



Ealing Agreed Syllabus: guidance for teachers

KS2.13: History of belief in the UK (1)

Overall aim: To look at the various ways we learn about the beliefs of past generations; to understand that the ideas and beliefs in Britain today have been influenced across time by a variety of traditions.

<i>Timelines</i>	<i>Pupils will</i>	
		Learn some of the key words and concepts related to creating an historical timeline; understand that, even if it appears that way from schematic timelines, there are no clear demarcations between ages, i.e. they overlap.
Aim: to introduce pupils to the idea of layers of history in Britain.	<i>SEN</i>	
	<i>Gifted</i>	
Possible activities		Suggested resources
<i>Note:</i> This unit could be part of a cross-curricular lesson with history, although it is probably best suited to years 5 or 6.		
<p>Starter: Ask children to raise their hands if they were born in the UK. Then ask them to keep them up if at least one of their parents was born in the UK. Ditto with grandparents. Project a large world map on the IWB (preferably one that has the UK in the centre). Draw lines from the different countries showing where the members of the class or their relatives/ancestors have come from. Ask class to list things that they or their relatives might have brought to Britain that aren't readily available here. Ask: what—if any—religious practices did their relatives/ancestors bring with them to Britain. Do they still observe these?</p>		
<p>Activity 1: On the IWB, take pupils through an interactive timeline, such as the “Ages of Treasure” timeline on the BBC website. Using the images on the website build up a vocabulary of words such as: monument, inscription, statue, burial site and artefact. Look at the way archaeologists use the term ‘age’: e.g. Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze, Iron Age, Age of Reason etc. Create your own timeline in a form that can be re-used during the course of this unit. (This is something that the class will come back to in later lessons.) Be sure to emphasise that ‘ages’ overlap. Give as an example something like the use of computers, e.g. how some people in the same family could have entered ‘the age of computers,’ while others have not.</p>		<p>Materials for creating a timeline</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/interactive/timelines/treasure/index_embed.shtml</p>
<p>Activity 2: Hand out worksheets that have a time line that extends a few years before the birth-year of the oldest child in the class and a few years in the future. Ask pupils to plot significant events (with dates, as detailed as possible) in their lives, including when they met significant figures or were introduced to ideas that really made them think.</p>		<p>Timeline worksheets</p>

<p>Activity 3: Return to the timeline you used in the first activity and indicate to the pupils where their individual timelines fit into the schema. Tell them to imagine leaving behind some artefact of their life, e.g. a house, a treasured object, some clothes. What object could they leave that would explain their beliefs or interests to someone in the future? Then, get them to imagine the layers of artefacts that humans have left behind. Show them a diagram of an archaeological dig, which reveals 'strata' of history. (see background information)</p>	<p>http://pages.vassar.edu/realarchaeology/author/ngtran/</p>
<p>Activity 4: Brainstorm words that refer to ages in an individual's timeline: e.g. infancy, childhood, school age, adulthood, pension age, old age etc. Also talk about how we outgrow clothes. Have any of the children worn hand-me-downs? How about fashion in clothes? Now, shift the discussion to ideas. Do we outgrow ideas? Are there hand-me-down ideas? What about the introduction of new ideas? How hard or easy is it to change the way we think? (This should be an open discussion.)</p>	
<p>Plenary: Tell class to imagine that your school was built on land where there used to be a school in Victorian times. And that when builders were working on an extension, they discovered an old metal box. You open that box and find: an abacus, hand slate, chalk, copy book, dip pen and inkwell, or pictures of these. What would these objects tell you?</p> <p>Now, ask class if they know what a time capsule is. Say that people sometimes deliberately bury things/or put things away (e.g. in a loft or cupboard) so that they can look back on their past. Create a time capsule that would give students in the future an idea of what your school life is like. What would you put in it (e.g. a school badge)? Get students to write a letter to their future older self, describing their current interests, something that they could read out at a future class reunion. How much do they think would have changed by then? (You can tell them some of the things that have changed since you went to school.)</p>	<p>http://www.victorianschool.co.uk/schoolday.html</p>
<p>SEN</p>	
<p>Gifted</p>	

<i>Evidence from the past</i>	<i>Pupils will</i>	Learn that we can speculate about past ages based on archaeological finds; they also learn that bias has to be considered when looking at historical accounts of other cultures.
Aim: To get pupils to start to formulate intelligent questions about historical and archaeological evidence.	<i>SEN</i>	
	<i>Gifted</i>	
Possible activities		Suggested resources
<p>Starter: Remind pupils of the time capsule from the previous lesson. On the IWB, go through the relevant pages and stories from the “Dig up the past” game about finds in a peat bog, specifically the skull, sword, cauldron, bog body and spindle whorl. As the ‘fact file’ on the website suggests, we can only look at the clues and make ‘educated guesses’ about what these finds suggest about the people who put these things in the bog. All of these could be viewed as sacrifices to a god or gods, but they could also have mundane significance. How do we tell? Or can we know for sure in the absence of more conclusive evidence? (This website makes the following excellent point: “Children need to understand that the history of this era – i.e. the Iron Age – was created using supposition, imagination and reconstruction.”)</p>		<p>Iron Age Celts “dig up the past game” http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/celts/index.shtml?1</p>
<p>Activity 1: Share with the class your personal artefact or memento. This can be anything, as long as it has ‘clues’ about what it is and what it says about you or the person to whom it belongs. For instance a hiking boot or gardening glove that is well worn could indicate that you/the owner really love(s) to hike/garden; an old family photo in an antique frame could indicate that you treasure your past and/or your family. Plus, the location/subject of the picture could say something about your origins, or the origin of your family, or a treasured holiday spot.</p>		<p>A personal ‘artefact’ that says things about you or about someone close to you.</p>
<p>Activity 2: Class to break into groups and discuss what your object says about you or the person to whom it belongs. They write down questions to ask you about the object – they aren’t allowed to ask a direct question like “What does this object say about you?” They should rate these questions in importance (i.e. the one that they think will provide the biggest clue should be at the top) and then come back together.</p>		
<p>Activity 3: A representative from each group gets to ask you their top question. Answer these questions and then ask class to make ‘educated guesses’ about what the object says about you. If none of their questions hit the mark, suggest further questions they might have asked. Emphasize that without your input it would be impossible to know for sure what the object says about you.</p>		

<p>Plenary: Chose a few sentences to read from the Roman historical records about the practices and beliefs of the Celts (see background information). What do these accounts tell us about the Celts? How do we decide whether a report is factual or propaganda? (Give contemporary examples of both.) Ask class: why do we think that the objects found in the bog were sacrifices to their gods? (E.g. Roman accounts plus speculation over whether people would just throw something as valuable as a gold cauldron on a rubbish heap.)</p>	
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<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Pupils will</i>	Learn to formulate and refine questions about beliefs based on the study of artefacts.
Aim: to learn the importance of context.	<i>SEN</i>	
	<i>Gifted</i>	
Possible activities		Suggested resources
<p>Starter: Show class a picture of a statue of Isis (i.e. without a typically Egyptian headdress) and Horus as a child (see background information). Ask the class to imagine that they work in a museum and that they were sent this object. Split into pairs or groups of three to come up with questions they would use as starting points for an investigation. Write these questions on the IWB, noting the most common and also the most original. What question does the class think would give them the most useful information about the object?</p>		
<p>Activity 1: (NB: Be sure and point out that <i>this activity is a thinking exercise</i>, and that if anyone finds an abandoned pack IRL they should report it to their parent/guardian or to the police.) Remind pupils about the time capsule exercise. Ask pupils to imagine that they had found a backpack near their school. What items would they expect to find in the backpack if it belonged to one of their classmates? What items might they expect to find if it belonged to an adult, e.g. someone who was in a rush, then set the backpack down and forgot about it? What does <i>where</i> the pack is found tell them, e.g. whether it is found at the bus stop, near the school, on the playground, in a nearby shop? Open the pack, look through the items and discuss how you might decide who lost the pack. What do the items say about the individual to whom the pack belongs? Do any of the items give clues to the person's ideas, values or beliefs? (For example, the library card <i>could</i> indicate that they value reading, but they could also use it to rent DVDs. A cross on a chain <i>could</i> indicate that the person was Christian, but it could also be an item that they had found and were hoping to return to the owner.)</p>		Backpack containing a variety of items, e.g. pencil case, books, money purse, bus pass, cinema tickets, library card and something of religious significance.
<p>Activity 2: Discuss the importance of <i>provenance</i> (i.e. exact location of a find). Explain that, to an archaeologist, unearthing a find in an actual dig site gives much better evidence than buying one in the market (which could have come from anywhere, in spite of what the seller might say). For instance, the <i>layer</i> that the object is found in can tell you something about its age, whereas the <i>location</i> (e.g. in a temple precinct, or a shrine corner in a home) can tell you something about what the object was used for. But also point out that evidence from layers is not always straightforward. Get them to imagine that the top floor of a house collapses, and things like the bathtub, beds etc end up all the way down in the basement, and that this particular house gets buried under layers of further construction. Someone looking at the layers in a future dig might think that people at that time had their bathrooms in the basement. Remind them again about the archaeological study of 'layers', i.e. stratigraphy.</p>		

Activity 3: Show the tomb painting of Horus and Isis. Does it remind the class of anything (e.g. statues or pictures of Mary and the baby Jesus)? As an open question ask: why might images of Mary and Jesus resemble images of Isis and Horus? Could the ideas and images of the earlier Egyptian civilisation influence the later ideas/imagery of Christianity? Show image of the Mother and Child statue from Serbia dating from the Stone Age. Could figures like this have influenced the later Egyptian iconography of Isis and Horus and the Christian iconography of Mary and Jesus? Could this be an example of an idea/image that spans across several ages? Ask how many pupils have pictures of themselves as a baby being held by their mother. Could this just be a common human image, rather than one that is specifically religious?

Plenary: If you have already taught unit KS2.12 (Seeds of unity, 1) remind class of the lesson “Food for thought”, which looks at how the same food consumed on different occasions and in different contexts can change both the meaning and the experience. (If you haven’t done this unit, give the example of bread used in a sandwich compared to bread consumed during the rite of communion, or sweets eaten after a meal compared to *prasad* received in a Hindu temple.) Now, ask class to suggest what an archaeologist might conclude about the following:

- A clay lamp found in the ruins of a house or on a village dump, as compared to the same lamp found in a temple precinct.
- A gold platter found in the ruins of a wealthy British-Roman villa and one found near a structure that might be an altar.

Without further definitive evidence (e.g. inscriptions on the items) would they be able to say for sure how these objects were used? Ask class to give examples from modern traditions of practices that might use candles/lamps (e.g. the everlasting light on altars, the lighting of lamps on Divali, the lighting of candles during Hannukah, secular monuments such as eternal flames as memorials) as well as special platters (e.g. puja trays or special platters for roasts used on special family meals) in both religious and non-religious contexts.

<i>Layers of belief</i>	<i>Pupils will</i>	Learn that archaeology can show how different groups of people bring new ideas to a country; also that old ideas can persist alongside new ones.
Aim: to begin to understand how beliefs from the past can affect ideas of the present.	<i>SEN</i>	
	<i>Gifted</i>	
Possible activities		Suggested resources
<p>Starter: Ask if any of the class has seen the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Do they remember the bit where Frodo, Bilbo and Gandalf travel to Grey Havens to leave on the ship with the Elves? Show the YT clip of this scene. (Departure to Grey Havens http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrNFjgCVeBo) Tell class that Tolkien, the man who wrote LOTR, was a professor of Anglo Saxon at Oxford, so he would have taught the Old English classic Beowulf. That the departure of the ship from Grey Havens is reminiscent of the final lines of the ship burial in Beowulf, when the men depart the ship in sorrow, leaving their king to make the final journey “to who knows where.”</p>		<p>Alternatively play a video of “Into the West”, e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shdiTRxTJb4</p>
<p>Activity 1: Show YT video that describes the discovery of the Sutton Hoo ship burial. Pause the video when it comes to the timeline and remind the class where this fits into the timeline you created for the first lesson. Explain that you are going to look at some of the evidence that archaeologists have used to: 1) identify the person in the grave in Mound 1 and 2) make statements about that person’s beliefs and the changing beliefs of the time.</p>		<p>Sutton Hoo ship burial http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjxXQif6VMI</p>
<p>Activity 2: Explain that you’re going to look at three types of evidence: 1) literary evidence 2) artefacts from the burial and 3) historical account (evidence from Bede’s <i>An ecclesiastical history of the English people</i>, completed c731 CE).</p> <p>Read the translation from Beowulf that describes the funeral at sea (see background information). Ask: can anyone spot the difference between this funeral and the Sutton Hoo burial? (In Beowulf, the ship is put out to sea, whereas at Sutton Hoo it is buried in the ground.) Perhaps the ship burial is a way of symbolising one final sea journey? What does a burial in a boat suggest (that the Anglo-Saxons were originally sea-faring people... Show map of the movements of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes into Britain in the 5th century CE: perhaps burial at sea or in a ship is meant to be symbolic of journey back to the ancestral lands?)</p>		<p>Map of Anglo-Saxon migration to Britain: http://www.thecobleinart.com/anglo-saxon_map.jpg</p> <p>Power point presentation of finds: http://www.britishmuseum.org/Docs/AS_Sutton_Hoo_slide_show_KS2.ppt</p>
<p>Activity 3: Briefly look at the British Museum power-point of the artefacts from the Sutton Hoo ship burial. Focus on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Slide 3: Shoulder clasps with entwined boars, symbol of the god Ing’s protection. Slide 6: coins and gold ingots. The coins would be payment to the crew who rowed the ship to the otherworld, and the gold ingots would be paid to the steersmen, so these are evidence of non-Christian beliefs about the afterlife. Slide 12: silver spoons engraved with the Greek names “Saulos” and “Paulos”, which would have been baptismal gifts (representing the conversion of Saul to Paul). <p>Discuss how these artefacts are representative of two different belief traditions, the older pagan beliefs that the Anglo-Saxons brought with them and the Christianity that was spreading through Britain at the time.</p>		<p>Teachers’ notes http://www.britishmuseum.org/PDF/AS_SHoo_presnotes_KS2.pdf</p>

Activity 4: Google a picture of Bede that you can show on the IWB and write the following quote on the IWB: “It has always been my delight to learn or to teach or to write.” Explain that Bede wrote a history of Christianity in England, in which he talks of the conversion of many of the kings, and that he based his history on several earlier works.

Explain that many scholars believe that the body that was buried in the ship at Sutton Hoo was that of Raedwald, who, according to Bede,

- was the son of Tytila;
- won a great battle against Aethelferth of Northumbria in 617 CE;
- was baptised in Kent and then changed his mind and honoured both sets of gods (this is also suggested by the gravegoods and the fact that he wasn't buried in the grounds of a church);
- was overlord of all the English south of the river Humber between Aethelbert of Kent (who died in 616 CE) and Eadwine of Northumbria (Book II Ch.5, 12, 15).
- Bede doesn't tell us when or how Raedwald died, but he was presumably dead by 627 when his son Eorpwald was king (Book II Ch.15).

Plenary: Group review asking:

1. What are the *sources of evidence* regarding the burial at Sutton Hoo?
2. What can the evidence tell us about the beliefs current in Britain at that time?
3. Can pupils think of any current customs that reflect old beliefs (e.g. Halloween, the Christian celebration of Christmas at the time of the winter solstice)?

<i>Layers of belief (i)</i>	<i>Pupils will</i>	Draw on what they have learned in previous lessons to examine the evidence relating to their particular 'find'; be able to relate any ideas about the beliefs of the people concerned to the evidence available.
Aim: to get pupils to examine collections of 'evidence' and to propose ideas about the beliefs of the time based on the evidence.	<i>SEN</i>	
	<i>Gifted</i>	
Possible activities		Suggested resources
<p>Starter: Divide pupils into five groups. Explain that you will spend the last two lessons on a single project. Each group will receive a 'box of evidence', and will have to examine the evidence, write a short headline story about the discovery, propose theories about what the finds suggest about the beliefs of the people of the time, and create a poster about their find. They should also say what is familiar about their find and what is strange about it. (If possible, it would be useful if these lessons could be extended lessons, in which pupils would have access to computers/the internet in order to do some searching to supplement the evidence in their box.) In addition, each group should create a "timeline" image—i.e. a symbolic icon—that they will be expected to place on the timeline from lesson 1 (they can do this at the beginning of their presentation in the next lesson). These could be small photographs of one of the finds; alternatively a child in the group who likes to draw might make something suitable. Be sure and point out that in the earliest finds there is no written evidence to support ideas.</p> <p>For each evidence box create four groups of material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details of the find: this should be in an envelope marked "open first", and placed on top, and should include pictures 2. Scientific/archaeological evidence 3. Theories, including ideas of what the find suggests about the relevant beliefs (if there are any). 4. A list of guiding questions (both open and closed). <p>Instruct each group that they should open the envelope with the details of the find, before looking at any of the other material. Get them to compose a short local newspaper article about the find, including speculation about what the purpose of the item or site might be.</p> <p>After they have done that, they can examine the rest of the evidence, and plan how to present the material in an educational poster., getting some help from the list of guiding questions, but coming up with their own thoughts and questions.</p>		Boxes of evidence; poster-making materials.

<p>Box 1: Neolithic Age (Note: be sure and point out that although this find is in Ireland, it gives us evidence of what Neolithic people in Britain might believe about death.) The following links might provide suitable materials for the evidence box.</p> <p>Newgrange (Wikipedia): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newgrange Newgrange: a passage to the afterworld: http://www.knowth.com/new-grange.htm Twenty intriguing facts about Newgrange: http://www.authenticireland.com/newgrange/</p> <p><i>Guiding questions (both open and closed):</i> When do archaeologists believe that this monument was built? What 'age'? What do archaeologists mean by a passage tomb? Why might the builders have constructed the tomb in such a way that allows light into the burial chamber at the winter solstice? What do some people think the spirals and other designs on the stones symbolise? Can they know what these mean? What do you think they mean?</p>	<p>Newgrange: google for images</p>
<p>Box 2: late Neolithic, Early Bronze Age Folkton Barrow 'drums': http://www.stone-circles.org.uk/stone/folkton.htm Analysis of the material: http://antiquity.ac.uk/ProjGall/middleton/index.html</p> <p><i>Guiding questions (both open and closed):</i> Describe the way these items were found. What is the mystery of the Folkton 'drums'? Why have they been described as drums? Can you think of another purpose for them? What are 'grave goods'? Why do you think people buried things in burials? What do some people think the spirals and other designs on the drums symbolise? Can they know what these mean? What do you think they mean? What do you think if the purpose of the eyebrow/eye motif? Has it been found on other objects? Do people still bury things with the dead today?</p>	<p>Folkton Drums</p>

<p>Box 3: Iron Age British Museum site: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_prb/l/lindow_man.aspx Sacrifice in Iron Age Britain: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/articles/s/sacrifice_in_iron_age_britain.aspx Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lindow_Man</p> <p><i>Guiding questions (both open and closed):</i> In religious terms, what is a 'sacrifice'? What other objects have been found in bodies of water or bogs? Have there been other bodies discovered in bogs? Where? What do we know about these finds? What ideas are just speculations? It is clear that the death of Lindow Man was not an accident (he was hit over the head, was strangled and had his throat slit), but could there be another reason for his death aside from ritual sacrifice?</p>	<p>Lindow Man</p>
<p>Box 4: Roman period (43 – 410 CE) Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Mithraeum Museum of London: http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Collections-Research/Research/Your-Research/Londinium/Today/vizrom/05+Mithraeum.htm YouTube video about the temple: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKBSl_gIUc http://www.mithraeum.eu/monumenta.php?mid=london_mithraeum BBC pages on Roman religion: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/romans/religion/ Museum of London: digging up the Romans: http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/learning/features_facts/digging/</p> <p><i>Guiding questions (both open and closed):</i> Who was Mithras? Who built the temple to Mithras in London? Why do developers have to employ archaeologists? Can you think of a reason why the temple did not last beyond the Roman occupation of Britain?</p>	<p>Temple of Mithras, London</p>

Box 5: Anglo Saxon period

Note: For the newspaper article part of the exercise, this group should imagine that there is to be a special travelling exhibition of the Gospels and they should write a short history of the book, who it was made for originally and how it changed hands, before ending up in the British Library in 1973.

<http://www.lindisfarne.org.uk/gospels/gospels2.htm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/0/21588667>

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/lindisfarne.html>

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/lindisfarne/tour.html> (virtual tour)

History of the gospels: http://www.bbc.co.uk/tyne/features/gospels/gospels_tense_past.shtml

Guiding questions (both open and closed):

Who created the Lindisfarne Gospel and why is it important?

What were the materials and tools used to make this book?

Why would one person spend so much time working on such an object?

What is an 'illumination'?

How do different religions that exist today treat their sacred books?

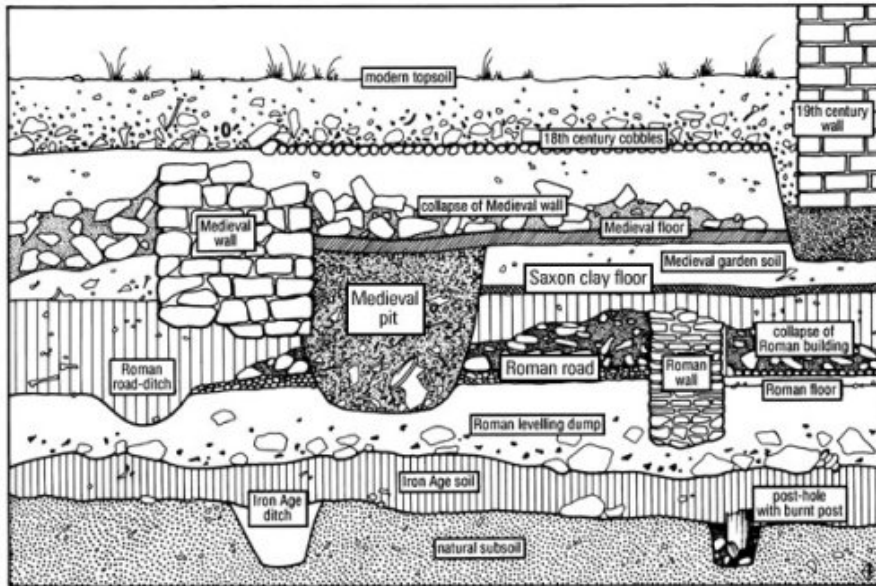
Lindisfarne Gospel

Layers of belief (ii)	Pupils will	Learn how to listen to—and present—evidence-based arguments and to ask/answer questions relating to these arguments.
Aim: to have an understanding that Britain is made up of layers, both physical ones, left by different cultures, and layers of ideas and belief.	SEN	
	Gifted	
Possible activities		Suggested resources
Starter: Remind pupils of the overall aim of the unit, i.e. to look at the various ways we learn about the beliefs of past generations and to understand that the ideas and beliefs in Britain today have been influenced across time by a variety of traditions.		
Activity: Each group to give a short presentation of their find; class should be allowed to give feedback and ask questions.		
Plenary: Go back to the original timeline, onto which each group should have put an icon or marker. Can we visualise some “layers of belief?” Do any of these overlap? Explain to pupils that in ks3 they will look at further ‘layers of belief’ in Britain.		

Key words	Timeline, archaeology, artefact, evidence, monument, ‘age’, strata, time capsule, provenance
Sample assessment activity	
<p>On-going assessment of pupils during the research, group work and presentation of their findings. Pupils are working at the following levels if they are able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are able to talk about aspects of the find they are studying, e.g. what in particular they found interesting. 2. They use some words relevant to the age of their find, and can locate it on the timeline. 3. They are able to use the resources provided to gain information about an aspect of the relevant find. 4. They are able to use the resources provided to make a statement about their group’s find or they attempt to explain what the find might say about the beliefs of the relevant person or people. 5. They can begin to relate their find to the historical context, i.e. what was happening in Britain at that time, or they give thoughtful answers to the questions posed to them about their find, or they begin to understand the difficulties involved in making statements about past beliefs in the absence of concrete, unbiased evidence. 	

Background information

Archaeological assessment of stratification is known as stratigraphy. By recording and analysing the artefact's location in relation to other artefacts and strata, archaeologists can determine its function and age.



This stratification example provides a wealth of information. Due to the law of superposition, the natural subsoil was deposited first. We can assume that the Iron Age ditch and post-hole were from the same occupation because they are in the same strata. The Iron Age soil was deposited next and then the Roman dump soil. The Roman wall was then built because it was placed deep into the soil, and next the Roman floor was built. After that are the remains of the Roman building. The medieval pit must have been built before the wall since the wall's edge is slightly in the pit. These lines of analysis continue for the entire stratification. All this information allows archaeologists to determine the relative age of the artefacts and understand specific time periods.

The example also demonstrates the complexity of stratigraphy. Behavioural and transformative processes can disrupt strata. In a class exercise, students found between 10 to 15 strata and 9 to 16 features in the picture. These results were anything but conclusive. However, through careful examination and a well thought out research question, an archaeologist can distinguish the important aspects of the stratification. By attempting to understand the intricacies of this archaeological

technique, individuals can come to understand the field as a whole.

(From Real Archaeology: <http://pages.vassar.edu/realarchaeology/author/ngtran/>)



Marble bust of Julius Caesar
Houston Museum of Natural
Science

[wikipedia](#)

Evidence about the beliefs and practices of the Celts can be found in the Celtic, Gaelic, and Gaul stories, songs, and poems that have been passed down through oral and written tradition. One modern example that pupils might know is the Merlin series on television. *Historical* accounts come mostly from Roman sources, during a time when the Romans were at war with the Celtic nations, which might mean that these accounts are biased.

The earliest known reference to the Druids—the alleged priests of Celtic society—dates to 200 BCE, although the oldest actual description comes from the Roman military general Julius Caesar in his *The Gallic War* (50s BCE). Later Greco-Roman writers who also described the druids include Cicero, Tacitus and Pliny the Elder. Following the Roman invasion of Gaul, druidism was suppressed by the Roman government under the 1st century CE emperors Tiberius and Claudius, and it had disappeared from the written record by the 2nd century. Again, as the Romans were keen to suppress the Celts' religious leaders, we have to consider that their accounts might be biased or sensationalised.

From *The Gallic War* by Julius Caesar

"**13** Throughout Gaul there are two classes of persons of definite account and dignity... one consists of Druids, the other of knights. The former are concerned with divine worship, the due performance of sacrifices, public and private, and the interpretation of ritual questions... These Druids, at a certain time of the year, meet within the borders of the Crnutes, whose territory is reckoned as the centre of all Gaul, and sit in conclave in a consecrated spot. Thither assemble from every side all that have disputes, and they obey the decisions and judgments of the Druids. It is believed that their rule of life was discovered in Britain and transferred hence to Gaul; and to-day those who would study the subject more accurately journey, as a rule, to Britain to learn it. "**14** The Druids usually hold aloof from war, and do not pay war-taxes with the rest; they are excused from military service and exempt from all liabilities. Tempted by these great rewards, many young men assemble of their own motion to receive their training; many are sent by parents and relatives. Report says that in the schools of the Druids they learn by heart a great number of verses, and therefore some persons remain twenty years in training. And they do not think it proper to commit these utterances to writing, although in almost all other matters, and in their private and public accounts, they make use of Greek letters. I believe that they have adopted the practice for two reasons - that they do not wish the rule to become common property, nor those who learn the rule to rely on writing and so neglect the cultivation of the memory; and, in fact, it does usually happen that the assistance of writing tends to relax the diligence of the student and the action of the memory. The cardinal doctrine which they seek to teach is that souls do not die, but after death pass from one to another; and this belief, as the fear of death is thereby cast aside, they hold to be the greatest incentive to valour. Besides this, they have many discussions as touching the stars and their movement, the size of the universe and of the earth, the order of nature, the strength and the powers of the immortal gods, and hand down their lore to the young men."

Diodorus Siculus was a Greek historian, who wrote works of history between 60 and 30 BCE. He is known for the monumental universal history *Bibliotheca historica*.

Regarding the Celts, *Diodorus* notes that:

“Their aspect is terrifying...They are very tall in stature, with rippling muscles under clear white skin. Their hair is blond, but not naturally so: they bleach it, to this day, artificially, washing it in lime and combing it back from their foreheads. They look like wood-demons, their hair thick and shaggy like a horse’s mane. Some of them are clean shaven, but others, especially those of high rank, shave their cheeks but leave a moustache that covers the whole mouth and, when they eat and drink, acts like a sieve, trapping particles of food...The way they dress is astonishing: they wear brightly coloured and embroidered shirts, with trousers called *bracae* and cloaks fastened at the shoulder with a brooch, heavy in winter, light in summer. These cloaks are striped or checkered in design, with the separate checks close together and in various colours.

[The Celts] wear bronze helmets with figures picked out on them, even horns, which made them look even taller than they already are...while others cover themselves with breast-armour made out of chains. But most content themselves with the weapons nature gave them: they go naked into battle...Weird, discordant horns were sounded, [they shouted in chorus with their] deep and harsh voices, they beat their swords rhythmically against their shields.”

Diodorus also describes how the Celts cut off their enemies’ heads and nailed them over the doors of their huts: “In exactly the same way as hunters do with their skulls of the animals they have slain...they preserved the heads of their most high-ranking victims in cedar oil, keeping them carefully in wooden boxes.”

The Roman Senator and writer **Tacitus** is the only primary source that gives accounts of druids in Britain. However he maintains a hostile point of view, seeing them as ignorant savages. Writing of the Roman attack on Anglesey he says:

“On the beach stood the adverse array, a serried mass of arms and men, with women flitting between the ranks. In the style of Furies, in robes of deathly black and with dishevelled hair, they brandished their torches; while a circle of Druids, lifting their hands to heaven and showering imprecations, struck the [Roman] troops with such an awe at the extraordinary spectacle that, as though their limbs were paralysed, they exposed their bodies to wounds without an attempt at movement. Then, reassured by their general, and inciting each other never to flinch before a band of females and fanatics, they charged behind the standards, cut down all who met them, and enveloped the enemy in his own flames.

“The next step was to install a garrison among the conquered population, and to demolish the groves consecrated to their savage cults: for they considered it a pious duty to slake the altars with captive blood and to consult their deities by means of human entrails...” (From *Annals XIV* by Tacitus)

Mother and Child images



Neolithic Mother and Child
Vinca Culture, Serbia, 5th millennium BCE

www.lessing-photo.com



Statue of Isis and Horus
26th Dynasty Egypt

[All Posters](#)



Tomb painting of Isis and Horus
First millennium BCE

msu.edu



Madonna and Child
6th or early 7th century CE
Mount Sinai, Egypt:
Monastery of Saint Catherine

txwes.edu

The Sutton Hoo ship burial

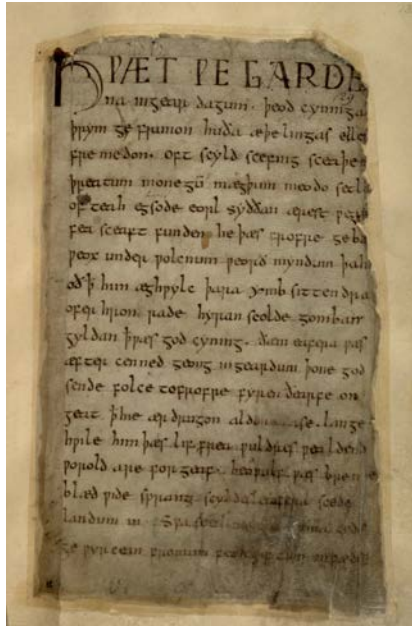
The style of the grave goods indicates that they belong to the late sixth or early seventh century, and radiocarbon dating (Carver 1998) of two objects from the grave, lamp wax and a piece of timber, gave dates of 523 CE (+/-45) and 656 CE (+/-45). More precise dating depends on the coins. In 1960 a French coin expert identified the latest date of the coin group as 625 CE, and on the basis of the gold content (which progressively declined over time as Frankish mints recycled the metal) the coins could all have been made by 613 CE (Carver 1998). This provides the earliest possible date for the burial, as the coins cannot possibly have been buried before they were made, but could have been buried at any time after.

There is no fixed latest possible date for the burial. However, once Christianity had taken firm root in East Anglia, one would expect the kings to be buried in churches, rather than in ships under mounds. So the ship burial would be consistent with a king who was either pagan or a recent convert.

The Sutton Hoo ship burial is at present unparalleled in its magnificence, so it clearly belonged to someone extremely important. The war gear suggests it was probably a man. The leader of the recent excavation, Martin Carver, argues that the value of grave goods might represent the 'wergild' (man-price) of the occupant. Wergild was the amount that had to be paid in compensation for an unlawful killing. Carver argues that the wergild for a nobleman was 480 oxen, roughly equivalent to 200 g of gold. The amount of gold in the ship burial is far, far higher than this—the great gold buckle alone weighs almost one pound—and therefore the occupant presumably ranked far higher than an ordinary nobleman. On this basis it seems logical to infer that he was right at the top of society, i.e. a king (Carver 1998). (The usual caveats apply, in that we do not know exactly what was meant by 'king' in early English society, or how many such leaders existed in a kingdom at any one time).

Sutton Hoo is in the territory of the kingdom of the East Angles, which in the seventh century roughly comprised the modern counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. So, the Sutton Hoo Man is most likely to be found among the kings of the East Angles, sometime after 613 or 625 when the coins were manufactured. Information about some of the members of the East Anglian royal dynasty can be found in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and the genealogies recorded in the 'Anglian collection' manuscript in the British Museum. From this, the best fit for the person buried in Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo would be Raedwald, who, according to Bede, was the son of Tytila. He won a great battle against Aethelferth of Northumbria in 617 CE, was baptised in Kent and then changed his mind and honoured both sets of gods. He was overlord of all the English south of the river Humber between the time of Aethelbert of Kent (who died in 616 CE) and Eadwine of Northumbria (Book II Ch.5, 12, 15). Bede doesn't tell us when or how Raedwald died, but he was presumably dead by 627 when his son Eorpwald was king (Bede Book II Ch.15).

From: http://www.carlanayland.org/essays/sutton_hoo_candidates.htm



Beowulf MS

Scyld Scefing's Funeral (Beowulf Prologue)

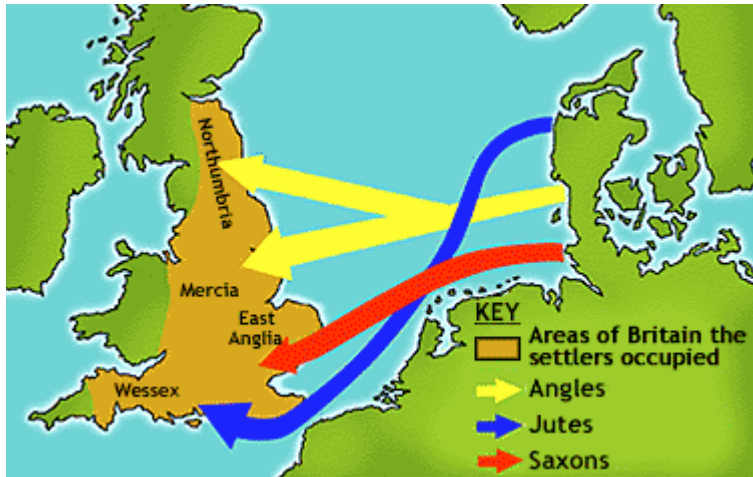
A tall ship stands in the harbour, a boat with a ringed neck, rocking on the icy waves, eager to sail. Along the shore people stand. They look at the ship with sad faces, their hearts heavy because of their King. His days are over. He must cross into the keeping of the Lord.

Many years ago he came to them, the Danish people. They found him on the beach in a boat no bigger than a shield, a child without clothing, surrounded by presents. No one knew who had sent him across the sea, but he lived and grew and gained respect until they made him their King, and all the tribes living nearby had to obey him. No enemy dared to attack, and he gave gifts gladly to his followers. His name was Scyld Scefing. He was a good King.

Now the hour has come. The men who have been his sword-companions carry him to the water's edge—as he told them to do while he could still speak. In the ship's middle, by the mast, they lay down their lord and master, and round him they make a mound of treasure, shining shields, weapons and warrior's armour.

The men leave the ship full of sorrow, leaving the old king to his far journey. They let the seas take him as the ship sails. However wise they may be, no-one can say for sure who received that ship's load in the end.

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/english/beowulf/beowulfa.htm>



This map shows the movements of people into Britain (called the "Adventus Saxonum" by 6th century cleric Gildas) in the 5th century CE, after the departure of Roman troops in 410 CE.

http://www.thecobleinart.com/anglo-saxon_map.jpg

Bede was born in 673 CE on the lands of a monastery in Northumbria and at the age of 7 was entrusted to the care of Benedict Biscop, the founder of the monastery. He spent the rest of his life in the monastery, having been ordained deacon at the age of 19 and priest at 30. He died there in the year 735.

Bede worked as scholar and teacher and wrote extensively about the Bible. His biblical commentaries were widely circulated: Bishop Boniface wrote of Bede that he "shone forth as a lantern in the church by his scriptural commentary."

He is best known as the author of *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (731 CE). This work is our primary source for understanding the beginnings of the English people and the coming of Christianity and was the first work of history in which the AD dating system was used. ('AD' stands for Anno Domini, "in the year of the Lord". The BCE/CE notation system was introduced into the school curriculum in England and Wales in 2002, where CE stands for "common" or "current" era.)