

Ancient Artefacts Teachers Notes

This lesson plan addresses the Leave What You Find principle of Leave No Trace Message

Leave What You Find means conserving the special qualities of Ireland's natural and built heritage for future generations to enjoy. Natural objects and cultural artefacts can be removed from the environment for a number of reasons; both intentional and unintentional. These include; vandalism or theft of fossils and artefacts, driving off-road, hobby collecting or campsite construction. The class could brainstorm other ways in which fossils and artefacts can be lost or damaged.

Why is it important to leave what you find?

Scientists and archaeologists rely on evidence to piece together an image of our history. Fossils, arrowheads, pottery shards and jewellery all provide important information about our ancestors and their lives. Archaeologists are able to tell more from evidence found in its original location than if it were removed.

Fossil discoveries have succeeded in creating an image of ancient wildlife in Ireland. One such discovery was made in the Ailwee Caves, Co. Clare. These caves were discovered in 1944 by a local farmer while out flocking sheep. Fossils and bones of Brown Bears were found here, proving that Brown Bears lived in Ireland up to 3,000 years ago.

Aoife's Tips...

Litter is the one exception to the rule! This is one thing that should be collected when found in Ireland's natural environment. Litter can be harmful to both wildlife and people. Broken bottles can cause injuries and small mammals can get stuck inside bottles, cans and other containers. Animals and birds can get stuck in plastic bags. Litter can often be mistaken for food, if ingested it can be extremely harmful to wildlife.

Fionn Fact!

It is important to leave natural objects where you find them so that others can discover them. Natural objects also play an important role within the ecosystem.

Feathers are collected by birds and woven into their nests to provide warmth for their chicks.

Wildflowers provide nectar for bees which is essential for their survival, without flowering plants there wouldn't be any bees!

Shells provide homes for crabs and other shoreline creatures. When a crab increases in size it moves on to a larger home.

Nuts and Acorns left on the ground are free food and protein for animals to eat or store for the winter. Acorns also sprout to grow new oak trees, continuing forest health and composition.

Pinecones supply seeds for birds to feed upon and add nutrients to the soil layer after decomposition.

Rocks and wood protect insects from other animals and the elements.

For more information on the Leave What You Find principle
and the other Leave No Trace principles visit:
www.leavenotraceireland.org

