

Dig-ital Resource pack

The Artefacts of Archaeology (KS1 - KS2/ Primary) (History / Art)

LESSON INFO :

A Key Stage 1 & 2 workshop on material recognition and identification. Addressing how archaeological materials are found, recorded and dated. It is designed to encourage foundations in critical thinking and promote creativity of thought.

The lesson focuses on the archaeological remains of St Mary's church found near to the village of Stoke Mandeville in Buckinghamshire. The ruins of the former parish church, and the area immediately surrounding it, are currently undergoing archaeological investigation as part of the HS2 project. The lesson encourages thinking about changes made over time to the land and lives of people who lived here.

Objectives -

- To address what materials are considered archaeological
- To ask questions about the archaeological process
- To evaluate materials and suggest their original use or shape

Teacher objectives -

To encourage discussion about the changes to culture visible through material evidence. Enable understanding about the concepts of change, continuity and contrast in archaeological / historical discussions.

Children Will:

Consider their local history and be encouraged to make observations regarding historic materials.

Provided resources:

Pottery designing print-out worksheet

You will need :

Printer
Scissors
Pencils

Estimated time : 40 min

Introduction

Archaeologists are currently working on behalf of HS2 to excavate the ruins of St Mary's Church in Stoke Mandeville. They are uncovering a wealth of archaeology that will tell us more about the history and past communities of Stoke Mandeville. The church and churchyard of St. Mary's is one of the most important historical sites being investigated along the route, and we hope that the archaeological work will answer many questions about the building and its surrounding landscape.

The church of St Mary the Virgin was built in the late 11th century, shortly after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Unlike the modern church, also called St Mary's, the old church was not located in the centre of the village. Instead it stood in the middle of an agricultural landscape, on land owned by the bishop of Lincoln. Near to the church there were a number of other buildings, like barns and a mill. The mill is mentioned in the Domesday Book, which lists information about who owned land in England after the Norman Conquest.

The church was built in the bottom of a shallow valley, which was naturally very wet. People working the land in the medieval period took advantage of this, creating a number of artificial streams and ponds. These provided water to the nearby mill and were later used for growing watercress.

When the new church in the centre of Stoke Mandeville was opened in the late 1800s, St. Mary's fell into disrepair, although the churchyard continued to be used for burials until 1908. The ruins became dangerous and unstable, and the church was eventually demolished in 1966. In total the church and churchyard were used for over 800 years. The landscape around the church has evidence for even longer habitation. Excavations have also been taking place at the site of a Roman settlement to the east of the church, where buildings were arranged on either side of a central trackway. This settlement appears to have earlier Iron Age origins. High status Roman finds, such as a coin and decorated pottery, suggest that a Roman villa may have stood nearby.

As well as these packs for schools, we have a Field Museum on site, over a number of weekends over the summer. Inside the museum is a viewing platform giving a view of the ongoing excavations, as well as displays, films and interactives enabling you to explore the history of St. Mary's church and find out about archaeological discoveries in the area. Come and see the excavations, meet the archaeologists and find out more!

Learning Content - Who are archaeologists and what do they do?

(Ask the class this question - open it up for discussion for about 5 minutes each.

Draw a mind map or list of ideas on the classroom board from their answers)

Archaeology is the scientific study of the material remains of past **human** life and activities. Archaeology is very different to paleontology which is the study of fossilised animal remains like dinosaurs!

Archaeologists seek to understand the cultural history of people living in the past and try to explain change to societies over time. They do this by looking at the material remains left by past people. However, archaeological excavation is not done just to find artefacts; archaeology is very different from treasure hunting!

Archaeologists survey, excavate (dig up) and analyse the remains of the past. They collect data to learn more about historic and prehistoric people. The artefacts recovered by archaeology are very important to understanding the past.

Archaeologists specialise in different areas; they study what they are interested in. Some archaeologists specialise in certain cultures and time periods like; Ancient Egypt (these specialists are called Egyptologists), the Vikings, World War II, Ancient China, Human origins in Africa, Medieval England, Ancient Greece, the Romans and many more.

Some archaeologists specialise in the environment; landscape archaeologists look at large areas that contain many archaeological sites. Marine archaeologists study things that are now underwater. They search for sunken ships or cities that have been lost under the sea. Archaeologists study past populations and cultures of people, especially the ones where there is no written history. Archaeologists can study any time period or environment! For instance there are even 'space archaeologists' that study the remains of man-made items in space and use satellites to look at large archaeological sites on earth like the great pyramids in Egypt!

If you were an archaeologist what would you like to study ?

What are artefacts ?

Artefacts are the material remains of past or current human life. Artefacts are anything that was made or altered by humans and can be made of synthetic (man-made) or natural materials. Most of the things we use today can be described as artefacts!

(Ask the class for examples of artefacts. Perhaps draw a list of suggestions from students on the classroom board or use the table below as a 'bingo card' going around the class and letting each student offer a suggestion. There aren't really wrong answers, anything made or altered by humans in some way can be considered an artefact. To help prompt students, consider what you would see if you visited a museum or ask them to look about the room or what is on the desk in front of them.)

Coins	Pottery	Jewellery	Pens / stationery
Paper / books	Machines / computers	Swords / weapons	Carved bone / horn
Chairs / furniture	Clothing / fabric	Plastic bottles	Glass / windows
Statues	Cutlery	Stone tools	Bricks / building

There are also archaeologists who specialise in certain types of artefacts; from pottery to shoes, coins to animal bone. Archaeologists who look at certain types of archaeological artifacts are called 'finds specialists'.

Learning Exercise 1 : Pottery identification

In the first exercise students are asked to think like a finds specialist and investigate a collection of pottery recovered from archaeological excavations undertaken in the area around the ruins of St Mary's church in Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire. This exercise should take about 10 minutes.

Pottery is one of the most common archaeological finds! People have used it for thousands of years. The bowls and plates people ate from, jugs and cups they drank from and the containers that they stored and transported goods in were all made from pottery. Pottery is usually very well preserved. Unlike materials like metal, it doesn't corrode or get rusty. If broken, a shard of still pottery contains a lot of useful information to archaeologists. They can usually recreate a pottery vessel from just a small broken shard!

Archaeological find experts are in charge of looking at artifacts recovered from archaeological excavations. Artifacts are sent from the muddy field or excavation site to be cleaned, photographed, described, identified and labeled.

But these 6 pieces of pottery have lost their labels! They were all found in a Roman rubbish pit near Stoke Mandeville in Buckinghamshire. Your task is to match the pieces of pottery with their description!

Questions for the class -

- How do you think the pottery vessel that this shard once belonged to used to look like?
- Can you notice the difference in scale - which is the biggest piece of pottery?
- How are they decorated?
- These are all from the Roman period - how might Romano-british people used this pottery?
- These were all found in a rubbish pit, why might they have been thrown away?

Alternatively you can get pottery to handle and analyse from ...

<http://www.trustforthanetarchaeology.org.uk/community-outreach/learning-resources/ceramic-thanet-pottery-learning-pack/>

A)

B)



C)



D)



E)



F)



1	<p>Samian Ware - An orange or red coloured pottery typical of the Roman period</p> <p>Broken part of a shallow bowl or dish.</p> <p>Age - Roman, 1st century AD.</p>
2	<p>Greyware - a grey or blue coloured pottery with decoration made by painting on the surface with lines making a diamond pattern.</p> <p>Broken part of a large bowl</p> <p>Age - Roman, 2nd - 3rd century AD</p>
3	<p>Greyware - a grey or blue coloured pottery with incised (cut) zig-zag decoration.</p> <p>Piece of a decorated small rounded bowl.</p> <p>Age - Roman, 2nd - 3rd century AD</p>
4	<p>Whiteware - Common white coloured pottery that has oxidised (where the pottery turns from an orange to white in a hot fire / kiln)</p> <p>Broken off neck of a flagon - a small rounded jug with a single handle.</p> <p>Age - Roman, 2nd - 3rd century AD</p>

5	<p>Yellow or white coloured pottery that has oxidised (where the pottery turns from an orange to white in a hot fire / kiln)</p> <p>Shard of a ceramic cheese strainer. It has many holes in it. This type of pottery would have acted like a colander and was used to separate curd from whey.</p> <p>Age - Roman, 2nd - 3rd century AD</p>
6	<p>Colour coated ware - the pottery is coated in a light orange colour. It has a swirled pattern of white decoration across part of its surface.</p> <p>Shard of a drinking cup</p> <p>Age - Roman, 2nd - 3rd century AD</p>

Answers :

A = 6

B = 3

C = 5

D = 2

E = 1

F = 4

Learning Exercise 2 - Design Your Own Pottery

Use the worksheet below to design and create your own piece of decorated pottery.

Pottery has been an important way for people to express themselves, share ideas and create culture for thousands of years. Humans have been making pottery since the Paleolithic period (the 'old' stone age). The oldest piece of pottery found by archaeologists was discovered in the Czech Republic and dates back to 29,000–25,000 BC: a very long time ago!

Pottery was very important to people, they used it everyday. To certain cultures the pottery they made was so important to them that they were buried with it when they died. In Europe a distinct group of people living between 2800 - 1800 BC in the Bronze age are known as the 'Bell Beaker people' by archaeologists today. They have been named and identified as the 'Bell Beaker people' because they made a very specific type of pottery that looks like an upside down bell that was decorated with lots of grooved lines and geometric shapes like triangles. These pottery beakers were often buried with people when they died becoming what is known as a 'grave good'.

Pottery has also been used to depict legends and stories. In Ancient Greece and Rome pottery was often painted or decorated to show great victories in battle, and sporting achievements (like chariot races or gladiator fights). Animals, mythical creatures, important heroic people and gods were also commonly pictured on pottery. Scenes were painted onto the front of large, finely made vases that would have decorated wealthy people's houses. These scenes would have very decorated borders on the pottery and even the base, handles and rim of the pottery would be covered in decoration!



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Instructions:

Choose the type of pottery vessel you want to decorate from the worksheets available below. Remember to include your name and where you are designing your pottery vessel. This information helps archaeologists to know who the maker is and where it is from.

You can design your pottery vessel however you would like!

Like in many fine examples of ancient pottery you can include both geometric patterns and picture scenes. Perhaps this pottery will celebrate a big achievement or something that is important to you! Take inspiration from the ancient world - draw a Greek or Roman battle, chariot racing or a mythical creature. Be creative! What would you like to find in a pottery vase if you were an archaeologist!

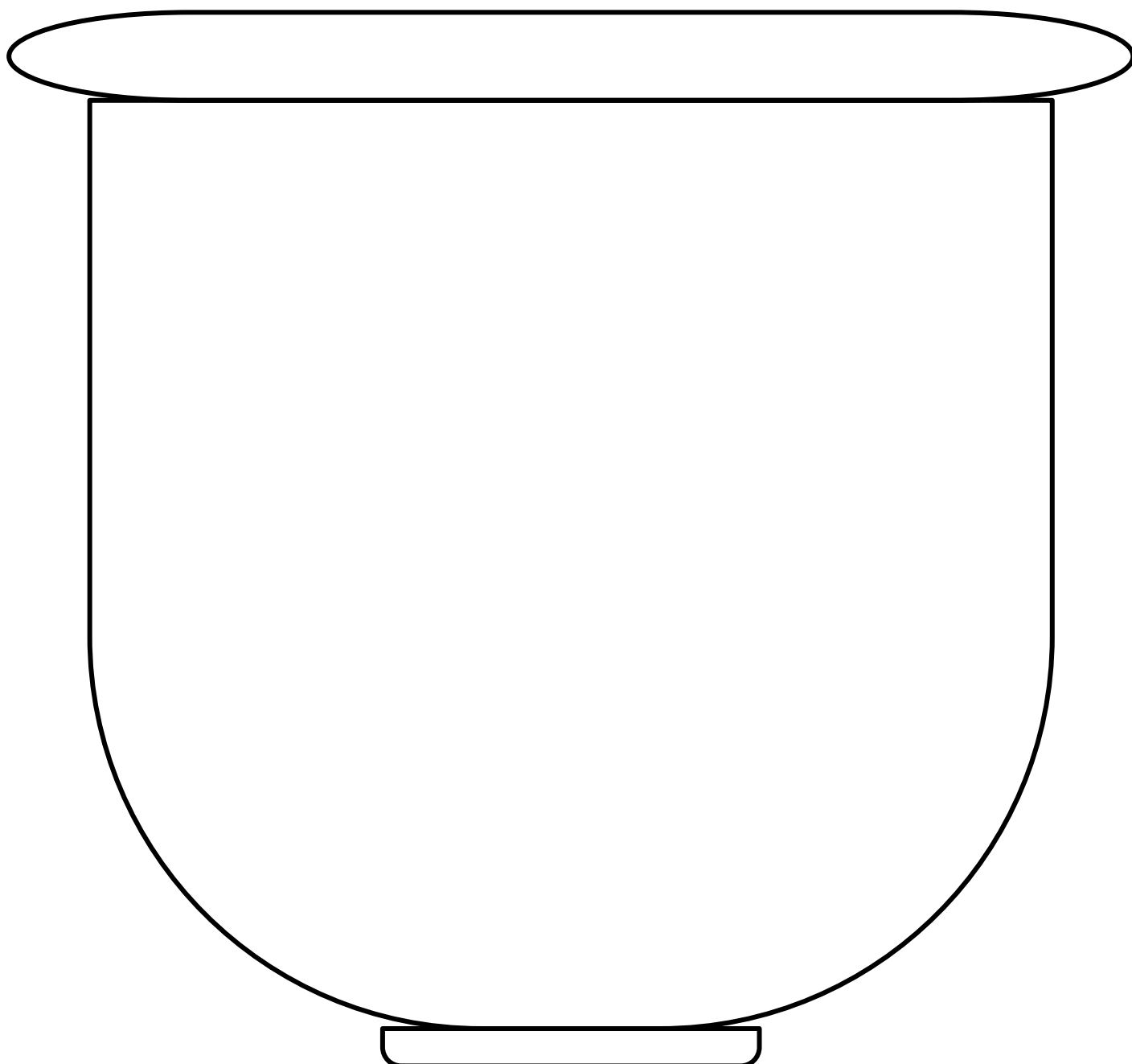
Teacher instructions - print of enough worksheets for at least one per student. Colouring pens or pencils are needed for this activity. Give the students 10 - 15 minutes to decorate their pottery vase and ask them to present it to the class saying what they drew and why they chose to decorate their pottery like that!

Design Your Own Pottery

Made by **Made in.....**

(your name here)

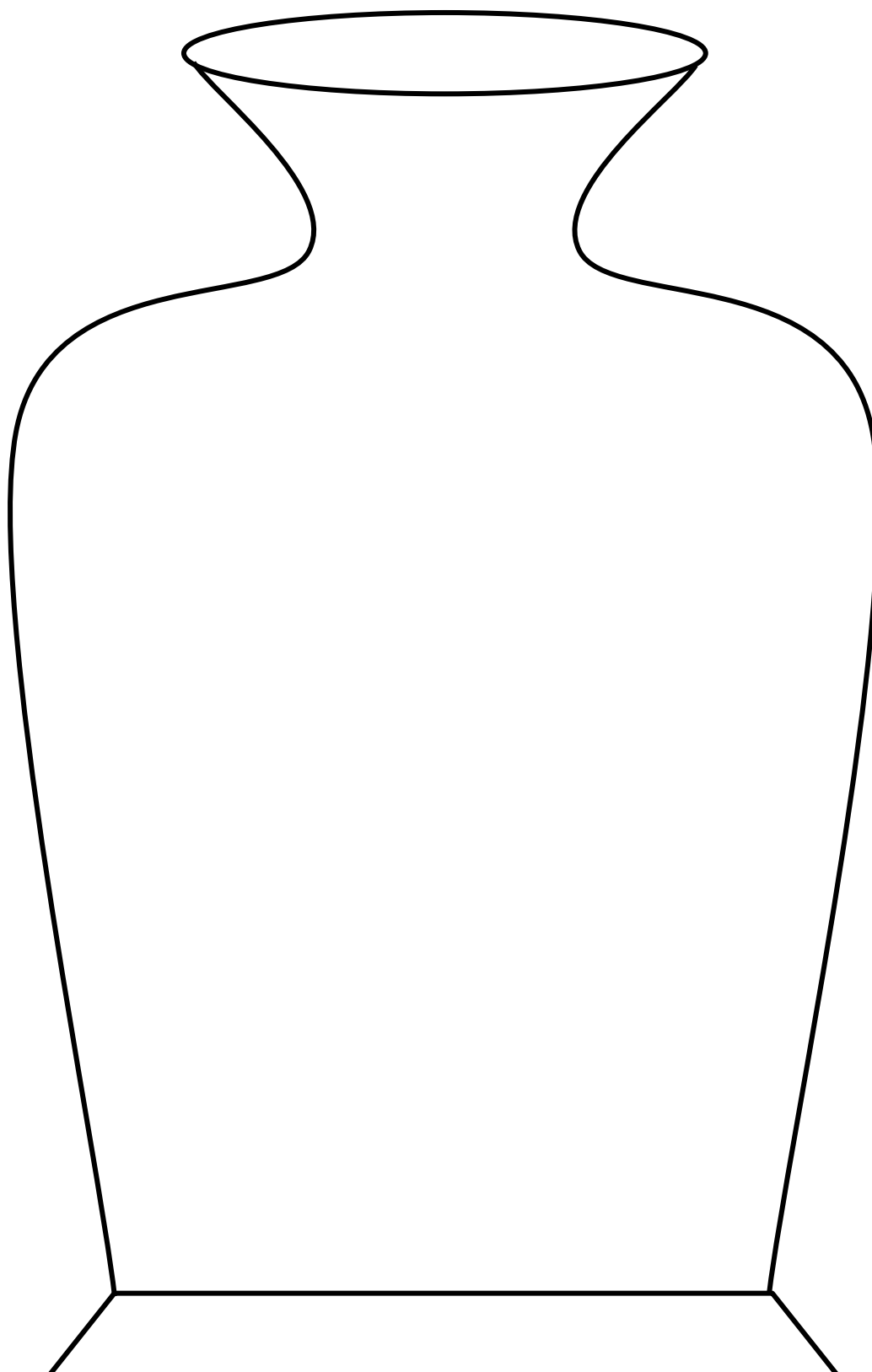
(your town / village)



Design Your Own Pottery**Made by** **Made in.....**

(your name here)

(your town / village)

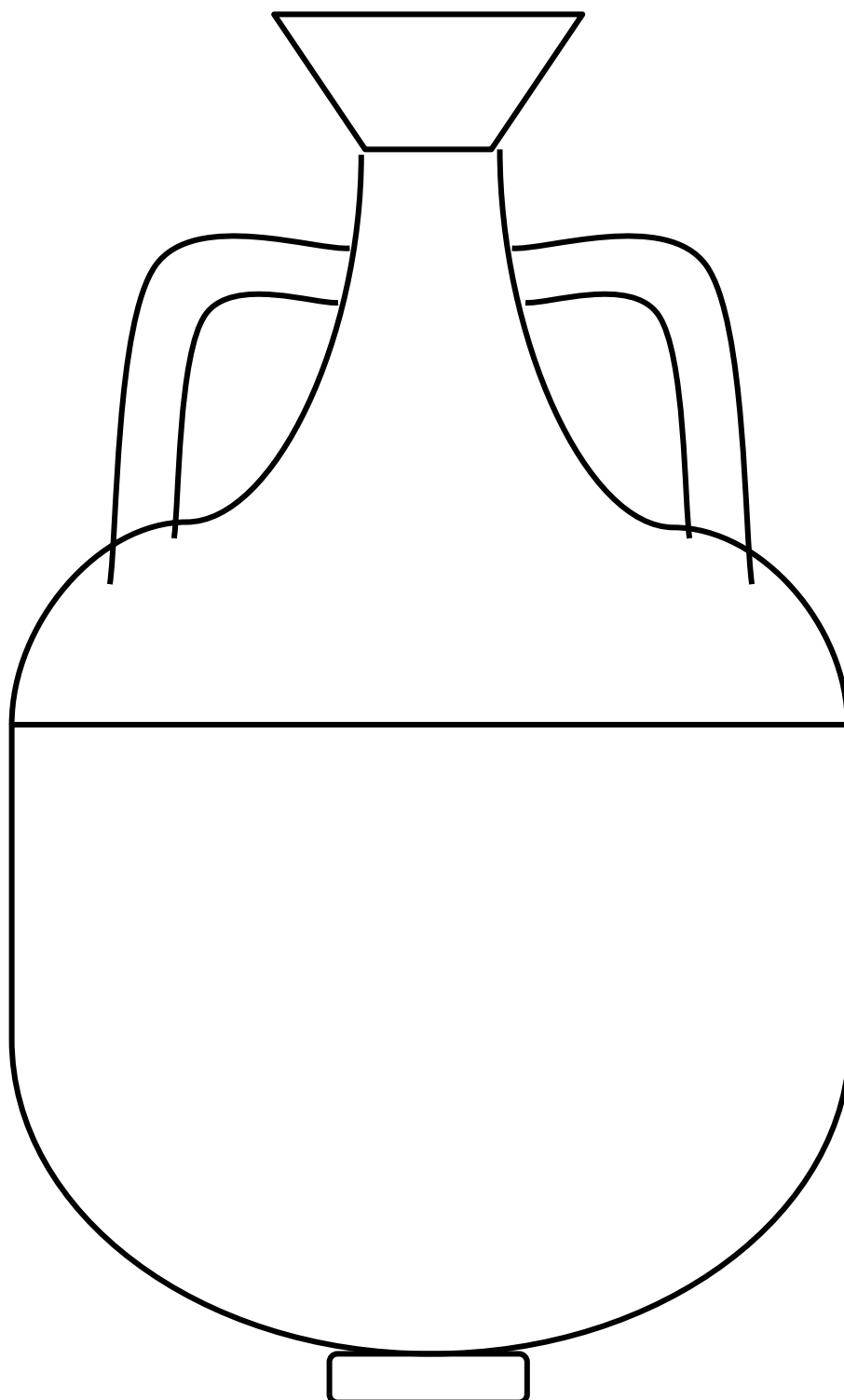


Design Your Own Pottery

Made by Made in.....

(your name here)

(your town / village)



Conclusion:

Ask your students to reflect on the work they have done during this workshop. If there was anything surprising or interesting they found out. How many have seen any pottery artifacts in a museum before?

Think about the meaning and uses of pottery. As a source of information for archaeologists, how useful is pottery? What else would you like to find if you were an archaeologist - what artifacts would you most like to study?

Think about the materials you use everyday, how many of them did you consider an artefact? What do you think archaeologists in 100 years time will think of all the things we use today - how many of them will they find and not recognise?!

Homework ideas -

- Look up an example of a roman or greek decorated vase (these many need to be found by the teacher and handed out given the nature of some depicted scenes on ancient pottery) and make a copy of what you can see.
- Visit a local museum and make a collage using the artifacts on display as inspiration or make a sketch of a particular artifact on display that you are interested in or like the look of.
- Make a study of an artefact - choose something from the Buckinghamshire Country archives online or from the British Museum's online collections to make a poster about.