

Making a Find into a Treasure

Key Stage 2-3



This activity works well with KS2 and builds on the fascination children have for found objects. It consolidates the idea that any find can be a treasure rather than the accepted view that treasure is confined to gold, silver and jewels.

The starting point is the find. This can come from a garden search at home or from the results of test pitting. (See the section on 'How to Dig Your Back Garden'). If you are lucky enough to have a Victorian or early 20th century rubbish dump near you then this is the most wonderful opportunity. It can be excavated despite all the potential Health and Safety risks and will provide you not only with the unique experience of excavation but also with heaps of material for future work. Before digging please contact us for advice and guidance.

Alternatively interesting objects from home can be brought in. (old bottles, china, small wooden objects, bones etc.)

You will also need various scrap materials (cardboard, fabric, wood, shells, buttons, sequins etc.)

The idea is to imagine that the artefact is the most precious of things which you want to display for others in a museum or gallery. Its manner of display has to reflect its importance and mystery so ideas for display could be;

- In an elaborate frame
- On a pedestal
- In a display cabinet
- Behind a curtain

I start the session with a drama exercise in which the children act out the following scenarios;

- The search for the object (depending on where the artefacts come from this can involve the careful excavation of the piece; the discovery in some long forgotten corner of an attic or cupboard etc)
- The discovery: A moment of joy or wonderment
- The careful cleaning of the artefact with a brush and toothpick
- An examination taking the utmost care in the handling of a very delicate and precious object
- Showing a friend what you have and sharing the wonder with them
- Transporting and setting up the treasure in a case for display
- Inviting others to come and see the exhibition

By preparing for the activity through this drama exercise the scene and atmosphere are set and the children really do become quite captivated by the simple beauty of their artefact. Ownership and pride is created and the displays which result show a care and sensitivity.

This is also an exercise which is all inclusive and where children who would normally avoid creative writing are able to tackle many of the same emotions without the use of a pen.

If you want to take this further AND involve the use of a pen then a plaque to display under your treasure adds another dimension to the work.



For this the text is to further extol the beauty of the find. One or two examples of this are shown below and once drafted out the text can be transferred to the plaque which, of course should be as beautifully designed as the frame or cabinet it is set beneath.

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