

Chronology through Archaeology

Aims

To have a simple overview of the chronological coverage of the key stage 3 course

To use objects to further pupils' understanding of concepts of time, especially sequence and relative age, survival and deterioration

To use objects to illustrate the convention of dividing time into historical periods

Preparation

No particular preparatory work is necessary, though the activity assumes some historical knowledge, including familiarity with some of the terms commonly used to identify historical periods e.g. Tudors, Victorians. This activity could be a useful way of putting several different study units into a time context.

Programme

The programme consists of a simulated archaeological excavation. Cleared floorspace and access to the classroom beforehand will be needed. It takes approximately 10 minutes to set up the 'site', and this needs to be done while the class is absent. It also requires the same amount of time to pack the objects away after the session.

The class sits round the 'site' in a circle, and layers of soil (represented by blankets) are removed one by one, and objects recovered and identified. The succession of objects - from the recent past to prehistory - can be linked with particular historical periods. The end result is a time-line objects and period names.

At the same time, pupils are looking at the effects of time on a variety of materials and considering the implications for interpretation. The activity finishes with a handling session. Photographs of the objects are available on the Museum Education Service website (www.carisbrookecastlemuseum.org.uk)

Follow-up

Record the 'excavated' objects in a diagram which shows the archaeological layers.

List the materials used in the manufacture of the objects. Classify the materials into animal, vegetable and mineral, according to origin. Which category stands the best of chance of survival after long-term burial?

Use reference books to find out more about each historical period. For each period, find an example of another object, and - from the Roman period onwards - a significant event, and an important person.



Museum Education Service

