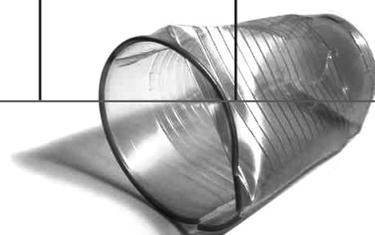


# What's in the dustbin?



Item						
What is it made from?						
How big is it?						
How old is it (more or less)?						
Is there any decoration, writing or other marks?						
What was it used for?						
Who might have made it?						
Who might have made it?						



# out&about

## School grounds focus:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we get there?
- Making the changes
- Using your grounds

## Curriculum focus:

- History
- English language and literacy
- Maths

## Purpose of this activity:

- To examine and interpret modern rubbish
- To introduce methods of investigation – including questioning and reasoning – used in archaeology

## Equipment/materials needed:

- A full bin bag of 'clean' rubbish – preferably sorted for recycling - either brought in from home, or emptied from one of the school's outdoor dustbins.
- Disposable gloves
- Paper and pens

## Preparation:

- Discuss how much of what we know comes from 'the dustbin of history' – the items dug up by archaeologists – and range from bodies in bogs to the contents of old lavatory pits; from buildings and roads to the actual rubbish dumps of our ancestors.

## What to do:

- Empty your rubbish bag outdoors on the school playground.
- Divide the class into groups and assign each group one category of rubbish (paper, cardboard, plastic etc).
- Ask each group to list their finds and then to discuss and record (using the photocopiable sheet over page) what it tells them about the people whose rubbish it is.
- Use challenging questions to provoke understandings – for example, a wrapping tells us they ate sweets. But where were the sweets made? How many types of sweet wrappings are there? What does this tell us about the society we are investigating?

## Extensions:

- Encourage older pupils to discuss and find out what 'real' archaeologists do. For example, what tools do they use? Who gives them permission to dig up sites? How do they record their findings? What do they do with the objects they find? How do they know how old the objects are?
- Visit a nearby archaeological site and/or invite a local archaeologist to school to talk about archaeology and archaeological methods, particularly some of the newer survey techniques and hi-tech equipment, such as infra-red scanning.
- Set up your own an archaeological dig. Collect old cups, vases and plates. Break into several pieces and bury either in trays of sand or potting compost, or in a designated area of the school grounds. Using archaeological methods of excavating (carefully uncovering what is in the soil using the spoons and paintbrushes), recording (setting up a grid using string to note the position of each item; drawing and recording each item before removing) and reconstructing.

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