Module 3

Excavation-in-a-box
Learn about the past by discovery

Curriculum Linkages and Integration

See Teacher Guidelines for additional information TG

SESE History

INFANT CLASSES	1st & 2nd CLASSES

Strand: Myself and my family
  Strand Unit: Myself
  Strand Unit: My family
 	
STRAND: Story
  Strand Unit: Stories
	Strand: Myself and my family
	  Strand Unit: Myself
	  Strand Unit: My family
	
	STRAND: Story
	  Strand Unit: Stories

3rd & 4th CLASSES	5th & 6th CLASSES

STRAND: Local Studies
  Strand Unit: Feasts and festivals in the past
 	
STRAND: Story
  Strand Unit: Stories from the lives of people in the past
  Strand Unit: Myths and legends
 	
STRAND: Early peoples and ancient societies
  Strand Unit: Stone Age peoples
	STRAND: Local Studies
	  Strand Unit: Feasts and festivals in the past
	
	STRAND: Story
	  Strand Unit: Stories from the lives of peoples in the past
	  Strand Unit: Myths and legends
	
	STRAND: Early peoples and ancient societies
	  Strand Unit: Stone Age peoples

LINKAGES

SESE Geography
- Human environments
- Natural environments
- Environmental awareness and care

SESE Science
- Living things
- Energy and forces
- Materials
- Environmental awareness and care

INTEGRATION

Mathematics
- Early mathematical activity
- Number
- Shape and space
- Data
- Measures

SPHE
- Myself
- Myself and others
- Myself and the wider world

Visual Arts
- Drawing
- Construction
- Fabric and fibre

Gaeilge
- Éisteacht
- Labhairt
- Scríbhneoireacht
- Léitheoireacht

Drama
- Exploring and making drama
- Co-operating and communicating in making drama

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

"It was fun
I like finding artefacts
I hope I will get to do it
again"

1st Class Pupil
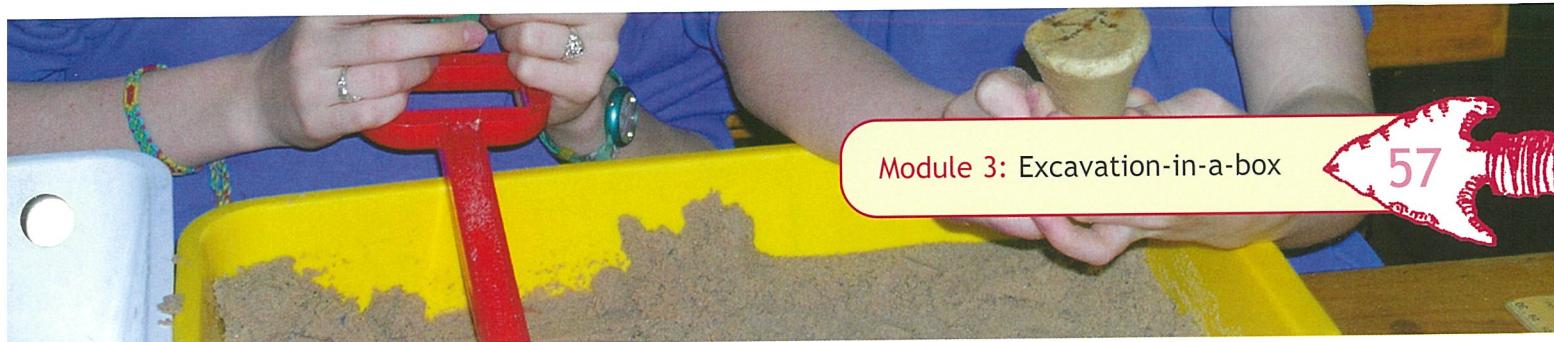
OBJECTIVE
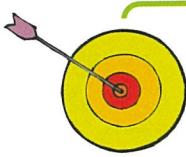
To show the pupils how an archaeologist discovers information about the past by excavation.

AGE APPROPRIATENESS

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

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Per Team
- Square or rectangular box or tray: approx. 30cm x 40cm, depth c. 10cm (e.g. cat litter tray)
- Play sand
- Trowel or toy shovel
- Brush
- Ruler
- Selection of artefacts
  Top Layer: birthday candles; lollipop sticks; top of plastic water bottle; snack packet; small toy.
  Bottom Layer: sea shell; animal bone; pointed stone; hazel nut.

Prompt: same trays/boxes can be used for Module 6.

Activity Sheets (AS)
- Licence to excavate (AS1)
- Artefact Record Sheet (AS2)
- Taking a closer look (AS3)

PREPARATION

- Divide the tray/box into grids by marking the outside edges of the tray 1-4 on one side and A-C on the other.
- In a quiet moment when no pupils are around half fill the tray/box with sand. Bury the four Stone Age artefacts in the layer.
- Place a sheet of newspaper or plastic over the layer and fill with sand to near the top of tray.
- Now bury the modern artefacts in the top layer.

Care must be taken with sharp objects. Sand should be covered when not in use.
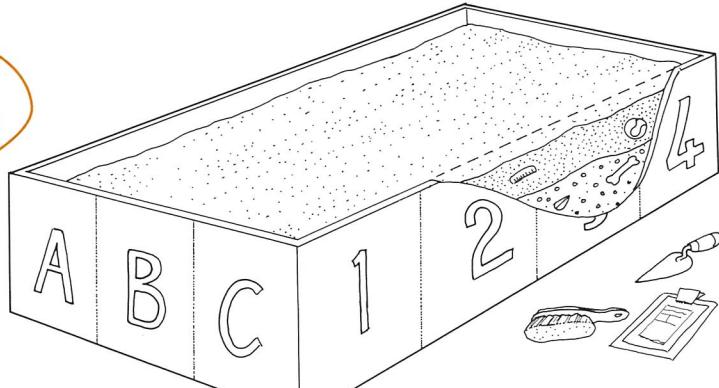
See ideas for layers and sourcing artefacts in *Teacher Guidelines*

Let's get started!

Setting the Scene

The pupils will archaeologically excavate two layers in the prepared sandbox. The layers represent two different levels of civilisation: Stone Age and Modern times. The lower layer is the Stone Age and the Modern layer overlies it. This is the way archaeological deposits build up over time, one on top of the other.

The Activity

- Divide the class into teams of 3 or 4
- Ask each team to appoint a Director
- Give each team:
  - One of the prepared trays of sand
  - Trowel and brush
  - Licence to Excavate **(AS1)**
  - 8 Artefact Record Sheets **(AS2)**
  - Plastic bags or tray in which to place the artefacts
  - Job instructions (see below)

The Excavation

Jobs for the Director

1. Fill out the Licence **(AS1)**
2. Coordinate the work of the excavators and ensure that the work is done in the proper sequence.
3. Appoint one of the team to begin excavating the top layer (layer 1). Make sure the excavators remove the sand in thin layers (not by digging holes!) using the trowel.
4. Coordinate rotation of excavators ensuring that each team member gets an opportunity to uncover an artefact.
5. When the Director is satisfied that layer one has been completely excavated, the trowels are set aside and the post-excavation work begins for layer 1.
6. Keep the excavation neat and tidy – do not allow heaps of sand to accumulate.
7. Activity Sheet 4 is optional (see Teacher Guidelines)

Jobs for the Excavators

1. The appointed excavator begins the excavation by removing a thin layer of sand along the full length of the box using the trowel (do not dig holes).
2. Deposit the excavated sand in a spare tray using the hand shovel.
3. Once the first artefact is found, stop and clear the sand around the artefact.
4. The first artefact found is assigned Find No 1.
5. Carefully remove the artefact and place it in a safe location (desk top/box/plastic bag). If you find a number of similar artefacts they can be put in one bag and recorded as one item
6. Hand on the trowel to the next excavator and continue the excavation.

Post-Excavation Work

Layer 1

It is important to pause after layer 1 is excavated and consider what has been found. One, two or all three of the following tasks should be performed at this stage, at the teacher's discretion.

1. The director asks each team member to fill out an Artefact Record Sheet (AS2) for each artefact they found in layer 1. If a multiple of the same artefact has been found they can all be recorded on the one Record Sheet.
2. Take one (or more) of the artefacts and make a detailed observation by answering the questions in AS3.
3. Each member of the team writes out the story of layer 1.

Layer 2

Once layer 1 is completed to the Director's satisfaction proceed to layer 2 and follow a similar procedure as for layer 1.

Closing Activity

Each team is asked to relate to the class what they found in their excavation:
- What artefacts were found?
- What event are these artefacts evidence of?
- What information have they learnt about the society that produced these artefacts?

Weblinks

Web Link

Using artefacts in the classroom
www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/loans/loans_site/preview/Loans1.htm

The sandbox excavation
www2.sfu.ca/archaeology/museum/classroom/sandbox.html

Key Terms
- Excavation
- Licence

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In the Republic of Ireland, under the National Monuments Acts, only suitably trained archaeologists get licenses to excavate archaeological monuments

Teacher's Log

"I did the excavation with infants by using objects familiar to them – kitchen objects and modified the worksheets to suit the pupils".

Infants Teacher