

Using artefacts as evidence

Junior Infants – Second Class

- Children sort artefacts into groups of OLD and NEW.
- Children sort artefacts into groups of NEW, OLD and VERY OLD.
- Children draw an artefact having been first encouraged to look at it closely, handle and feel it etc.
- Children sort artefacts from their own personal history to form a timeline.(Page 8, Teacher Guidelines).
- Children are shown an artefact and told to look at it closely. Artefact is then taken away and children must draw it from memory. They are shown the artefact again, must look at it before it is removed once more. They add to their drawing.
- Teacher places artefacts in draw-string bags. Pupils feel the artefacts (without looking at them) and are asked either to describe what they feel or draw what they feel depending on age/ability/language ability)
- Collect, handle, examine, ask questions about toys, clothes, equipment etc used by a younger child eg baby, toddler. How are these different that what you use now? Is anything the same?
- Pupils bring in favourite toys, explain how it works, what it is made from, why they like it. Adults visit the class and do the same. How are the toys from past and present the same/different?
- Set up a class museum of old and new toys- label. Ask parents to write a label for their “old” toy and for the child’s “modern” toy. Agree rules about where the

toys should be placed and how to handle, like a real museum eg precious or delicate items to be placed on a high shelf, labels only to be handled for some toys etc. Photograph and collect the labels into a class scrapbook or poster.

(Even if pupils cannot read the labels they will be aware of what information they contain and of their significance to the museum). Invite other classes and parents to view the collection.

- ‘The lost teddy bear poster’- Children bring their teddy bears to school. Each child creates a detailed drawing of his/her teddy for a lost teddy bear poster. Depending on age/ ability they could add a detailed description including the bear’s age, colour, distinguishing features, clothes last seen wearing etc.
- Children sit in a circle. Teacher passes an artefact round the circle. Each child says something about the artefact if they can. Artefact is passed around again. Teacher encourages longer comments and adds further comments to scaffold learning. Probing questions such as : Who might have used it?; Did it belong to a man? A woman? A child?; How was it made? Used?; What is it?
- Thematic: Make a collection of domestic items- old irons, wash boards etc.
- See ‘**We are the World**’ (especially Theme One: ‘*Myself and my Family*’)
(‘**We are the World**’ is a Development Education Resource for Junior and Senior Infants with a focus on SESE available from the Curriculum Development Unit, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick 061 204366

- **LOST LUGGAGE**

Setting the Scene

I found this bag in the back of my car and I need to find out who owns it. I give lots of people a drive in my car and I can't remember who left this bag in my car.

Questioning

Show the bag up to the children – *Who do you think might own this? What type of a bag is it? What kind of things could you put into it? Is it a new bag or an old bag? How could you figure out who owns it? What should I do? Could I look inside do you think? Would that help me?*

What is in the bag?

Ask different children to pull one item at a time out of the bag and then discuss each item as it is removed and build up the picture.

Possible items (a) A baby toy

(b) A babygro

(c) a baby's bib

(d) a soother

(e) a lipstick (Does this belong to the baby? Who owns it?)

(f) a child's storybook (e.g. "Guess how much I love you?")

(g) a rubber duck

(h) a squeezey type toy

(i) an envelope with a card inside it for a new baby – message in the card and teacher could read the message . . . "Congratulations on the birth of.."

Children can guess who the bag belongs to and give reasons for their answers

EXCAVATION IN A BOX: see “*Archaeology in the Classroom*” Pack

1. Teacher fills a large tray with sand/peat moss/clay and places artefacts (items) from an event children are familiar with in the tray.
2. Teacher tells children that she went for a walk yesterday evening and came across a group of builders who were working hard building some new houses. As teacher was chatting to the builders asking them about the types of houses they were building she noticed something shiny in the soil. She picked it up and looked at it and tells the children she brought it with her to show to all her class. (Show children piece torn off a birthday card in a clear plastic bag. Teacher models for the children how the plastic bag is labelled: ('1') Discuss with the children what they think the artefact is and how they think it might have ended up in the soil. Can we know for certain what it is? Why not? Because part of it is missing. Teacher tells children that she decided to gather up some of the soil that was in the area she found the first artefact and that she brought it to school today so that the children could investigate it to see if they could find any more clues. Teacher shows children the tray.
3. Teacher shows children the equipment they will need- gloves, trowel, brush (to brush clay from artefacts), clear Ziploc bags with blank labels. Discuss with the children the reason the 'excavator' will need to wear gloves (to ensure the artefact isn't damaged) Discuss with the children the rules of excavation- Do not dig holes. Model the process for the children- using the trowel the excavator removes a thin layer of clay/sand along the full length of the tray and deposits the excavated sand in the spare tray.
4. Once the first artefact is found, stop and clear the sand around it using the brush.
5. Carefully place the artefact in a plastic bag and label it '2'. Discuss with the children what they think the artefact is. What does it tell us?
6. Teacher hands trowel to child to continue excavation

7. As artefacts are found they are placed in plastic bags and marked. If a number of similar artefacts are found they can be placed in the same bag.
8. When the entire tray has been excavated the artefacts found are recorded on the blackboard/flipchart.

Examples of artefacts uncovered

No.1: 5 birthday candles

No.2: 1 toy dog bone

No.3: 6 drinking straws etc.

9. Through questioning the teacher helps children build up a picture of the important event that took place.
 - a. *What event took place?*
 - b. *What age was the person whose birthday it was?*
 - c. *Did the party actually happen?(Check to see if candles were lit)*
 - d. *How many people were at the party?*
 - e. *What did they eat?/drink?*
 - f. *Who else was at the party? (baby? Dog?)*
 - g. *Was it a boy's birthday or a girl's birthday? Can we be sure?*

Children create the story of the birthday party based on the artefacts uncovered.

10. **Follow up activities:**

Children could discuss their own birthdays. How do they celebrate them? Tell the story of their last birthday. How many birthdays have you had? Timeline of birthday cards to show the birthdays child has had. They could create a class timeline depicting their birthdays. What artefacts would be left to tell the story of their own birthday parties. Why do we celebrate our birthdays with a party? Is this what people do all around the world? How did their parents/grandparents celebrate their birthdays when they were the same age as you are now?

Variations: Instead of a birthday party artefacts could be buried that would suggest a picnic/ a football match/ a wedding.



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