

ANCIENT BELONGINGS



Activity overview

Much of what we know about ancient people comes from the objects that are left behind. These are especially important for cultures that pre-date written records, and for better understanding the lives of different people: rich and poor, men and women, young and old.

The activities covered in Ancient Belongings are designed to encourage discussion about what objects can tell us about a person, as well as thinking about what isn't usually left behind (for example prehistoric clothes). They are also an opportunity for children to think about and make connections with the past and their own lives by asking the question: do we still have similar objects today? Do we still use tools, wear jewellery, and have toys? What's the same and what's different?

There are three activities provided in this resource, which can be done separately, or you may wish to use all three.

Prehistoric pots enables pupils to make a decorated clay pot. The prehistoric people at Hinxton would have used pots like we do today, for storing food and supplies. Although the pots were designed for a function, prehistoric people liked to decorate them with designs and patterns, much like we choose our objects because we like the colour or the style. Archaeologists are learning about their lives by looking at the things they left behind. Different pottery designs help us to tell how old things are and where they might have come from. Some designs are found in particular places, so we can ask whether people travelled, or whether they traded with other people.

A **Roman brooch** was found at the Wellcome Genome Campus in Hinxton. It survives because it is made from metal but its colours and the details of its design have been lost over centuries of being buried in the earth. Designing a Roman brooch encourages children to think about what people wore in the past, and what materials might be used.

Archaeologists find out about the lives of people in the past by looking at the objects that they leave behind. Sometimes we don't know straight away what something is when we find it and have to look for clues for what it might be. This enables us to ask **What am I?** During the Anglo-Saxon period we know that Viking invaders made it to the lands around Cambridgeshire, and at Hinxton archaeologists found the remains of a Viking sword. The grip is made from walrus ivory and the pommel (the bottom of a sword's handle) is iron so both have survived in the ground. These objects tell us about where people have travelled from and what might have happened – if we have found a sword was there a battle? What might a sword represent?



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