

ROMAN BURIALS

INVESTIGATING ROMAN BURIAL TRADITIONS

Introduction activity

Look at the 'Replica of Medusa pendant' image and explain that the original was a small carved pendant made out of jet that was probably buried with a female body.



Watch the video that explains about the pendant and its significance in a Roman burial.

Main part of the lesson

Discuss how a Roman burial was quite similar to that of a burial today but that there are a few differences.

Show the pupils the image of the archaeologist excavating the stone sarcophagus and explain that this is a very important find for archaeologists as they can learn a great deal about the past from studying real artefacts that have survived but also from the skeletons of the dead.



Discuss the image of the conservators who opened up the stone sarcophagus that was found and discuss how the skeleton has been preserved because the body had been placed within a lead coffin inside the stone sarcophagus and it had lain undisturbed since Roman times.



As an activity, discuss the fact that many people were buried with objects that were important to them, some being personal effects like jewellery and some were, like the Medusa pendant, intended to protect the person who had died to help them pass safely to the Underworld.

Pupils can work in pairs and construct a list of 10 items, with illustrations, of what they would bury today in the ground to show the sort of person they are.

Ask them to consider 10 things, that if an archaeologist in the future discovered them, would give a good picture of what they were like as people and what sort of things they may have enjoyed. It would also give a very good indication of what life was like in the year 2012. (NB this does not have to be about death and burying a body but it provides the opportunity to discuss time capsules as mentioned in the plenary).

Plenary

Discuss how we can learn so much about the past from looking at artefacts from the past. Look at the information about the Blue Peter time capsule that was buried in 1971 and then dug up in 2000.

Explain that even though this was not something as old as Roman artefacts, we could still learn about the past from the contents of the Blue Peter time capsule.

Information about the Blue Peter time capsule can be located [here](#).