupils to choose six to ten objects to tell the story of their class. If an archaeologist were to find these items in 1,000 years’ time, how might they investigate them? What might they deduce?

- Would people in the future be able to identify these objects?
- What might they think they were used for?
- How would they know what was precious to us?

Gather feedback on a variety of objects from school uniform, whiteboard, tablets or smartphones, photographs, camera, books, furniture, bins, toys.

Telling our stories

The short answer to the question is probably archaeologists can never know for certain, but people carry out research and make their best guesses about what object might be used for.

The problem is, it is difficult to not put our own experiences onto objects and behaviours. Why might this cause problems with investigations?

Ask pupils to select the objects that would survive to tell children in the future about life in Lincolnshire today.

Which objects would they choose and why?

What would they want children in the future to know about their lives? What messages would they send to the future? What might the problems be in communicating clearly with children in the future?