



# Module 1

## Archaeology of the Classroom: *What will survive?*

*Discover archaeology and the work of an archaeologist*

### Curriculum Linkages and Integration

See Teacher Guidelines for additional information



## SESE History

### INFANT CLASSES

**STRAND: Story**  
Strand Unit: Stories

### 1st & 2nd CLASSES

**STRAND: Story**  
Strand Unit: Stories

**STRAND: Change and Continuity**  
Strand Unit: Continuity and change in the local environment

### 3rd & 4th CLASSES

**STRAND: Local Studies**  
Strand Unit: My school  
Strand Unit: Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality  
Strand Unit: My locality through the ages

**STRAND: Story**  
Strand Unit: Stories from the lives of peoples in the past

**STRAND: Change and Continuity Over Time**  
Strand Unit: Continuity and change in the local environment

### 5th & 6th CLASSES

**STRAND: Local Studies**  
Strand Unit: Schools  
Strand Unit: Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality  
Strand Unit: My locality through the ages

**STRAND: Story**  
Strand Unit: Stories from the lives of peoples in the past

**STRAND: Change and Continuity Over Time**  
Strand Unit: Continuity and change in the local environment

### LINKAGES



**SESE Geography**  
- Human environments  
- Natural environments



**SESE Science**  
- Materials  
- Living Things



**Mathematics**  
- Shape & space  
- Number  
- Data



**Gaeilge**  
- Éisteacht  
- Labhairt  
- Scríbhneoireacht  
- Léitheoireacht



**Visual Arts**  
- Paint & colour



**English**  
- Receptiveness to language  
- Competence and confidence in using language  
- Developing cognitive abilities through language  
- Emotional and imaginative development through language

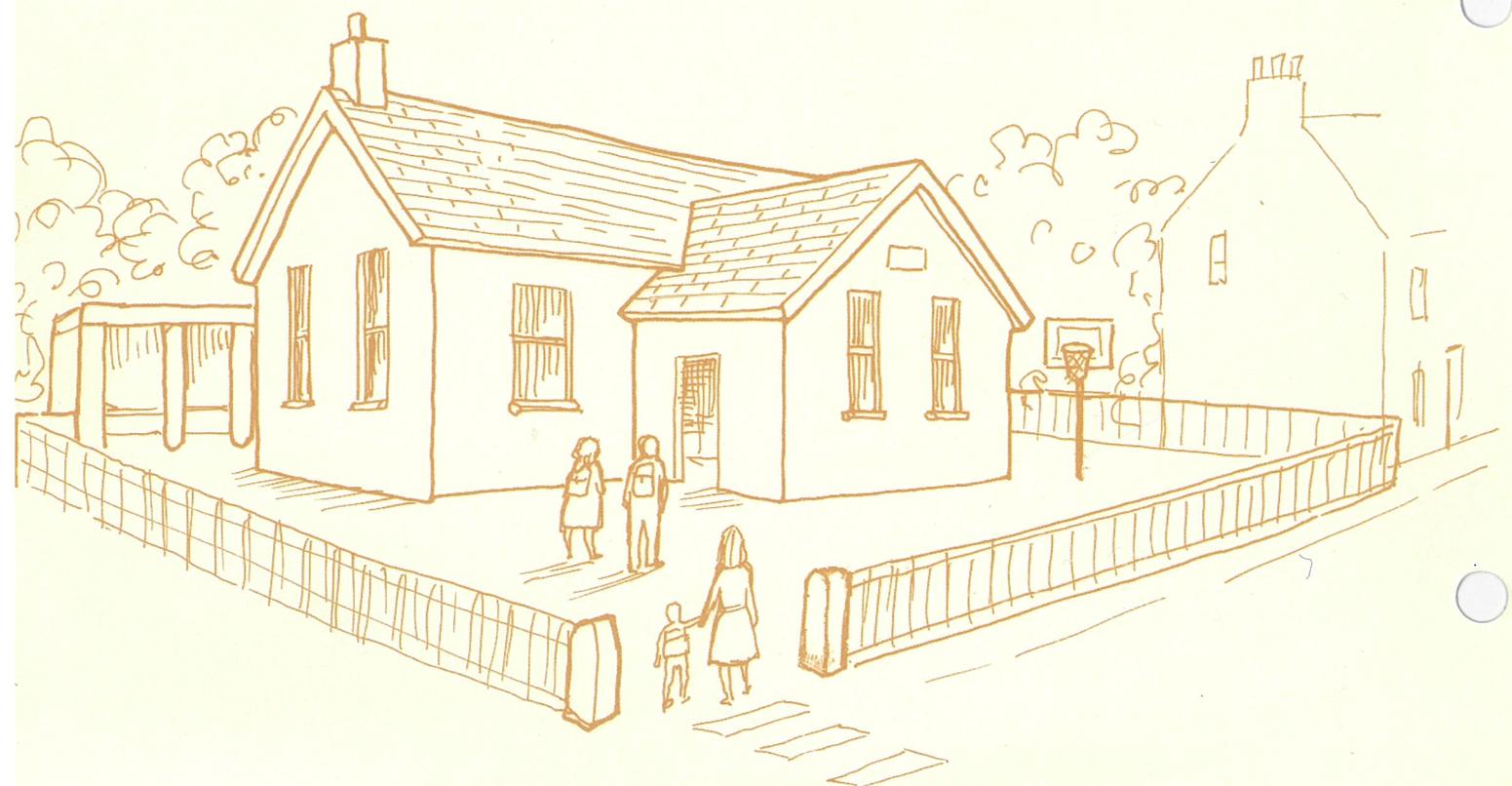


**SPHE**  
- Myself  
- Myself and the wider world

### INTEGRATION

*“It was educational, fun and entertaining and I really enjoyed it so I think other children would enjoy it too. I have to say that it is one of the best subjects in school today”.*

*6th Class Pupil*



## OBJECTIVE



To give the pupils a general understanding of archaeology and the work of an archaeologist by doing an imaginary excavation of their classroom.

## AGE APPROPRIATENESS



This module is suitable for all classes.  
To manage the module for each age group, see Teacher Guidelines



## MATERIALS REQUIRED



### Activity Sheets (AS)

- Colour in the artefacts (AS1)
- Colour in the monuments (AS2)
- What will biodegrade? (AS3)
- Church/School/House (AS4)

## PREPARATION

To begin, pupils need a basic understanding of what the word 'archaeology' means. Write the word 'archaeology' on the board (see if the pupils can spell it for you!). Archaeology is 'the study of how *people* lived in the *past* through the examination of the *physical remains* they left behind'. What do they think the word means?

The physical remains that archaeologists look at can be divided into two categories:

- artefact: portable objects such as pottery, jewellery, etc. (AS1)
- monument: castle, megalithic tomb, stone circle, ringfort etc (AS2)

Discuss with the pupils what materials survive and what will rot away. It is important to understand that what survives from the past is very fragmentary because so much will rot away over time. Only what survives is available for the archaeologist to study. (AS3)



Prompt: When discussing *monuments* use local examples.

Every  
artefact tells  
a story!



# Let's get started!

## Setting the Scene

- A mudslide flow or a volcano eruption engulfs the whole school
- The school is buried in a deep layer of mud or lava
- A thousand years later the government want to build a space station on the site of the school
- The archaeologists are called to investigate
- What will they find?

## The Activity

Through a class discussion reconstruct the archaeological excavation of the school. What will the archaeologists find when they dig away the covering of mud or lava? Identify what remains of the monument (the school) and its artefacts (the contents).

- Monument: -what will remain of the building?- what features will survive? -doors?, windows?, walls? How would the archaeologist know that the ruined building was a school and not a dwelling or church? (AS4)
- Artefacts: -what survives? what will have rotted away? -do they give clues to the use of different rooms in the building?



**Prompt:** Most schools have a name plaque and this would probably survive in the rubble. It may be useful to keep this vital clue until last and tease out the other evidence first.

## What about the Pupils?



In certain conditions human bodies or skeletons will survive a mudslide/volcano.

What does it tell us when certain rooms in the building contain the remains of one adult, and 35 children all of roughly the same age? Discuss what may survive of their personal effects, e.g. clothes, jewellery, shoes, buckles, dental fillings. What do these artefacts tell us about the pupils?



**Prompt:** Only discuss this subject if you feel the pupils are comfortable with the idea of human remains.

## Historic Research

Background historic research is essential to archaeologists working in the historic period. Such information will help discover the building's use and what happened to it.

- Discuss what is currently on record about the school: history; roll books; reports in local newspapers of events (concerts, sport); school web site, etc.
- What will survive of these records after the mudslide/volcano?
- Where would you get additional information: newspaper reports about the mudslide/volcano; TV and radio reports (would these survive?); eyewitness reports etc.



**Prompt:** Focus on the importance of keeping records and putting them in a safe retrievable place for posterity.

## Putting the Pieces Together

An archaeological excavation is like guessing the picture of a 1,000-piece jigsaw, but with only 100 pieces left. At the end of the excavation the archaeologist must write a report explaining all the information that has been discovered. In the same way the discussion about the mudslide/volcano needs to be brought to a conclusion.

Go through the process of how the archaeologist builds up a picture of the past from the evidence recovered during the excavation:

- It was a school: name and date plaque
- The school was organised in certain way: classroom layout (tables; chairs; doors; windows); hallway; cloakroom; office; toilets etc.
- It was a primary school: age range of pupils (4-12)
- Do the surviving artefacts give extra information about life in the school? (computers; sports trophies; religious statues etc.)

## Closing Activity

You are a news reporter in 1,000 years time reporting on an archaeological excavation where the remains of a school, destroyed by a mudslide/volcano, is being uncovered. Write an account of what the excavation has discovered. What have the archaeologists found out about school life in the early 21st century?

## Weblinks



Classifying objects in the classroom

[www.msnuclueus.org/membership/html/k-6/as/benviron/k/asbek\\_2a.html](http://www.msnuclueus.org/membership/html/k-6/as/benviron/k/asbek_2a.html)

Pompeii in Vesuvius' shadow

[www.archaeology.org/interactive/pompeii/index.html](http://www.archaeology.org/interactive/pompeii/index.html)

### Key Terms

- Archaeology
- Artefact
- Monument

### Teacher's Log

*"This module created an atmosphere of curiosity and awoke a hunger for information in the pupils".*

4th Class Teacher

