



Archaeologist for an hour!

A lot of what we know about the Romans and how they lived comes from archaeological evidence. Archaeologists carefully excavate a site to sift out all the evidence they can find about how people in the past lived.

This activity links to the year 3 and 4 QCA Scheme of Work unit 6A, “Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? A Roman case study”. Children pretend to be archaeologists and take part in a mini-dig to uncover Roman pottery then discuss what it can tell us about the Romans.

You have

- Large box or tray in which the mini-“dig” can take place
- Enough sand or similar material to fill the tray
- Pottery fragments (remember make sure there are no sharp edges). You may be able to borrow some from your local museum.
- Trowels
- Masking Tape

Activity

Prepare the activity by filling the tray with sand and hiding the pottery pieces in it. Make sure they are well spread out and at different depths.

Split the area to be dug into squares, with one square for each member of the group. Give each square a number. Archaeologists record everything they find on site, and subdividing the excavation area makes it easier to do this. The children will need to record which square the objects they find came from.

Ask the children to imagine they are archaeologists, digging at an ancient Roman site. Ask the group to take it in turns to carefully dig through the sand, using the trowels provided, looking for anything which ‘may have survived from Roman times’.

When a child finds an object, ask them to carefully put it to the side of the ‘dig’ and make sure it is labelled with the number of the square it came from. When they have finished digging, they will record their finds.

When all members of the group have dug through their section of sand, and nothing remains in the sand, you can then start to analyse what they have found.

Discuss the objects found and what they are made of. Ask the children to record their finds using the finds recording sheet (attached).

Useful Questions

- What materials are the finds made of?
- Why do you think these materials would survive in the ground for over 1600 years?
- Can you think of any other materials that **wouldn't** survive?
- Make a list of materials that would and wouldn't survive from the Roman period. What kind of evidence is missing about Roman life?
- What other types of evidence could we use to find out about the Romans?

Research Opportunities & Extension Activities

- Find out about what archaeologists do by looking on the internet or in library books. What other things do archaeologists do apart from digging?
- Find out more about the Romans and the objects they would have used in their daily life. Try visiting your local museum which may have Roman collections. Some museums can provide boxes of Roman objects on loan to schools.

Useful Websites

www.museumoflondon.org.uk/learning/features_facts/digging/index.html
www.channel4.com/history/timeteam/
www.pastexplorers.org.uk
www.finds.org.uk

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	National Curriculum	QCA Unit
KS 1	Science: Sc1, Sc3 Geography: 2a, b, e History: 4a	Science: 1c, 2d History: 6A
KS 2	Science: Sc1 Geography: 1b, c, 2b History: 4a	History: 6A

creativeminds

The Creative Minds project works with museums libraries and archives across the Yorkshire region, to provide young people with learning opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (S.T.E.M.). This ground-breaking project is the first of its kind in the country and is managed by MLA Yorkshire. This pack was developed by Creative Minds with funding from Yorkshire Forward.

