

Neolithic Burial Chambers Education Resource Pack

Key Stage 2

Literacy, Numeracy, Music, Art, ICT,
PSE, Curriculum Cymreig

LEARN



Neolithic Burial Chambers

Education Resource

Curriculum links:

Literacy — oracy, developing & presenting information & ideas

Numeracy — measuring and data skills

Music — composing, performing

Art — skills & range

Information Communication Technology — find and analyse information; create & communicate information

Personal Social Education — moral & spiritual development

Curriculum Cymreig — visiting historical sites, using artefacts, making comparisons between past and present, and developing an understanding of how these have changed over time

Neolithic burial chambers in Cadw's care:

Barclodiad-y-Gawres passage tomb, Anglesey

Bodowyr burial chamber, Anglesey

Bryn Celli Ddu passage tomb, Anglesey

Capel Garmon burial chamber, Conwy

Carreg Coetan Arthur burial chamber, Pembrokeshire

Din Dryfol burial chamber, Anglesey

Duffryn Ardudwy burial chamber, Gwynedd

Lligwy burial chamber, Anglesey

Parc le Breos chambered tomb, Gower

Pentre Ifan burial chamber, Pembrokeshire

Presaddfed burial chamber, Anglesey

St Lythans burial chamber, Vale of Glamorgan

Tinkinswood burial chamber, Vale of Glamorgan

Trefignath burial chamber, Anglesey

Ty Newydd burial chamber, Anglesey

All the Neolithic burial chambers in Cadw's care are open sites, and visits do not need to be booked in advance. We would recommend that teachers undertake a planning visit prior to taking groups to a burial chamber, as parking and access are not always straightforward.



Young people re-creating their own Neolithic ritual at Tinkinswood chambered tomb, Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales

Neolithic Burial Chambers

Education Resource

The Neolithic period

The Neolithic period is a time when farming was introduced and when people learned how to grow and produce, rather than hunt and gather their food. This period is widely regarded as one of the biggest changes in human history. The Neolithic period in Wales spans the period between 4000–2500 BC. That's around 6000 years ago.

The first farmers brought the ancestors of cattle, sheep and goats with them from France. Domestic pigs were bred from wild boar, which lived in the woods of Wales.

Sheep, goats and cattle are fond of leaves and bark, and pigs snuffle around roots. These domestic animals may have played a major role in clearing away the huge areas of dense forest that covered most of Wales.

Technological changes were also made at this time, and this can be seen in the material culture. For example, pottery was not made before this period, and flint tools now reflected the need for cereal gathering implements such as sickles. For the first time, permanent structures were built both for the living and the dead.

Burial practices in this period are characterized by collective burial in large, highly visible monuments with most of the excavated remains of this period being ceremonial or funerary in nature.

Early Neolithic (6000-5200 years ago)

Large collective monuments for the dead began to appear throughout Britain at this period.

They represented a permanent link between the community, the ancestral dead, and the land which they occupied. A good example is the Tinkinswood chambered tomb in south east Wales.

Houses of the dead were usually more permanent than those of the living, because the ancestors represent the community and the tombs were shrines to these supernatural beings.

Styles varied from region to region:

- In the Cotswolds-Severn region, internal stone-built chambers are located under wedge-shaped mounds faced with local limestone. For example, Tinkinswood and Parc le Breos Cwm chambered tombs, in south Wales.

- In west Wales, portal dolmens and cromlechs dominate, which have large stone chambers possibly covered by earth or stone mounds. A good example is Pentre Ifan, in Pembrokeshire.
- On Anglesey, we are lucky to have two passage tombs, Bryn Celli Ddu and Barclodiad-y-Gawres. This style of tomb corresponds with Irish examples, which were the norm on the island.



Bryn Celli Ddu passage tomb, on Anglesey

Some tombs began as portal dolmens, like at Pentre Ifan, which was then elaborated and built upon by future generations, so it might have looked more like Tinkinswood. Many were of multi-phase construction.

The most remarkable element of tomb construction is the raising of the capstone. Even today, these massive floating stones evoke wonder. That such feats were undertaken at all, let alone that they survived for almost 6,000 years, is a credit to Stone Age engineering.

The technology available to these engineers appears basic today, but was obviously enough for the task. Stones themselves could be used to raise ground levels, provide footings and act as weights. Timber could provide frameworks, levers and ramp surfaces, while ropes of plant fibre or honeysuckle could secure construction equipment.

The tombs may have had several functions aside from that of disposal of the dead, in the same way that a church is not simply a burial place. However, the main function which is visible in the archaeological record is the burial of human remains. Generally these tombs contain several bodies, there were around 50 at Tinkinswood — men, women and children.

It is possible that the bones of the buried people were not just kept in the tombs, but were brought out into the light of day and perhaps used in ceremonies. This might explain why skeletons were incomplete, with some people only represented by a handful of bones. Let us not overlook the idea that these handfuls may have been infused with a special meaning or magic.

Burial in chambered tombs may have been reserved for important people, but it could be for other reasons too. Perhaps people were selected for special reasons, like witch doctors, shamans or wise women, or people chosen because they were representatives of a family group; or had died in a specific way.

The contents of Neolithic chambers often included broken pottery and the occasional pot, a few pieces of worked flint or stone tools and, more rarely, a piece of worked bone, like a bone pin, which may have held a leather coat together.

Later Neolithic (5500-4700 years ago)

There was a change in burial practices in Anglesey and other areas around this time. Megalithic passage tombs were constructed in North Wales, as in Ireland and northern and western Scotland. The most famous in Wales is Bryn Celli Ddu on Anglesey. Newgrange is the most famous in Ireland, and Maes Howe in Scotland. They consist of chambers at the end of stone-lined passages, covered with large round mounds of earth.



Bryn Celli Ddu rock art stone

Rock art is a common feature, usually geometric patterns, sometimes deliberately hidden.

Astronomical features are often present. For example, Bryn Celli Ddu is aligned to the summer solstice, the longest day of the year.

Neolithic burial chambers as an education resource

Neolithic burial sites are ideal places for educational enquiries and projects. The fact that we do not have all the answers make these places interesting for pupils to research and discover what is known about them and the people who built them, whilst imagining and re-creating what is not known through creative processes of making music, drama performances, and art.

The remains of burial sites are ideal places for outdoor learning, and are also excellent stimuli for classroom learning. The sheer size and theatrical nature of Neolithic burial sites makes them interesting and engaging places for learners to explore, and study of these places supports the teaching of a wide range of skills. Engaging with these places also helps learners value and further understand their heritage, and the sites themselves.

Neolithic sites are a rich source of educational enquiry, as:

- They are mysterious places, which makes them an ideal focus for open-ended questioning, discussion, and the development of thinking skills.
- They are undeniably theatrical places, and often have very good acoustic properties, making them wonderful places for performances which integrate music and drama.
- They are part of the cultural heritage and built heritage of Wales, and there are examples located across the landscape of Wales.
- They are often to be found in rural locations surrounded by nature, which allows learners to consider the extent of change in the landscape through history.
- They were built as sacred places of ritual, and as such are places which inspire exploration of the big existential questions that humans have always asked.
- They were built by the first farmers, study of and comparison between Neolithic and modern farming methods, plants and animals will naturally lead to consideration of sustainability issues.
- Many of the sites are associated with local folklore, which allows for exploration of myth and legend, the traditional stories and culture of Wales, and the more recent history of the local areas around the sites.

Neolithic Burial Chambers Education Resource

Why use Neolithic sites, sound and music as a stimulus for learning?

Neolithic sites are part of our heritage, but because they pre-date the written word, there is no documentation explaining their purpose or use in the Neolithic period. Neolithic sites are, therefore, mysterious places which make an excellent focus for creative outdoor education activities, where pupils can imagine themselves to be transported back in time.

Outdoor learning is a key part of education in Wales and the importance of heritage and a sense of identity on a child's development is recognised in the statutory Curriculum Cymreig component of the national curriculum for Wales.

The importance of music education has been voiced throughout history; educationalists from Plato to Rousseau and Dewey to Hume have all espoused the virtues of music on a child's development.

Creativity is also important in children's development, and focusing on their ancestors and local heritage sites makes applying creativity in this context relevant to learners, giving them further educational value. It also allows the learners to take part in experimental archaeology and at the same time engage with these sacred sites in new and meaningful ways.

The activities suggested in this resource support the National Curriculum for Wales Skills Framework, and include problem solving activities that require teamwork, perseverance, imagination, attention to

detail and high level oracy skills, including the cultivation of listening skills.

Academics have suggested that Neolithic people put far greater importance on the sound world than we do today. Each sound may have had significance and a power beyond the physical thing that was responsible for producing the sound. The sound world may have been seen (or heard!) as the gateway to the spirit world. A world of magic!

It is very difficult to find a place in the modern world that is ever completely free from traffic noise, as even remote places can be within hearing range of aircraft. During the Neolithic period the soundscape (the sounds of the environment) of most places would have been vastly different from today's soundscapes.

Humans from every known past and present culture have created and performed music. Composing music inspired by the site, perhaps to be performed at the site as part of a ritual performance using the sorts of instruments Neolithic people may have had access to — drums, simple percussion and woodwind instruments — allows every pupil to connect with the past and explore how to convey emotions through music.

Most Neolithic sites are located in rural locations, and the lower levels of noise pollution at these places allow learners to tune in to the sounds of the environment and connect with nature in a truly multi-sensory way. This focus perhaps also mirrors the experiences of our Neolithic forebears.



Young people taking part in a Neolithic performance

Pre-Visit activities

Activity 1 — Mind mapping to generate learner questions for discussion

Ask pupils to draw a picture of the Neolithic chamber you are studying in the centre of a piece of paper.

Ask pupils to think of all the questions they can, relating to the Neolithic burial chamber, and write their questions out on branches coming from their drawing, to make a mind map or spider diagram. If pupils need prompting, the following questions could be considered:

The group or class could then decide which of the questions could be answered by visiting the site, and which would need to be answered by undertaking further research.

Pupils could produce a second mind map of questions about the Neolithic period, which could focus on other areas of Neolithic life. These questions could form the basis for a historic enquiry, and the discussions of the questions may also provoke questions about contemporary society.

Neolithic chambers

Why were they built?
How were they built?
What were they used for?
Who built them?
Why were some of them built in line with the summer and winter solstices?
Why were the bones of the dead mixed up?
What did Neolithic people believe happened when the body dies?
What were their beliefs about God and the after life?
How do we know?

Neolithic people

Who were the Neolithic people?
How many people lived in Wales at that time?
Where did they come from?
How did farming begin in Wales?
Why did people choose to be farmers?
Why did they begin to create abstract art?
Why did they deliberately break their pots?
How do we know?



St Lythans chambered tomb, Vale of Glamorgan, south Wales. Note that the chamber only survives.

Class discussions

Each Neolithic burial site is unique, but there are some common facts that relate to most of them, which could be discussed before visiting a burial chamber:

1. Neolithic burial chambers seem to have been built in places deliberately chosen because of their position in the landscape. For example, on a hill top, looking out to sea, in a valley, by a river etc. Can pupils suggest why the location of the Neolithic site they are studying might have been chosen?
2. They were used as burial chambers for the dead.
3. The bodies were often left to decompose away from the chamber before the bones were collected and placed in the chamber.
4. Whole skeletons have been found in Neolithic burial chambers, but more often bones from several people have been found in the chambers. Can pupils suggest reasons for this?
5. These were not just places for the remains of the dead, but were places of ritual and ceremony for the living.
6. Pottery was often deliberately broken at the chambers.
7. Some chambers contain engravings of abstract art work carved in to the stone. Can pupils suggest what the art might represent?
8. Neolithic burial chambers were built in a variety of styles. Archaeologists have categorised the chambers according to their design. Pupils could research and outline the main features of each of the following categories:
 - Chambered tombs
 - Portal tombs
 - Passage tombs

Philosophical discussion in response to Neolithic burial chambers

Visiting a Neolithic burial chamber and learning about the ways people may have used these places in the past is a good starting point for thinking about philosophical questions about belief systems. You could use some or all of the following questions to stimulate classroom discussions.

What is the difference between a material object and a person?
Can material things ever be as valuable as people?
What is a soul?
Do animals have souls?
What happens when we die?
Why should we remember the dead?
Is there an afterlife?
How would you feel about breaking your most treasured possession?
What is faith?
Can we ever prove God does or does not exist?

Is God male, female or something else?
Can there be more than one God?
Where is God?
Would the world/people exist without God?
How should we communicate with God?



A Neolithic re-enactor playing a bone flute. The flute is the oldest instrument to be found in a chambered tomb in Wales

Site visit activities

Measuring activity

Pupils could estimate the height, width and depth of each large stone used in the burial chamber.

Pupils could then use metre sticks and tape measures to measure the stones, working together to measure each stone using its highest and widest points.

Can pupils suggest ways the Neolithic people may have moved each stone into place, using only earth, stones, wood and perhaps rope?

Investigating alignment activity

Pupils could find the broad compass alignment of the entrance to the Neolithic monument (north, south, east or west)? Pupils could use a compass to find the precise compass alignment of the entrance, expressed as a 16 point compass term.

Many prehistoric burial chambers were built to be aligned to sunrise or sunset. Pupils could investigate which direction the sun would shine into the burial chamber they are studying, at sunrise or sunset.

Categorising materials activity

Pupils can gather objects from a given area around the site (not including the stones that are part of the monument!), and decide how to organise the objects into different categories, to provide the most useful data. For example, objects could be categorized by materials — wood, stone, plant, plastic, metal; by shape or weight; or by whether they are natural or manufactured.

Pupils could present and analyse the data using a variety of graphs and charts, after their visit.

Human timeline activity

Pupils could make a human timeline at the site. This line does not have to be straight (depending on amount of space available), but it could mark some or all of the following dates:

- Paleolithic period
- Mesolithic period
- Neolithic period
- Bronze Age
- Iron Age
- AD 43 Romans arrive
- AD 343 Romans leave
- AD 410 Saxons arrive
- AD 784 Offa's Dyke built
- 877 Rhodri Mawr (first King of Wales) dies
- 1066 Normans arrive, 1067 Chepstow Castle built
- 1282 Llywelyn yr Olaf (last Prince of Wales) dies
- 1404 first Welsh parliament
- 1485 Henry VII crowned
- 1536 Act of Union
- 1603 James I crowned
- 1837 Queen Victoria crowned
- 1914 first world war
- 1939 second world war
- 1969 first man on the moon
- 1998 Welsh Assembly Government established.

The gaps between the children in the human timeline should help pupil understanding of chronological development, and how far in the past the Neolithic period was.



Listening to the soundscape activity

1. Ask pupils to stand or sit and close their eyes.
2. Ask pupils to listen to all the different sounds they can hear, and decide which direction they are coming from.
3. Ask pupils to identify the modern sounds, such as the sound of engines or power tools, which would not have been heard during the Neolithic period.
4. After a minute (or two minutes with more practiced learners), ask pupils to list all of these modern sounds.
5. Ask pupils to identify the sounds that would have been heard in Neolithic times. Challenge them to block out any modern sounds, to try to imagine they have gone back in time, and to focus in on the sounds from the Neolithic.

Plenary discussion — what does listening to the soundscape tell us about the modern world and the Neolithic world? Do pupils think there is more or less sound today than in Neolithic times? Did pupils find any sounds particularly pleasant, or unpleasant? Can they explain why they felt this way about the sound?



Young people taking part in the human timeline activity

Hide and seek activity

Although Neolithic people were the first farmers, they continued to hunt, and wild birds and animals were an important food source. The acts of hiding and seeking replicate hunting activities — seeking prey, remaining hidden so as not to frighten prey away; and whilst hiding pupils are able to “tune in” to their surroundings.

Define safe boundaries for the game to be played within, then discuss and agree the rules before starting. Things to consider:

- How many players are seekers, and how many go to hide?
- Where are players allowed to hide?
- How long do seekers wait before starting to look for hidden players?
- Do players who have been found become additional seekers, or merely watch and wait until everyone has been found?
- Do you need an audible signal to end the game (in case of emergency)?



Hide and seek!



Sacred or special space activity

It is likely that the Neolithic builders of these monuments built them at locations which were regarded as special or sacred. Pupils could search within a designated area around the burial chamber for their personal most sacred or special place. Challenge them to find a place that feels different from the ordinary. This could be the quietest place, the place with the best view, the most hidden place or the place that looks different for some reason. Ask them to stay in their place in silence, for 5 minutes. Ask pupils how they felt, and what they noticed about the place, during this activity.



Pupil role-play — making an offering

Freeze frame activity

In groups, pupils could create 'freeze frame' Neolithic scenes.

Suggestions for scenes:

- hunting
- farming
- cooking
- building
- ceremonial

The scenes could be issued to groups of learners. After discussing how to depict their theme, each group could create their 'freeze frame', then display it for the rest of the class, who have to try and guess what the theme of the 'freeze frame' is.

Role play activity

In groups, the pupils could role play everyday Neolithic scenes, and perform their role play through mime.

Suggestions for scenes:

- looking after animals
- planting and harvesting crops
- hunting
- rituals (such as choosing a new tribal leader or making an offering)

The scenes could be issued to groups of learners. After practising their role play/mime, each group could perform their mime to the rest of the class, who have to try and guess what scene is being acted out.



Post visit activities — numeracy

Measuring

Using the data collected during the site visit, pupils can arrange the estimated and then actual measurements of the standing stones by putting in order of smallest to largest.

Pupils could measure and weigh small stones (found in the school grounds or brought into school by the teacher) and pupils could use this data and the measurements of the large burial chamber stones made during their site visit to estimate the weight of the burial chamber stones. Are the stones too heavy to be moved in some of the ways pupils may have suggested during the site visit?

Creating a timeline

Pupils could investigate dates associated with the monument, including excavation dates, dated discovery of artefacts, or known events which happened at the site. Pupils could calculate the differences between past dates and the present time, and calculate the periods of time between the significant dates on the timeline.



Tefignath burial chamber, Angelsey



Post visit activities — literacy

Many of the Neolithic sites in Wales are associated with myth and legend, and it seems that these mysterious places have always inspired stories. The Tylwyth Teg (Welsh fairies) are often said to dance at the sites at specific times of the year, and other related stories include those involving giants and/or King Arthur. The following activities carry on this tradition of using these places as inspiration for story making.

Creative writing — Adapt an existing story

Learners can research whether there are any stories or legends associated with the Neolithic site they are studying. If there is a story or legend, they can adapt it by putting the story into a modern setting, or changing one or more elements of the story.

Creative writing — Create a new story or legend

Learners can work individually, in table groups or as a whole class to create a new story or legend. They could include mythical characters such as the Tylwyth Teg (fairies), giants, King Arthur etc. It could also be a story involving fictional or real characters from the past. Could the site have been used as a secret hideaway? Could it have been the scene of a crime? Or a secret meeting place?

Creative writing — Create a play

Learners could turn their story into a dramatic script, which could be performed in school or at the Neolithic site.

Creative writing — Create a radio play

Learners could adapt the dramatic script to create a radio play — which elements communicated by actions in the play would need to be written into the radio play dialogue? Would existing characters deliver these elements, or would the learners create a narrator? Different characters could be portrayed by different voices and appropriate sound effects could also be created by the children.

Creative writing — Create a poem

Learners could create a piece of poetry inspired by the site. Using all of their senses, and after listing words to describe the site, the learners could construct a poem about their local Neolithic monument.

Creative writing — Create a poem inspired by a story created for or associated with the site

Using the tale as inspiration, learners could write a piece of poetry celebrating the story or describing a particular scene from the story.

Writing for a purpose

- Learners could write a guide pamphlet for the site, or a young person's guide to the site.
- Learners could research the known history of the site and write an article for a history newsletter or magazine, e.g. Young Archaeology Club members magazine.
- Learners could create a web page which helps others understand the site.
- Learners could write letters expressing differing points of view. They could be given the scenario that a planning application to build a supermarket (or housing estate, or sports facility) has been submitted, for the land next to the monument.

Learners could take the roles of characters or groups who might have strong views for or against the application, e.g. local history society, owners of nearby homes, Cadw members, owners of local shops, individuals with a keen interest in local history or sport, local business owners etc.

Pupils could write letters of support or objection to the local newspaper/their Assembly Member/Member of parliament, expressing their character's views on the application, and arguments for and against the application according to the perspective of their character.

Pupils could prepare scripts expressing their character's points of view, and role play a debate on the topic.



Activities for a second visit to the site — imagining and creating a Neolithic burial ritual

Introduction — attempting to create an authentic Neolithic experience

The pupils should be made aware that although the 'ritual ceremony' involves a 'performance', the nature of this performance is different from the type of performance they may have taken part in on a stage in school, and that Neolithic ritual ceremonies are likely to have followed a format which was known to the 'congregation' in the same way that the format of modern religious ceremonies is known to today's congregations.

The learning objectives are designed to allow the pupils to imagine and experience what it might have felt like to be part of a ceremonial performance at their site during Neolithic times.

Pupils should try to imagine and believe that they are part of a Neolithic tribe. Specific movements, sounds and facial expressions are less important than the pupils continually behaving as if they are part of a Neolithic ceremony. If an individual pupil

suddenly feels the need to deviate from the "script" or choreographed performance, then this should be encouraged, as long as they continue to behave as if they are a Neolithic person.

It is the attitude and imagination that is the focus of the activity, rather than specific sounds or movements. Being able to improvise also ties in with the aim of focusing the pupils' minds on the present moment. Being focused on the present frees them from worrying about the "next step" and allows them to really attempt to get into the mind of a Neolithic tribesman or woman.

Listening to sounds from nature during the performance, such as the wind in the trees and birdsong, helps focus on the moment and incorporates these sounds into their Neolithic ceremony. It is also quite possible that sounds would have been considered sacred and embodied with messages from the other world during Neolithic times. Therefore, giving them value in the pupils' performance further authenticates their experience.



Neolithic re-enactment of a Neolithic ritual offering

Activities

Drawing/painting

Pupils could research Paleolithic and Neolithic art in books and on the internet. (Palaeolithic art is mostly figurative, Neolithic art is mostly abstract) Following their research, pupils could discuss what Neolithic patterns might represent.

Pupils could make observational drawings or paintings of Neolithic pattern stones, from photographs. They could create their own patterns in a similar style to Neolithic patterns, and explain what their patterns represent.

Pot Making

Pupils could research prehistoric and beaker pottery, and draw their favourite pottery shapes.

Pupils could use the research they undertook on prehistoric pottery shapes to inform the shape of the pots they make, and use the drawing and paintings they made of stone patterns to inform the pattern designs they will inscribe onto their pots.

Learners will be more successful in creating pots if an adult demonstrates the process before they begin to make their own pots.

Materials required: air drying modelling clay, clay tools, squares of cardboard.

Instructions:

Seat each child in front of a smooth flat surface to make their pottery on.

Give each child a piece of modelling clay (about the size of a plum), roll in to a ball. Flatten into a circle shape approx. 5mm thick. This will be the base of the pot.

Place the base on a square of cardboard — this prevents pots sticking to the table and allows them to be moved elsewhere when finished.



Coiled and pinch pots drying in the sun

Take a ball of clay and roll in to a snake shape or “coil”, which should be slightly thicker than a pencil, and at least the length of the diameter of the pot base.

Attach the coil to the base by pressing the coil onto the base. Cut away any excess length from the coil after the circumference of the base has been covered. Smooth the joint on both inside and outside.

Continue attaching the coils from the inside of the pot, ensuring that the joints are not directly above each other. After each addition, force the clay together on the inside of the piece, by pushing clay from the top coil onto the coil below and smoothing the surface, whilst supporting the pot with the other hand to prevent it becoming misshapen.

Smooth the outside — use a little water if the clay starts to dry.

Once smooth, use pencils or clay tools to create designs on the surface of the pot.

Put the pots on a sunny windowsill to harden (or bake in an oven, if possible).



Young person dressed in costume with his dried coil pot

Acting a story activity

If pupils undertook the 'create a play' activity by developing a story into a dramatic script, they could rehearse and perform their play at the site.

Writing for a purpose/ICT

Pupils could discuss what information a poster advertising an event needs to include, and create a checklist to ensure their poster text includes the key information required.



Barclodiad y Gawres

Working individually or in groups, pupils could draft then finalise text for a poster advertising their performance. They could design a poster using desktop publishing software, and insert the text into the design.

The class could discuss the various poster designs and decide which poster would be the most effective advert for their performance. Pupils would need to explain the reasons for their choice — why is one poster more effective than another? Is it the choice of image or colour, or use of headings or persuasive language?

The winning poster could be distributed to parents and put up on community notice boards.

Creating a graphic score

Pupils could create graphic scores inspired by Neolithic patterns.

The following step by step guide suggests one way of turning the patterns in to a graphic score.

- Show the learners various visual images of different Neolithic patterns, using books or the internet.
- Highlight how the artwork is abstract.
- Challenge pupils to create their own abstract patterns on paper using pencil.



Graphic score

- Discuss what these patterns may have meant to Neolithic people. Are they maps, a form of writing, signs, visions, doodles, sound waves or pictures of the afterlife?
- Ask pupils to interpret some of the artwork using vocal sounds. How would zig zags differ in sound to wavy lines?
- Pupils could use their artwork as a graphic score and use vocal sounds to interpret the artwork.
- Challenge the learners to create a new graphic score of abstract Neolithic style patterns and interpret through sound. How did it differ creating the patterns knowing that they were going to use them as a graphic score?



Creating graphic scores from Neolithic patterns

Learners could also use percussive instruments or/and flutes to make the sounds of the graphic score.

Learners could listen to each other's music and use 'thinking hats' as a thinking skills framework activity to respond to what they have heard from different perspectives.

Creating a Neolithic burial ritual — music, dance and drama activities

Divide the learners into groups, and assign a different role to each group. Ask groups of learners to design the actions and choreograph the movements that go with their role.

For example the following roles could be outlined:

Musicians — The musicians will play the drums and percussive instruments. They must compose different rhythms to accompany the different sections of the ceremony.

Dancers — The dancers could be split in to different groups depending on the number of children performing. Each group must choreograph a sequence of movements. This could be inspired by the different rhythms created by the musicians or visa versa.

Pottery breakers — The pottery breakers should design and perform the pottery breaking part of the ceremony. This should be done ritualistically and could be very theatrical. How are the pots going to be broken? What sounds and movement are

to accompany the breaking pots? As a contrast to other more rhythmical sections of the ceremony the breaking pots section could be accompanied by soft vocal or/and whistling sounds. These could be a mixture of vocal and flute sounds. It is important to note that sherds of pottery have to be cleared away after the performance.

Animal spirit guides — This activity aims to get learners to enter a different mind-set. The novelty of being able to behave differently is an important aspect of the process. As one learner put it:

“We’re allowed to go wild and crazy and behave differently and that helps my imagination.”

Neolithic people may have believed that they had animal spirit guides or even could become animals during magic rituals. Ask learners in this group to imitate or represent different animals that would have existed in Neolithic times, e.g. eagles, bears, wolves and stags, by using gestures and vocal sounds.

The movements could all be performed on two feet and incorporated in to the ceremonial performance. A dramatic representation of the metamorphosis from human to animal could also be part of this display.



Team photo at Carreg Coetan Arthur

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Barclodiad-y-Gawres, Anglesey

gov.wales/cadw/learning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Bodowyr, Anglesey

gov.wales/cadw/learning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Bryn Celli Ddu, Anglesey

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Din Dryfol, Anglesey

gov.wales/cadw/learning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Duffryn Ardudwy, Gwynedd

gov.wales/cadw/learning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Lligwy, Anglesey

gov.wales/cadw/learning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Parc le Breos Cwm, Gower

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Pentre Ifan, Pembrokeshire

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Presaddfed, Anglesey

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St Lythans, Vale of Glamorgan

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Tinkinswood, Vale of Glamorgan

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