

History: First Year

TASK	Describe an archaeologist at work	
TOPIC	How we find out about the past <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An archaeologist at work 	
LEARNING INTENTION	Students will have an understanding of the various activities of an archaeologist when excavating a site.	
TASK DESCRIPTION	<p><i>Write, in essay format, an account of an archaeologist at work.</i></p> <p>Students initially learned about the work of an archaeologist through their class-work. The student task was then presented to students and the criteria for success were discussed and agreed upon. The teacher and students then conducted a brainstorming session on the blackboard giving an account of an archaeologist at work. Students were then given this exercise to complete as homework.</p>	
CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ list the ways an archaeologist can find a site. ▪ explain how to excavate a site. ▪ identify instruments used in the excavation. ▪ account for what happens to any item that is found during a dig. 	
LEVELS OF SUCCESS	HIGH SUCCESS	MEDIUM SUCCESS
	Shane	Sarah

Archaeologist at work.

After studying history at Queens University Belfast for a few years I headed off to the south of Ireland with Professor Stone to excavate a site in County Cork. The site was discovered by a farmer while ploughing a field where he found 10 gold coins dated back to the 18th century^A. Further digging uncovered an ancient pot. We got a grant to work there and preserve the site.

Three months later and the excavation was going well. I had got my first real taste of archaeology. The day started at 7am, hail rain or snow. I set out dressed for work. Kneeling on the ground digging with trowels and sifting through the dirt with sieves was backbreaking work but very rewarding^B. The first thing I uncovered was a small comb made from what appeared to be bone. I gently brushed away the dirt stuck to it with a soft brush^C. After doing so I brought it to one of the buildings we were using for accounting and storing artefacts. The archaeologists working in the building were testing them in labs and writing up possible uses for the given artefact. Inside I met Professor Stone and I asked him where to go with the comb. He brought me over to one of the other archaeologists who asked me where I found it. I told him I found it in grid B of the dig^D. The grids were used to tell where each artefact is found. Then Dr. Stone showed me into a lab where they tested the comb by checking how much Carbon-14 was left in the bones of the comb. They told me here that the comb was 300 years old. The professor took the comb to be stored and tagged.

I know now what to do when I find something, without someone's help. The best and most rewarding part of being an archaeologist is knowing your help to uncover history.^E

Feedback for Shane	
A.	Well done Shane. You have clearly stated one way an archaeologist may find a site. Are there any others? e.g. list the other ways of finding historical sites i.e. old maps and stories.
B.	You have given a very accurate description of how to excavate a site.
C.	You mention the main instruments used in the excavation. Well done.
D.	You give an excellent description of what happens an item found during a dig. It might be a good idea to include a list of methods for dating artefacts.
E.	Great work Shane. You have displayed a clear understanding of this particular job- its activities, time taken etc. You might like to divide the main part of your essay into more paragraphs as this will make it clearer to read!

Commentary for teachers	
<p>Overall, Shane has produced a well-written account showing a clear understanding of the job of the archaeologist, chronology and purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In certain areas more specific details should have been provided i.e. list methods of finding a site and include a list of methods for dating artifacts. ▪ Attention needs to be given to essay structuring. 	

People in History

An archaeologist at work.

I am an archaeologist. I went to Queen's University Belfast. I studied History and archaeology. I choose to study here because there was a great interest in tree-ring dating.

I once was called to excavate a site in Cork. I was asked to excavate it because the builders had found many things when they were digging the foundations^A. They had put aside in a pile the things they had found. In that pile there were some bones, coins, bits of pottery and pieces of wood.

I examined each one very carefully. I went back to the place they were found. I dug a bit deeper into the ground using a trowel. Before I dug I drew^B a grid of squares to record each of the finds. I used a sieve to see if there were any small artefacts in the soil^C. But there wasn't many. I found alot more bones where the others were found. I put all the bones together, it formed a body with only a few bones missing.

I numbered all the artefacts, bones and plant remains and stored them in separate bags^D. Then I cataloged them in a site book. They are all the main things I did on excavating that site. That is one of the many sites I have excavated as an archaeologist.^E

Feedback for Sarah

A.	You need to provide more information on finding a site i.e. think of the importance of crop marks, old stories, maps and shadows.
B.	You explained clearly how to excavate a site. Well done.
C.	You have you have explained clearly how to excavate a site using certain instruments to help in this work.
D.	You also need to include some information on what happens when artifacts have been recorded i.e. dating methods.
E.	Well done – a good effort. The essay format you have used has created an easy to read account of an archaeologist at work.

Commentary for teachers

Overall, a good effort has been made by Sarah. Clear essay format has been adhered to and most of the criteria have been catered for. The student shows a clear understanding of instruments used and excavation methods have been displayed. There are however areas for improvement. The student needs to pay more attention to listing the methods for locating a site and how an archaeologist would deal with the new artifacts found i.e. dating procedures.