



## First Steps into Archaeology: Archaeology for Young Children - Lesson Plan 1

### Now and then – the Home

This lesson plan is part of a series of 4 lesson plans focussed on teaching archaeology to young children. It is aimed at pre-school, and junior and senior infant classes in primary schools. This project is a joint initiative between the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council, the Kilkenny County Childcare Committee and Kilkenny Education Centre, and is co-funded by the Heritage Council. For further information see [www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage)

#### Learning objectives

- To introduce the term "Long ago" as representing historical eras.
- To introduce the terms "New" and "Modern" to represent things in the present.
- To let pupils discover the similarity and differences in home and life settings between 'now' and in 'the past'.
- To let pupils discover the similarity and differences between food eaten 'now' and in the 'past'.

#### Learning context

Time period	From	To
<b>Prehistoric</b>	<b>7,500 BC</b>	<b>400 AD</b>
Stone Age - Mesolithic Period	7,500 BC	4,000 BC
Stone Age - Neolithic Period	4,000 BC	2,500 BC
Bronze Age	2,500 BC	600 BC
Iron Age	600 BC	400 AD
<b>Medieval</b>	<b>400 AD</b>	<b>1,540 AD</b>
Early Medieval Period	400 AD	1,100 AD
High Medieval Period	1,100 AD	1,300 AD
Late Medieval Period	1,300 AD	1,540 AD
<b>Post-Medieval &amp; Modern</b>	<b>1,540 AD</b>	<b>present</b>
Post-Medieval Period	1,540 AD	1,700 AD
Early Modern Period	1,701 AD	1,800 AD
Modern Era	1,801 AD	present

Key events	Date
Newgrange Passage Tomb Built	c. 3,000 BC
The Great Pyramid of Egypt	c. 1,800 BC
Celts arrive in Ireland	c. 500 BC
Jesus born	0
St Patrick arrives in Ireland	432 AD
Vikings arrive in Ireland	794 AD
Anglo-Norman Invasion of Ireland	1,169 AD
Potato brought to Ireland	1,587 AD
Cromwell arrives to conquer Ireland	1,649 AD
Tea is brought to Ireland	c. 1,800 AD
The Great Famine starts	1,845 AD
Titanic sails from Cork	1,912 AD
Ireland gains independence from Britain	1,921 AD

Humans have built shelters out of materials for many thousands of years, going right back to when our ancestors were nomads or hunter-gatherers. The first houses were nothing more than timber branches wrapped together and finished with mud. Thatch was the only roofing material available for the majority of people throughout the Middle Ages in Europe and beyond until the 1800s. Likewise, stone was in limited use as a building and roofing material until the arrival of the Normans in Ireland. Keeping in the heat in the house was crucial, so people lived close to their animals (bringing some animals indoors) and they cooked over a open fire in a hearth. However, that placed houses at great risk of fire.

#### Neolithic Houses

There is archaeological evidence for both round and rectangular houses during the Neolithic period, when the first farmers arrived in Ireland. The houses contained hearths which would have been used for cooking and heating and may have provided the only form of light. The houses were often divided in individual rooms. While there is little evidence for the dividing walls were made of, trenches or post holes survive at excavated sites which would have supported the timber or wattle walls. Finds recovered within excavated sites include Neolithic pottery vessels, worked stone including flint and chert, querns used for grinding corn for break, beads and polished stone axes.

#### Bronze Age Houses

Round houses were constructed during the Bronze Age. They generally consist of a massive foundation wall of stone which would have supported a timber roof covered in vegetation or skins. The round houses usually had a hearth in the centre for cooking and heating and artefacts recovered often include flint tools and sherds of Bronze Age pottery.

## ■ Learning context (continued)

### **Vikings (Early Medieval)**

Viking houses have been excavated at the major urban centres and rural locations throughout Ireland. Viking houses are typically rectangular in shape. They are generally constructed with post-and-wattle walls. Some excavated examples have double walls with the remains of bracken used for insulation in between. The walls supported timber roofs covered in turf and thatch. The interiors were often subdivided into aisles and the side aisles for used as area for bedding and storage. The central aisle would have contained the hearth and would have been used as a kitchen and workshop.

### **Mottes (High Medieval)**

Mottes are the ruined remains of medieval timber and earth castles which were the centre of medieval manors during the early phase of the Anglo-Norman period in Ireland. Almost 500 ruined Mottes exist throughout Ireland. They were constructed during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. They consisted of a flat-topped earthen mound with a timber tower on the summit. Attached to the base of the mound was an enclosure called a bailey surrounded by a bank and fosse (ditch). Nowadays, all that usually survives above ground is the earthen mound and ditches.

### **Eighteenth century (Modern)**

The eighteenth century was a time of rapid population expansion in Ireland following the wars and revolutions of the earlier centuries. A wide variety of house types were built during this period, from the large stately homes of the landed classes, large farmhouses of the strong tenant farmers to the mud walled cabins of the landless labourers. Grand houses were built at the centre of country estates. They were often designed by architects in the classical style influenced by the style of houses in Britain and continental Europe. Good quality materials were used in their construction and these were often moved over long distance, for example good quality limestone for the walls and slate for the roof covering. The houses were often subdivided on social grounds with the grand rooms which were used for entertaining on the ground and first floor and the kitchens in the basement. Cottier cabins on the other hand were constructed of mud, taken directly from the nearby ground, and the roof was covered in clay sods or thatch –their building materials were those that were found locally (straw or reed for thatch, stone and limestone mortars for walls). They sometimes contained a small fire for cooking, but some did not even have this.

## ■ Linkage and Integration

- (i) **Aistear**  
Exploring and Thinking  
Active learning, hands on experience in handling objects  
Building communication through discussion.  
Identify and belonging, Thinking about things reflecting home environment.
- (ii) **Primary school curriculum**
  - Geography** Skills and concepts: *a sense of place and space*  
Strand: *human environment* - living in local community
  - History** Skills and concepts: *time and chronology* - using evidence, communication  
Strand: *Stories* - myself, my family
  - Science** Skills: *designing and making* - making; *working scientifically* - predicting  
Strand: *Materials: properties and characteristics of materials; Energy and forces* - forces
  - SPHE** Strand: *myself and others; myself and my family.*
  - Mathematics** Skills: *reasoning, understanding and recalling*  
Strand: *early mathematical activities* - classifying, matching, comparing
- (iii) **Archaeology in classroom**  
Module 2 timeline Ireland – understanding time  
Module 8 – using images of old things, supported by evidence from excavation/historical record/drawings  
Module 12 – my own place, and relating it to places in past

## ■ Learning activities and method

**Compare "modern" home and "old" home** This is a long term activity spanning weeks, rather than a single lesson.  
**Suitability for preschool:** Use models and artefacts that can be handled rather than photographs.

### Activity 1 - Story

An ideal way to introduce the concept of old and modern houses is to tell the story of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf. The focus should be on the types of houses that each pig made and the differences between them.

### Activity 2 – Construct the houses of the 3 little pigs as 3d models



Straw roof



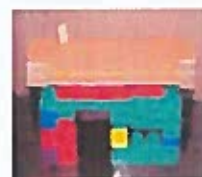
Straw walls



Straw house



Wooden house



Brick house

Make simple models with the children of the three little pigs houses using spaghetti (or drinking straws, or straw) for the straw house, wooden bricks for the wooden house, and lego / duplo for the brick house. Use paper shaped in to a cone with spaghetti stuck to it (with glue or tape) for the roof of the straw and wooden houses. Use cardboard as the roof of the brick house.

### Activity 3 - Act out the story of the 3 little pigs

Retell the story, with children adding the characters the pigs, and the wolf (use toys or puppets). The teacher uses a hairdryer (to represent the wolf) to blow the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> house down.



Blowing down the straw house



Straw house blown down



Blowing down the wooden house



Wooden house blown down



Trying to blow down the brick house

### Suggested discussion topics:

- Which house was the strongest?
- The process of houses getting damaged (high winds, storms)
- The heritage value of old buildings, and the use of 'old' materials such as thatch, are part of our heritage – just because they are old does not mean they are not of value
- How builders do repairs so that houses don't fall down
- How weather storms can cause damage to old houses
- What materials modern houses are made from
- How old houses in Ireland had thatched roofs
- Compare other differences

## ■ Learning activities and method (continued)

### Activity 4 – Comparing old and modern houses

**Activity preparation** - Download images of modern and old houses. The old house can be from any time. Alternatively, visit and an old house in your area (see Teaching Resources for information on old houses in Kilkenny). Visit and with permission take photographs of the house and its contents – rooms, furnishings, utensils etc. Laminate these images if you wish them to be more durable and reusable. Also use puppets of other toys to represent the family members.

**Old house table** - Place the existing stick or straw house from “3 little pigs story” on the ‘old house’ table. Discuss how long ago many old houses had thatched roofs and stick and mud walls. Subsequently replace the model with a photograph of an historic house/castle, ruin selected for visiting.

**Old house contents** - Children place a small number of photographs of the historic house contents on the old table. Discussion of contents is prompted by who?, what?, and where? questions. Add a photo of a chamber pot, or old toilet.

**Modern house table** - Place the brick house model on a ‘modern house’ table. Discuss how people live in brick and block houses today. Subsequently replace the model with a photograph of a style of modern house familiar to the children.

**Modern house contents** - Children choose 1 or 2 images of modern furnishing, and place these on the modern house table..

#### **Compare the images of the old and modern houses**

- Play spot-the-difference between the modern and old house images
- What materials are the houses made of?
- Discuss the shape and size of the houses?
- Discussion of contents is prompted by who, what, and where questions

Sufficient time should be allowed for imagination play to recreate the idea of a familiar family home.

#### **Compare the insides of old and modern houses**

Focus on two or three items / themes

*Example: a ‘room’ - the toilet*

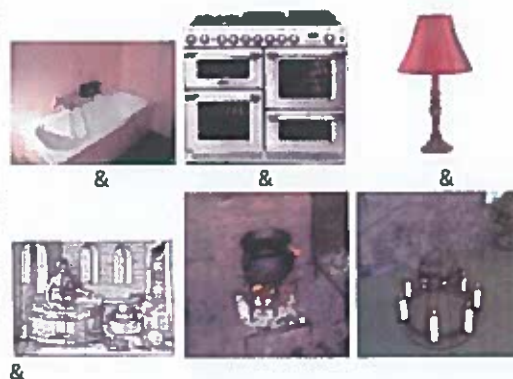


Images of a modern toilet and a chamber pot. Teacher leads discussion about the chamber pot being carried carefully, without spilling, and then it is emptied into a “smelly ditch” outside.

#### **Discussion points**

- Each item is discussed as to what it was used for.
- Which item is old and which is new?
- Did the people who lived long ago have these items (select from modern table)?

*Example: matching puzzle*



Children match up one or two items from the old and the modern houses.

## ■ Learning activities and method (continued)

### Activity 5 – Visit to the selected historic house or castle

#### Prior to visit

- Read the story of “Peepo”. Peepo is a book about a family who lived in an old house long ago.
- To enhance learning about the people living long ago, pictures from the story can be printed out and the children can colour them in, see link in resources section.
- Display the images from the old house table to prepare children what they will see upon their visit to the selected historic house. Tell the children a story about the family who lived in the house.

#### After the visit

- Revisit the old house table and review photographs to prompt discussion about the visit
- Encourage children to assist the teacher in retelling the story of the family who lived there long ago and encourage children to use their imagination in expanding the story.
- Discuss whether the historic house is a ruin, or whether it has been repaired.
- Was the historic house old or modern?

## ■ Resources & Materials

### Activity 1 – Story

Three little pigs story book

And / or Peepo story book (<http://www.twinkl.co.uk/book/peepo>)

### Activity 2 – Construct the houses of the 3 little pigs as 3d models

- Straw house – straw or raw spaghetti or drinking straws; oasis (from flower shop) to hold the straw walls together; paper shaped as a cone for the roof
- Wooden house – wooden blocks (roof as per straw house)
- Brick house – lego or duplo; cardboard for roof
- PVC glue / sticky tape (to attach straw to roof)
- A hairdryer is a substitute for the wolf blowing the house down.
- 3 toy pigs, or pig finger puppets
- 1 toy wolf, or wolf finger puppet

### Activity 3 - Act out the story of the 3 little pigs

- As per Activity 2, plus a hairdryer

### Activity 4 –Compare old and modern houses

- Modern house - Use the existing brick house for the model and download, print and laminate images for modern houses on-line. Select a few toy furnishings or images.
- Old house – Use existing straw or stick house for the model. Select a historic house to visit (see Teaching Resources below for links to suggested historic houses). Get permission to visit and photograph house and contents, print out and laminate the photographs.

### Activity 5 – Visit to historic house

- Preparation – story book “Peepo” or watch reading online, and download pictures for children to colour from book. See resource section for links.

## ■ Teaching Resources

General information about Ireland's archaeology and history

- <http://www.itsabouttime.ie/primary/05links.htm>
- [http://www.digitkids.ie/teaching\\_resources](http://www.digitkids.ie/teaching_resources)
- <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/learning-zone/primary-students/>

For images of old and modern things

- <http://www.google.ie/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi>

### Place to visit in Kilkenny City and County

#### **Kilkenny Castle**

The earliest stone castle at Kilkenny was constructed between 1207-1219 by William Marshall, 4th Earl of Pembroke. It is located on the site of an earlier earthwork castle. It is located on high ground on the bank of the River Nore. Kilkenny Castle later became the principal Irish residence of the Butler family. The Butler ownership began when James (c.1360-1405), 3rd Earl of Ormond, purchased the castle in c.1391, and lasted nearly 600 years after which it was presented to the people of Kilkenny in return for a token payment of £50. Over time, many additions and alterations have been made to the fabric of the building, making Kilkenny Castle today a complex structure of various architectural styles.

#### **Shees Almhouse**

The architectural heritage of Kilkenny includes a number of sixteenth century structures built by wealthy merchant families like the Rothe's and Shee's. Richard Shee was a successful lawyer and was a member of one of the most influential families in Kilkenny in the 16th century. He held the office of Deputy Treasurer of Ireland and received a knighthood in 1582.

In 1582, Sir Richard Shee founded the alms house 'to accommodate twelve poor persons'. The last record of any inmates in the house date back to 1830. It is one of the few remaining Tudor alms houses in Ireland. The Alms house was acquired by Kilkenny Corporation in 1978 and restored to its original condition. In 1981 it was reopened as the present tourist office in the city.

#### **Rothe House**

Rothe House is an example of a wealthy merchant's house dating to the 16th century which survives into the modern day within Kilkenny. Between 1594 and 1610 a wealthy merchant called John Rothe built this magnificent Tudor mansion. There are 3 houses built one behind the other. The first house was completed in 1594 and this is where John Rothe carried out his business as a merchant and lived upstairs with his family. The façade housed shops, one of them was John Rothe's own. The second house was completed in 1604 and included additional family living space. The third house, completed in 1610, included a kitchen on the ground floor with a large hearth and bake oven, as well as additional rooms on the first and second floors. Behind the third house are the gardens which contained an orchard, herb and vegetable gardens, a pigeon house, a well, and a summer house at the far end. The building has been restored magnificently and is now home to Kilkenny Archaeological Society. It houses some of the 2,500 artefacts collected by the Society. The garden to the rear of Rothe House has been reconstructed as an early 17th century urban garden.

#### **Edmund Rice House**

The house in which Edmund Rice was born is located in Callan, Co. Kilkenny. It is an example of a large farmhouse dating to the 18th century and belonged to the parents of Edmund Rice, who were prosperous tenant farmers. The farmhouse contained six rooms including a kitchen, parlour, breakfast room and three bedrooms. Rice, who was born at the house in 1762, was the founder of the Christian Brothers and Presentation Brothers.

#### **Further reading on houses in Kilkenny**

- Bourke, E. 1995. Life in the Sunny South-East in Archaeology Ireland, Volume 9, No. 3, Issue No. 33, p 33-36.
- Cooney, G. 1999. A boom in Neolithic Houses in Archaeology Ireland, Volume 13, No. 1, Issue No. 47, p 13-16.
- O'Sullivan, M. and Downey, L. 2007. Mottes in Archaeology Ireland, Volume 21, No. 21, Issue No. 79, p 19-21.
- Rathbone, S. 2011. The Slievemore Roundhouses in Archaeology Ireland, Volume 25, No. 1, Issue No. 95, p. 31-35.
- <http://www.kilkennycastle.ie/en/TouroftheCastle/>

There are also a number of useful lesson plans undertaken by the Heritage Council / Heritage Office for Kilkenny which include reference to historical buildings:

- [http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage/Ballyragget\\_Castle\\_Lesson\\_plan.pdf](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage/Ballyragget_Castle_Lesson_plan.pdf) (Ballyragget Castle)
- [http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage/Threecastles\\_Lesson\\_plan.pdf](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage/Threecastles_Lesson_plan.pdf) (Threecastles Ringfort & Motte)

■ **Extension activities**

**(i) Story board**

An activity story board could be designed with photographs of the children engaged in these activity at different stages. Comments made by children and adults could be included and this will help to document the process. This could become a learning story for children to use in reviewing how the activity was carried out and the outcome of the activity.

**(ii) Different types of houses**

Introduce a different type of old house, such as a castle or stone house and compare differences

**(iii) Other types of building**

Introduce other buildings in the neighbourhood such as a church and market

**(iv) Different time periods**

The activity can be carried out again and again using pictures from different time periods, e.g. Georgian, Stone Age. Use different artefacts themed around other aspects of the period studied.