Archaeological finds

Print (on a colour printer), laminate and cut out these archaeological finds for your 'test pit'.

Leather purse

Drawstring **leather purses** have been a common accessory throughout history.

Purses like these might have been made and used by Romans, Vikings, medieval people and even by people living as recently as the 18th and 19th centuries.

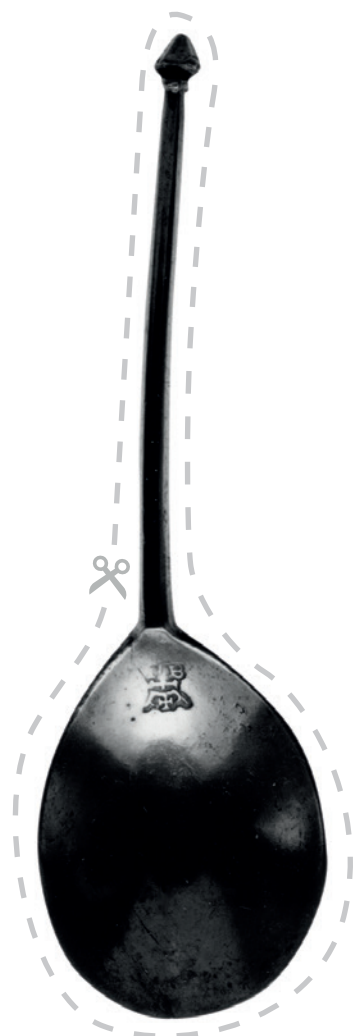They would have been hung from belts, and the drawstring would have kept the contents safe.

Spoon

This **English spoon from the Middle Ages** is dated around the fifteenth century. It is 6.4 inches in length and is made of pewter.

This spoon has an unidentified marker's mark on the interior of the fig-shaped bowl, displaying letters inscribed on either side of a crowned cross.

Although spoons were usually marked on the back or front side of the bowl, it is unknown who owned this spoon and what the inscription means.

The shank ends in a diamond point knop which is a common style for medieval spoons. However, this pewter spoon is especially rare because it combines a hexagonal stem with a diamond-pointed head. Since this spoon is composed of pewter and not silver, the poor durability is evident.

The long, slender, and elegant shape of this particular spoon was typical of the late medieval period.

Archaeological finds

Page 2

Roman coins

These **Roman coins** depict the first Roman emperors, who were also referred to as Caesars.

Julius Caesar was the first living Roman to have his portrait on the current coinage of the official mint. This was a sign both of his power and of the break with tradition. This practice was followed on by his successors.

Here are 12 denarii (ancient Roman silver coins) from the first 12 emperors of the Roman Empire. The Emperors are Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian.

Julius	Augustus	Tiberius	Caligula
Claudius	Nero	Galba	Otho
Vitellius	Vespasian	Titus	Domitian

Archaeological finds

Antique pottery

Pinxton Porcelain Works produced what is now valuable **antique pottery** in Pinxton in the early 19th century. The owner of the Pinxton Porcelain works, John Coke, also inherited Pinxton Colliery and was the main person behind the Mansfield to Pinxton Railway line which is an important part of the history at Mill Waters.
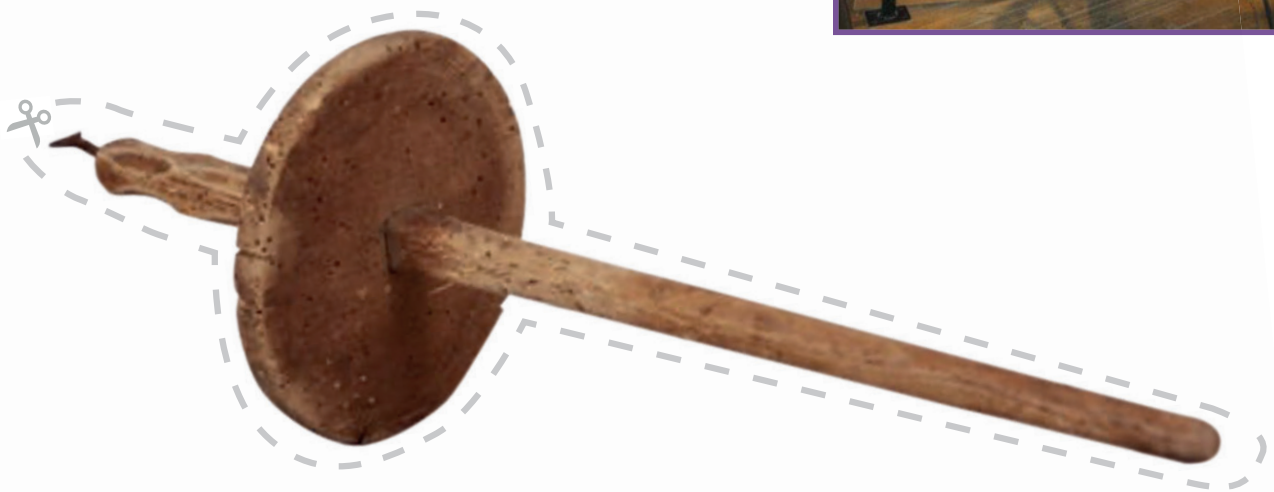
Spindle whorl

In medieval times, yarn was spun using a **spindle whorl** which was usually case in lead with different patterns. A wooden peg or dowel was inserted for spinning the yarn.

Archaeological finds

1800s spindle

1800s spindle is one of the oldest and simple objects used for spinning the wool, silk or cotton, highly used in traditional homes where women used to design the materials by themselves.

Medieval buckle

Buckle from a leather medieval belt, decorated with stamping crafted from high quality leather. Made from leather and pewter.

The belt would have been worn over a wool tunic as in the picture below.

Archaeological dig fact sheet

What is archaeological excavation?

The term excavation means digging, recording, and interpreting the physical remains of the people who lived in an area in order to understand their culture.

Excavation is one of the ways that archaeologists survey a site to see if there is evidence of the past.

Finds may be man-made objects and human remains. Artefacts may include everyday objects for cooking and eating, or decorative items including jewellery. They can provide clues about the people who lived in that area a long time ago, how they lived, what they ate, and what their lives were like.

The place or layer underground where an artefact is discovered is called its context. It is important to record the context of a find as this can help interpret how old the item is, what it might have been used for or what it means. Archaeologists carefully dig layer one under the ground at a time looking for artefacts or remains. Each layer represents a period in time; the deeper below the ground the further back in time your remains are dated - unless there has been an earthquake. Anything which is found on layer is considered a related find as it is from the same period in time. When an artefact is detected archaeologists will search in a diagonal line away from that item to see if there are any other finds close by.

Every archaeological site has a top plan to help archaeologists record the exact location of any finds. A top plan consists of grid lines on top of the archaeological site.

When a site is backfilled that means the earth that has been taken out is put back again. That means that anything which has not been discovered is preserved in case there is another archaeological dig in future. Often it is because the land is going to be used for building and the developer wants to get on with the job, or the land is used for something else, like farmland.

Archaeologists work with a variety of historians who are experts in particular periods or types of objects, such as pottery or jewellery, to help them learn more about their finds and the people who left them behind.

Archaeological dig fact sheet

The top rules of archaeological excavation

1. Care must be taken not to damage archaeological artefacts or remains during an excavation so mechanical diggers are not allowed. Small trowels are permitted but great care must be taken to remove soil from around the object without breaking it and the artefact (or human remain) removed from the ground by hand.

2. The context of every find needs to be carefully recorded both in relation to the top plan and the depth beneath the surface.

3. Finds must be cleaned gently with a soft brush being careful not to break off any parts. Usually artefacts are photographed before they are taken away for closer inspection. It is important to make a drawing of what you find in the ground too to highlight anything important which won't stand out in a picture.

4. The site must be backfilled so that it can continue to be used for its modern-day purpose.

Archaeological excavation record sheet

Location: ....

Name of archaeologist / archaeological team: ....

Date(s) of dig (day/month/year) ....

Find code (usually starts with initials of place and year)	Top Plan location	Context (layer)	Description of soil (shade, texture, smell)	Brief description of find