



Archaeology Detectives – E. Photographing Your Site

Activity plan

Learning Intention

- ◆ To understand how and why archaeologists use photography to record archaeological or historical sites
- ◆ To be able to use a camera to record specific detail of your chosen site

Curriculum Links

Through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum, I can create images and objects which show my awareness and recognition of detail.
EXA 2-04a

Resource List

- ◆ Learning Resource E
- ◆ Digital cameras
- ◆ Recording sheets

Heritage Hero Award
Engage Activity

Research needed before session

Allow up to **1 hour** for preparation time.

There are 4 items to prepare before this session and on site activity.

1. Look at **Canmore** to see examples of archaeological photographs

Find the link to **Canmore** on our [links page](#). The easiest way to find examples of archaeological site photographs is as follows:

- I. Type in a place name in the Search box on the top right e.g. Edinburgh Castle
- II. Select Images in the drop down box to the right of the Search box, and click on the blue search button (it has a picture of a magnifying glass on it).
- III. The results of your search will be displayed. It may be easier to find useful images if you chose to show 96 images per page.
- IV. The results will show historic, as well as more recent archaeological site photographs alongside other images.
- V. Click on an image to view it.
- VI. Copy the image by clicking on Download beneath the photograph.
- VII. This takes you to a page with licensing information. **Canmore** license images for educational purposes – the correct attribution and licensing information is shown above each enlarged photograph. The larger 800px images are for educational use.
- VIII. Click on Download to save the image.

2. Preparing a photograph record sheet

In order to remember what the photographs taken by your group depict it is a good idea to create a photograph record sheet. This can help you keep notes about who took the photo, what each photo shows and what number the photo has been saved as in your camera's memory. An exemplar photograph record sheet is included in **Learning Resource E**.

3. Check the camera

- I. If using a school digital camera/s make sure that it / they are fully charged and have adequate memory storage to store the images you will photograph.

- II. Ensure you have the correct cable or adapter to download images from the camera/s to a computer (if needed), and that you know how to download the images to store them on a computer.
- III. Check the digital camera settings to ensure images are captured at a high resolution. Taking digital images as jpg files will provide images of a good quality. Try to ensure the file sizes are not too big however, as you will use up a lot of memory storage. JPEGs of a memory size of 1.5MB will be sufficiently detailed.
- IV. Practice taking a few photographs if necessary to familiarise yourself with the camera's functions.
- V. A spare (charged) battery, and an additional memory card might be considered.

4. General overview of resources

We suggest you always review our resources and amend as necessary before running the session.

Timings

Activity	Summary	Time
Starter – Thinking about photographs	Using Learning Resource E discuss with the group why photographing your site might be a good idea. Why is it useful? What sorts of information might you be able to record?	10 mins
Introduction	Discuss that the group is going to learn some tips to take good photographs for your site investigation. You can apply this guidance when you go out to site. You might want to show some examples of archaeological photographs that you have sourced from Canmore or another online archive.	5 mins
Main activity	You will learn the difference between a close up and a wide angle photograph. Look at the examples in Learning Resource E and ask the group to think about what each type of photograph is good for, and what they are not so good at. Look at the guidance for taking good archaeological site photographs.	20 mins
Plenary	Group share of information	10mins

Extra Activities/ suggestions on scaling up and down

You could extend this activity by letting the group have a 'dry-run' of taking archaeological site photographs around the school. Challenge them in groups to take turns to capture a number of wide angle and close-up photographs, and to record what they have photographed on a record sheet. You could assign roles for photographer, scribe etc. so that everyone gets a turn to practice different recording activities. This activity should enable them to become familiar with the process of taking archaeological site photographs and ensure they are prepared when on a site visit.

To simplify the activity, locate a variety of archaeological site photographs online and have the group sort them into close-ups and wide angle shots. Use a camera to take photographs of the group – one up close to show detail, and one from a distance to show the group in a wider context. You could go to extremes and take an extreme close-up of the group and another from very far away to give

examples of photos that are not so useful. Ask them to describe the differences between these images, and how they might be good or not so good at showing detail and recording useful information.