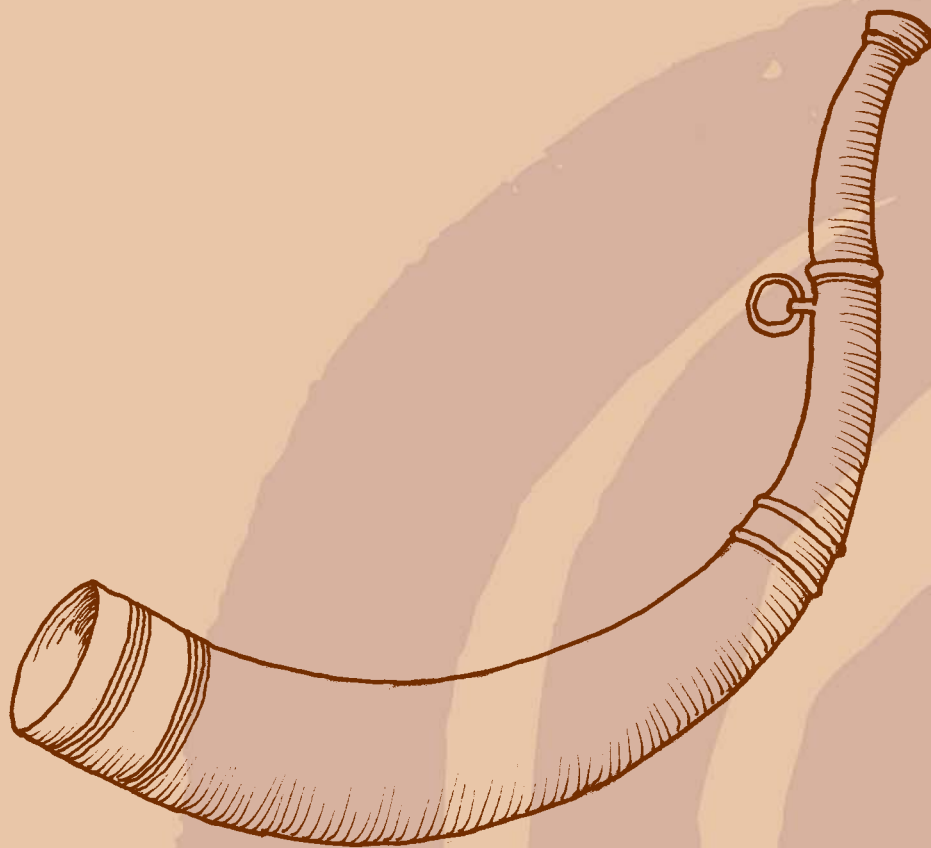


Lifestyle

LESSON 1

Our Archaeological Footprint



ARCHAEOLOGY
time in transition

IT'S ABOUT TIME 2

**Aim(s)**

To give the students an understanding of how archaeologists discover information about how people lived in the past by examining the artefacts they left behind.

**Objective(s)**

To explore the student's own lifestyle activities and the associated artefacts, and to use this as a means of showing how archaeologists discover information about past lifestyles.

**Time Period**

17th century - modern times

**KEY INFORMATION****Lesson**

- Lifestyle activities describe the main activities of day-to-day living.
- Lifestyle activities include: working, education, eating, transport, etc.
- Lifestyle activities generally occur in specific places and they have certain artefacts associated with them.
- Examining these artefacts gives us a lot of information about lifestyle.
- By using a writing pen as an example of an artefact we examine what it tells us.
- Archaeological artefacts are stored in museums.

Context

- The main aim of archaeology is to reconstruct past lifestyles from the surviving physical evidence of the time.
- This physical evidence is conveniently divided into two primary groups: monuments and artefacts.

**METHODOLOGY & MEDIUM**

- Instruction
- Active participation
- Requirements: Ruler
- **Worksheet 1** The Secrets of an Old Artefact
- **Worksheet 2** Interview Sheet
- **Worksheet 3** Taking a Closer Look
- **Student Handout** Artefacts

**SECTIONS**

- Section 1** Lifestyle Activities
- Section 2** The Archaeology of a Writing Pen
- Section 3** The Secrets of an Old Artefact
- Section 4** Role of the Museum



Key Question(s) What are lifestyle activities? What are the artefacts associated with these activities?

The term 'lifestyle' is used to describe the main activities of day-to-day living. These activities include:

working	education	eating	transport	recreation
washing	dressing	adornment	worship	communication
sleeping				

Let's look at an average weekday to see what artefacts and monuments relate to our lifestyle activities.



Teacher Instruction

Write the two headings (*Lifestyle Activity* and *Artefacts*) on the board. Then list the lifestyle activities. Ask the students to supply artefacts for each activity.

Lifestyle Activity Artefacts

Eating	Knife, Fork, Plate , Cup, Bowl
Dressing	Clothes, Shoes , Stockings
Adornment	Rings, Earrings, Brooches
Washing	Toothbrush, Soap, Washing-up Liquid
Recreation	Chess Pieces, Cards, Dancing Shoes, Football
Worship	Chalice, Candlesticks, Crosses
Education	Chalk, Projector, Books, Lockers, Blackboard, Desk, Chairs, Pens

Though this list of activities and associated artefacts relates to a student's individual life they tell us a great deal about the society to which they belong. We can see that this society is highly organised and technologically advanced.

- Eating—very organised—use of plates, knives, forks.
- Dressing—lots of variety—almost a recreational activity with a wide diversity of artefacts.
- Washing—very important—lots of artefacts relating to washing.
- Entertainment—huge range of activities.
- Education—important to society—wide range of teaching artefacts.



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students what are their top three lifestyle activities from the above list? What do these tell about the society they live in?



Key Question(s) What does a writing pen tell us about the society we live in?

Let us take a typical classroom artefact and assume we are archaeologists in the future examining the writing pen (biro) as an archaeological artefact. What is it telling us?

The Ballpoint Pen

Describe the artefact

Archaeologists begin their study of an artefact with a description of its physical make-up.



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to examine a writing pen under the general headings: form, fabric, function and record the answers on the board.

- Describe its form—(shape, physical make-up). A long, thin, solid plastic cylinder, hollow and tapered at one end. A coloured stopper closes off the other end.
- Draw a cross section of the pen on the board—(six sided).
- Inside the chamber there is a long thin circular flexible plastic tube containing a special type of fluid (ink).
- At the base of this tube there is a triangular metal chamber with a very small ball bearing—a ‘ball-point’.
- There is a removable top.
- Is there any inscription on it? (writing/logo)

Dimensions Measure the length and diameter with the ruler.

Weight Estimate the weight (is it heavy or light?).

Fabric Solid plastic externally; flexible plastic internally; metal tip.

Function Writing and drawing.



Plastic may be very rare in a thousand years time as it is a by-product of oil which is a finite resource.

Having considered the form, fabric and function of the pen, it is now time to consider its manufacture in more detail.

How was it made?

- Man-made materials.
- Mass produced in a factory.
- Made in a mould.
- Is there any inscription or decoration on it? (manufacturers name? logo? colour of ink?).
- Any evidence of where it was made?
- Any evidence of when it was made?
- Is the artefact common or rare? It is common—lots of them are found in the excavation!

Conclusion: a common mass-produced writing utensil made of man-made materials—plastic and alloy metals. It belongs to the early decades of the 21st century. It was found in a school so it is related to education.

Having established the above facts let us ask some more questions:

(a) What does it tell us about the owner?



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to comment on the variety of pens in the classroom.

Are there general differences between them? Colour of the ink (blue, black, red, green)—why is this so? Special grips? Different manufacturers? Different materials—metal, plastic, wood? Are there any with inscriptions for special occasions or souvenirs of certain places? Would an archaeologist in the future be able to tell anything about the students as individuals from the study of their pens? Discuss.

(b) Is a pen datable?

Will the archaeologist of the future be able to put a date on the pen? **Yes—the pen became popular in the latter half of the 20th century.** Has their design changed much in the past few years?

(c) What does it tell us about the place it was found?

Count the number of pens in the classroom—what would finding this many in one room tell the archaeologist? **Number of students.**

(d) What does the pen tell us about society?

Were they literate? **Yes—writing with a pen suggests that we can read. The pen itself suggests we can write and the number of pens found show this is a very common activity.**

(e) Does it have an aesthetic quality?

Would you put it on your mantle piece for display? **No—it is a basic functional design.**

Now look at the range of pens in the classroom and see if any have a special style—some are plain and simply functional, others are probably more elaborate. What kind of economy does it represent? **Market economy.**

If they were made in China what does this suggest? **Foreign trade.**

Would you be upset if you lost the pen—are they evidence of a ‘throw-away’ society? **Yes—inexpensive and easily replaced.**

(f) If an archaeologist found a ball-point during an excavation in 5,000 years time would it be put on display in a museum? Discuss.



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to group the pens in the classroom using some of their physical characteristics and write the results on the board.

Here are some headings that might be useful

- Colour of Ink (blue, black, red).
- Retractable Writing Tip (Yes/No).
- Type of inscription on pen (name of charity, sports club, bank, etc.)
- Writing Mechanism (roller-ball, felt-tip, gel roller, etc.)

These groupings are called typologies—one of the most useful tools used by archaeologists in dealing with artefacts is to sort them into groups or typologies. A typology is a grouping of similar objects according to their differing physical characteristics.



The archaeologist who discovers the pen in 1,000 years time will send it to an expert on 20th/21st century writing implements for a special study. The expert will subject it to various laboratory tests to see if they can tell more about it- 'the type of ink used was popular with Chinese factories between 1,990 and 2,010 AD, so it dates to that period'.

Drawing conclusions about the pen

- A common writing tool of late 20th/ early 21st century.
- Mostly made of plastic—easy to mass produce.
- Blue/black/red ink was most common, occasionally green.
- It is made to fit into the hand—light, slim and long enough.
- Portable artefact.
- Literate society—writing was a commonplace activity.
- It carries a company logo—evidence of a market economy.



László Bíró, a Hungarian newspaper editor, filed a British patent for a revolutionary ballpoint pen on 15th of June 1938 (see **Supplementary Information**).

We see that by looking at a simple everyday artefact much information can be gleaned by careful and systematic examination. This is exactly how archaeologists examine artefacts from the past. Through careful study, analysis, and comparative studies they can discover much information. Frequently, the artefacts are broken and only some parts are found thus making the archaeologist's job more difficult.



Key Question(s) What can the examination of an artefact tell us?

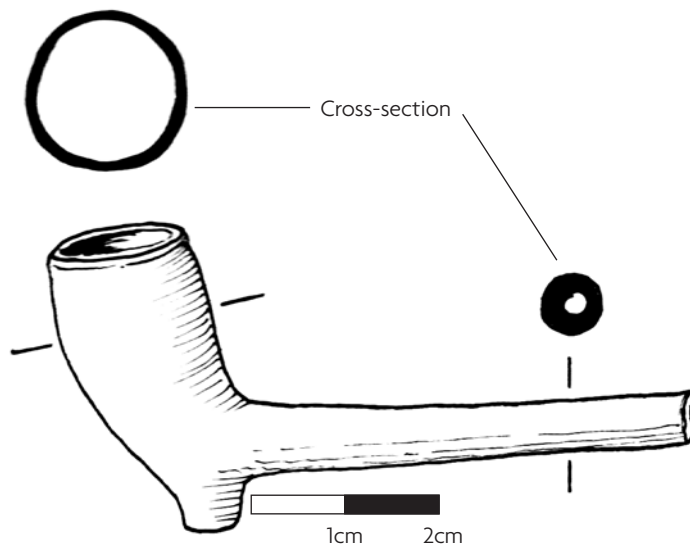


Teacher Instruction

Distribute **Worksheet 1** *The Secrets of an Old Artefact*.

Now let's look at an old artefact and see what information we can gather from it. Divide the class up into pairs and get them to examine the artefact and answer the questions on **Worksheet 1**.

Ask the students to give feedback on their discoveries.



This artefact was found on an excavation in Cork city (see *Beneath the Streets* T2,U3,L2).

Description

Form

A hollowed out circular stem with a bowl at one end; wider in the centre like a bulb. The bowl is set at an angle to the long circular stem. There is a little heel at the junction between the bowl and stem.

Dimensions

7.3cm x 2cm



The cross sections in the drawing show that the bowl and stem are hollow.

Fabric

Made from a natural fine clay which has been fired in a kiln and turned into a ceramic material. It is hard—not flexible.

How was it made

Manmade in a mould. Liquid clay was poured into a mould and then fired.

Inscription

None.

Decoration

A little bit around the top of the bowl. What is it for? **Simply decoration.**

Function

A pipe for smoking tobacco.

What does it tell us?

- The owner—probably male and adult.
- Datable—Yes, pipes are introduced into Ireland in the 17th century following the introduction of tobacco. A typology of pipes has been made and they are easily datable—pipes with a bulbous angled bowl like this one are 17th century in date. The more upright larger straight-sided bowls are late 18th/19th century (see **Worksheet 1**).
- What does the artefact tell us about the society? They smoked, they had leisure time. They had trade links with America (tobacco), they were part of the tobacco-smoking world.



Clay pipes are very useful artefacts on excavations as they are easily recognisable and dateable. This is important as one way of dating layers in an archaeological excavation is finding a datable object in the layer (see *The Big Dig* T3, U2,L2). Clay pipes are fired so they will last in the ground. However they are very fragile and can be easily broken—so fragments of clay pipes are more common finds than complete pipes.

What can we say about the artefact?

- It is a clay pipe for smoking tobacco.
- It was made from fired clay in a mould.
- It fits into the late 17th century typology.
- It showed the owner was a smoker who had some leisure time.
- It showed that the country had well established trade connections with America.

SECTION 4 Role of the Museum



Key Question(s) Who looks after the archaeological artefacts?

Museums

All archaeological artefacts recovered from archaeological excavations are stored in our regional and national museums for safe-keeping.

The role of the museum is to:

study, preserve, house and exhibit objects of cultural value for the good of the community.

- After the collapse of the Gaelic ruling class in the late-medieval period (16th and 17th century) hereditary keepers were appointed to keep precious relics safe.
- These keepers were often descendants of stewards who controlled monastic lands.
- For example, the Shrine of St. Patrick's Bell (see *Journey of Worship* T1,U3,L1) was in the possession of the Mulholland family for about 700 years.
- During the nineteenth century these relics and reliquaries were bought by collectors and public institutions.

- The eighteenth century was a period of intense activity devoted to learning and discovery about the past, other civilizations and the natural world.
- Collecting, classification and deciphering were all important steps on the way to a greater understanding of the past.
- Private collections were developed by wealthy individuals and institutions/societies.
- Museums brought a lot of these collections together in the 19th/20th century.

The *National Museum of Ireland* has a responsibility to preserve and make accessible the portable (artefacts), natural and cultural heritage of Ireland. It promotes understanding of our heritage through exhibitions, lectures and other awareness initiatives. In doing so it deepens cultural ties both within Ireland and abroad.

The National Museum of Ireland consists of four separate museum buildings

- The *National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology and History*, Kildare Street, Dublin 2
- The *National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Arts and History*, Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin 7
- The *National Museum of Ireland - Natural History*, Merrion Street, Dublin 2
- The *National Museum of Ireland Country Life*, Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

The National Museum also has a conservation laboratory to preserve artefacts in its collection.



Since the 1990s there has been an enormous increase in archaeological excavation producing tons of artefacts. These all have to be stored carefully and some may need conservation. The State owns all archaeological objects found in the country under Section 4 (1) of the 1994 National Monuments Act.



Optional Exercise Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to compare their lifestyle activities and their associated artefacts with those of their parents when they were teenagers using **Worksheet 2 Interview Sheet**.

See Projects section: *Museum Visit and Taking a Closer Look*.

WEB LINKS

WWW.



National Museum

www.museum.ie/

Irish Museums Association

www.irishmuseums.org/

Museums

<http://tbreen.home.xs4all.nl/musea.html>

The Battle of the Ballpoint Pens

<http://inventors.about.com/library/weekly/aa101697.htm>

The Secret Life of the Home

http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/onlinestuff/museum_objects/secret_life_of_the_home.aspx

1. Describe the artefact :

Form (shape):

Dimensions:

Height

Width

Diameter

2. Fabric

(a)

(b)

Combination of Material:

(c) Soft /solid/Flexible (d) Man made or natural

3. Function

4. How was it made? (handmade or machine-made)

Describe how it was made.....

Where was it made?

5. Is the artefact common or rare?

6. Is there any writing or decoration on it?

What is the purpose of this writing or decoration?

7. If this artefact was found on an archaeological site

(a) What does it tell us about the owner?

Young or Old ☐

Male or Female ☐

Rich or Poor ☐

(b) Is it datable?

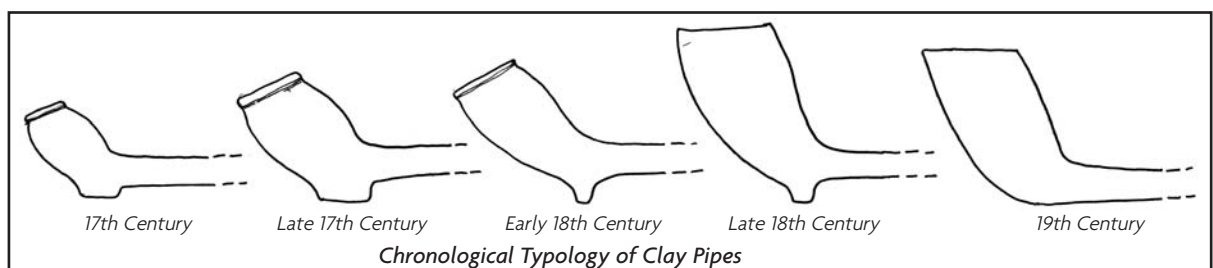
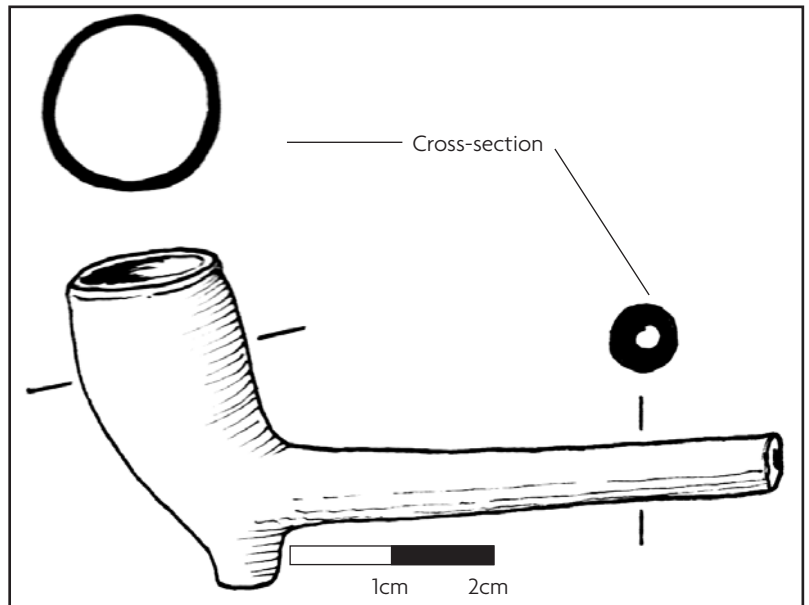
(c) What does it tell us about lifestyle activity?

(d) What does it tell us about the society that produced it?

Were they literate?

Does it have an aesthetic quality?

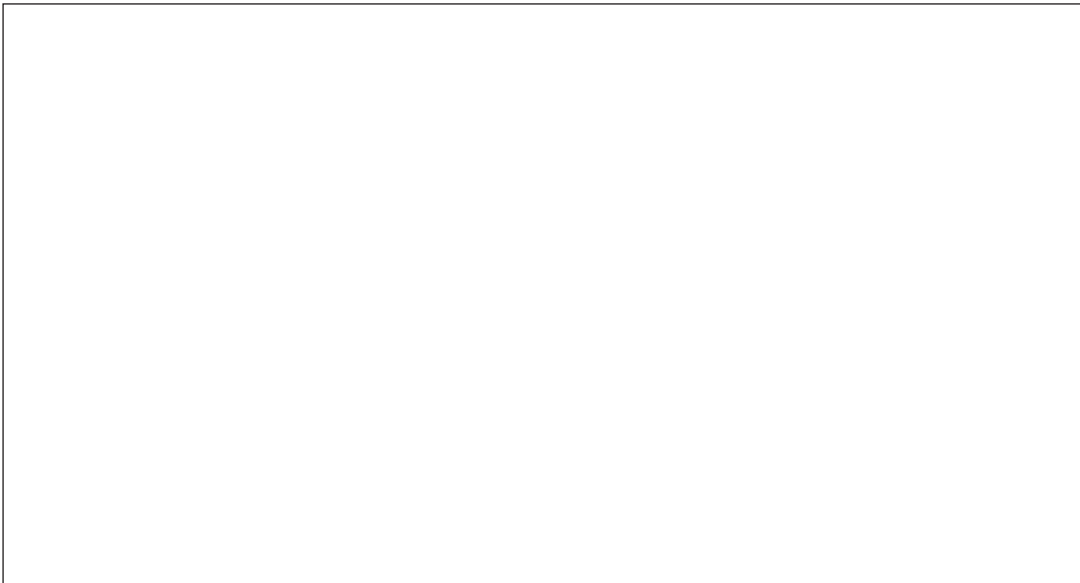
What kind of economy? Trading/market/barter.....



Interview a parent/grandparent or neighbour about their lifestyle activities when they were your age and the artefacts associated with them. Explore each area with the person using questions such as; How? When? Where? What? Why? Where did the activities generally take place and what were the objects or artefacts associated with the activity?

Washing/cleaning	Location	Artefacts
<i>Personal hygiene, different types of washing-bath/shower/hand basin, hair care, regular times-teeth</i>		
Eating /Drinking	Location	Artefacts
<i>Different types of food, different meal times, wide range of food available today, eating out-chain stores</i>		
Clothing	Location	Artefacts
<i>Need for clothes/shoes, different clothes for different occasions-school uniform, work (indoors/outdoors) party clothes. Changing styles, where are they made?</i>		
Employment-job/household chores		Artefacts
<i>Different careers/opportunities, methods of travel to and from work, working at home, daily chores at home.</i>		
Travelling/Communicating	Location	Artefacts
<i>Need for travel, methods of transport, ease of travel today, communication technology-internet, mobile phones,</i>		
Recreation	Location	Artefacts
<i>How we spend our free time at home-music, reading, TV, computer games etc. Outside home-concerts, cinema, dancing, meeting people etc</i>		

1. Draw the artefact in the box below



2. Form (shape):
- Fabric: Soft/Solid/Flexible/Combination
- Material: Manmade or natural
- Dimensions: Height Width
3. Function: What was it used for?
4. How was it made? (handmade or machine-made)
- Describe:
- Where was it made?
5. Is the artefact common or rare?
6. Is there any writing or decoration on it?
7. What is the purpose of this writing or decoration?
8. How old is it?
9. If this artefact was found on an archaeological site
- (a) What does it tell us about the owner?
- Young or Old Male or Female Rich or Poor.....
- Anything else?:
- (b) What does it tell us about lifestyle activity?
- (c) What does the artefact tell us about the society that produced it?
- Were they literate?
- Does it have an aesthetic quality?
- What kind of economy? Trading/market/barter.....
- (d) Any other comment(s)?

Lifestyle Activity**Eating****Artefacts**

Knife, Fork, Plate, Cup, Bowl.

Dressing

Clothes, Shoes, Stockings.

Adornment

Rings, Earrings, Brooches.

Washing

Toothbrush, Soap, Washing-up Liquid.

Recreation

Chess Pieces, Cards, Dancing Shoes, Football.

Worship

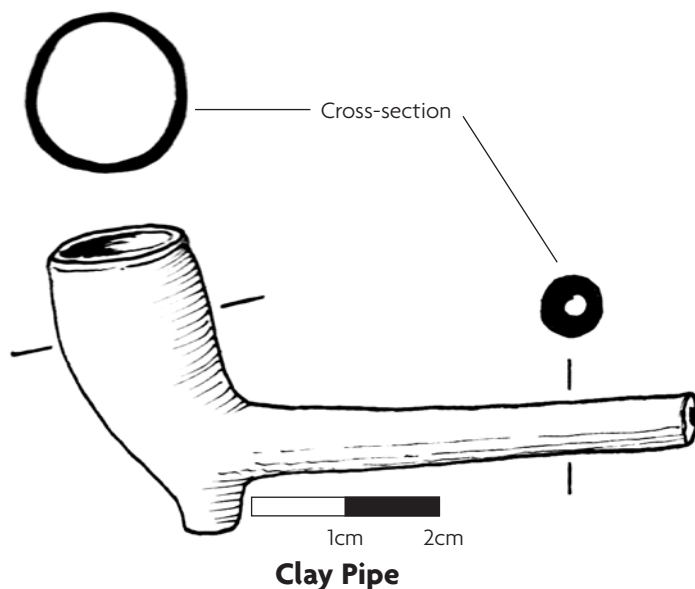
Chalice, Candle Sticks, Crosses.

Education

Chalk, Projector, Books, Lockers, Desk, Chairs, Black Board, Pens.

- Lifestyle activities describe the main activities of day-to-day living.
- Lifestyle activities include: working, education, eating, transport, etc.
- Lifestyle activities generally occur in specific places and have certain artefacts associated with them.

Examining these artefacts reveal a lot of information about lifestyle.

**What does it tell us?**

- The owner—probably male and adult.
- Datable—Yes, pipes are introduced into the country in the 17th century following the introduction of tobacco. A typology of pipes has been made and they are easily datable—pipes with a bulbous angled bowl like this one 17th century in date. The more upright, larger, straight-sided bowls are late 18th/19th century.
- *What does the artefact tell us about the society?*—they smoked, they had leisure time, they had trade links with America, they were part of the tobacco-smoking world.



Pottery vessel, Baunogenasraid,
Co. Carlow Neolithic 3,500 - 3,400 BC

Museums

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Derrynaflan Hoard, Derrynaflan,
Co. Tipperary 8-9th century AD

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