



Piece It Together

You will need

- Safety Goggles & Protective Gloves
- 2 x old ceramic items (plate, mug etc. - breakable)
- Materials to construct grid
- Hammer (if necessary)
- Record Sheets

This activity counts towards

Explorers - Requirement 3

Activity Details

Time: 1 Hour

£ ££

Indoors & Outdoors

Teams

S / E / N

Before you begin

- Explain that this activity looks at how artefacts can be dispersed around sites. This dispersal could occur when the item is originally broken. It could also be due to formation processes moving the pieces around in the ground.
- Split the group into two teams.

Activity

1. Make a 5x5 grid on the floor, each square measuring 50cm x 50cm. This could be done numerous ways: by laying out a large sheet of paper, using chalk to draw out the grid or outlining the grid with rope.
2. The second team then go somewhere where they cannot see the grid. Whilst waiting they could have a go at completing Requirement 2 of the Explorer Badge or another activity from our activity bank.
3. The first team should then put on safety goggles and protective gloves.
4. The first team now drops one ceramic item on to the grid. It should smash and the pieces be distributed across the grid.
 - a. If the ceramic doesn't break, the hammer can be used to break it up, and the team would then need to place the ceramic pieces on to the grid.
 - b. If pieces have moved off the grid, they can represent pieces lost over time due to formation processes.
5. The first team record where the pieces of ceramic dispersed on their grid (see the Record Sheet at the end of this document).
6. They then clear the ceramic pieces from the grid leaving no evidence.
7. The first and second team then swap over and the second team carry out steps 3-6.

Both teams should now have a record sheet outlining where their ceramic item dispersed.

8. The two teams now re-group.
9. The teams now play 'Unearth the Shards' (like Battleships). Each team takes turns to choose a grid square, trying to locate pieces of the other team's ceramic. They mark their finds on their grid.
10. The team that finds all the pieces of the other team's ceramic first, wins.





Reflection

How far were the ceramic pieces spread out? How long did it take to find all the pieces? Were you able to piece the ceramic back together?

Not all evidence survives in one piece; it is likely to be broken due to degradation and formation processes. This can lead to an artefact being spread across a whole archaeological site.

Very often, archaeologists cannot find all the pieces. They must therefore interpret an item without all the components, which can lead to an incorrect conclusion.

Safety

The person leading the activity should highlight the importance of:

- carefully following directions
- wearing eye protection
- wearing gloves
- wearing protective clothing or something with long sleeves

If it is too dangerous for the ceramic to be broken in an open area, a box or protected area could be used. The pieces could then be laid out on to the grid.

The person leading the activity should ensure that the space is thoroughly swept after the activity, and all pieces of ceramic disposed of safely.

Change the level of challenge

Once you have completed the activity, the Explorers could have a go at piecing the ceramic item back together

Make it accessible

If it is not feasible to smash a ceramic object, the teams could use paper plates, which are cut up and then dispersed on to the grids.

If you don't have the time or resources, this activity could be carried out on the record sheets, with the Explorers deciding where to put their ceramic pieces and then guessing where the other teams' ceramic pieces are.





Piece It Together Record Sheet

Ceramic Dispersal – Where did your ceramic disperse. Put an X in each box which contains a piece of ceramic

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |

Guesses: Where do you think the other team's ceramic landed?

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |

