### Module 11

**Fieldtrip: the Outdoor Classroom**

*Active learning in the field*

**Curriculum Linkages and Integration**

*See Teacher Guidelines for additional information*

**SESE History**

#### INFANT CLASSES

**STRAND: Story**
- Strand Unit: Stories

#### 1st & 2nd CLASSES

**STRAND: Story**
- Strand Unit: Stories

**STRAND: Change and Continuity**
- Strand Unit: Continuity and change in the local environment

#### 3rd & 4th CLASSES

**STRAND: Local Studies**
- Strand Unit: Buildings, sites and ruins in my locality
- Strand Unit: My locality through the ages
- Strand Unit: Feasts and festivals in the past

**STRAND: Story**
- Strand Unit: Stories from the lives of people in the past

**STRAND: Continuity and change over time**
- Strand Unit: Food and farming

**STRAND: Life, society and culture in the past**
- Strand Unit: Life in Norman Ireland
- Strand Unit: Life in mediaeval Ireland

**STRAND: Early peoples and ancient societies**
- Strand Unit: Stone Age peoples
- Strand Unit: Bronze Age peoples
- Strand Unit: Early Christian Ireland

#### 5th & 6th CLASSES

**STRAND: Local Studies**
- Strand Unit: Buildings, sites and ruins in my locality
- Strand Unit: My locality through the ages
- Strand Unit: Feasts and festivals in the past

**STRAND: Story**
- Strand Unit: Stories from the lives of people in the past

**STRAND: Continuity and change over time**
- Strand Unit: Food and farming
- Strand Unit: Art, crafts and culture

**STRAND: Life, society and culture in the past**
- Strand Unit: Life in Norman Ireland
- Strand Unit: Life in mediaeval Ireland

**STRAND: Early peoples and ancient societies**
- Strand Unit: Stone Age peoples
- Strand Unit: Bronze Age peoples
- Strand Unit: Early Christian Ireland

### Linkages

**SESE Geography**
- Human environments
- Human environments
- Environmental awareness and care

**SESE Science**
- Living things
- Materials
- Energy and forces
- Environmental awareness and care

**Mathematics**
- Shape and space
- Measures
- Early mathematical activities
- Number
- Data

**Visual Arts**
- Paint and colour
- Drawing
- Construction
- Fabric and fibre

**Physical Education**
- Outdoor and adventure activities

**Music**
- Listening and responding
- Performing
- Composing

**Gaeilge**
- Éisteacht
- Labhairt
- Scríbhneoireacht
- Léitheoireacht

**English**
- Receptiveness to language
- Competence and confidence
- Developing cognitive abilities through language
- Emotional and imaginative development through language

**SPHE**
- Myself and the wider world

**Drama**
- Exploring and making drama
- Cooperating and communicating in making drama
“Our teachers took the 4th, 5th and 6th classes on a field trip around our parish. Nobody expected it to be exciting but it was. The first place we visited was a ringfort. We looked around the ringfort to see where the families or tribes would have stayed. The teachers gave us tasks to act out. We had great fun imagining that we were a real tribe trying to hunt down food for our families.”

5th Class Pupil
Objectives

To give the pupils first-hand experience of Ireland’s rich archaeological heritage.

Age Appropriateness

This module is suitable for all classes. To manage the module for each age group see Teacher Guidelines.

Materials Required

- Measuring tapes, measuring stick etc.
- Compass
- Reference books (wild flowers, hedgerow plants, animals, birds, trees etc)
- Clipboards
- Musical instruments and drama accessories
- Arts and crafts materials

Activity Sheets (AS)

- AS1 Ringfort
- AS2 Ringfort: Tasks
- AS3 Graveyard: part 1
- AS4 Graveyard: part 2

Preparation

- One to three monuments are adequate for a field trip.
- If the monument is located on private land permission must be sought before the visit (see Resources: Health & Safety)
- Each monument will need to be visited by the teacher before the trip to:
  - ensure good access and adequate parking
  - that the monument is clearly defined on the ground
  - help to prepare the Activity Sheet(s)
  - identify assembly points
- If possible a copy on the Ordnance Survey 6-inch map of the area would be useful (see Module 10).
- Inform pupils to wear suitable clothing and footwear.

Activities & Tasks

- Prepare Activity Sheets with questions and tasks related to the monument. These should be divided into two parts:
  - Firstly, questions that focus on the monument’s form, fabric, function and date.
  - Secondly, the basic tasks. The six basic tasks are: measuring and recording; practical experiment; story/poetry; drama; arts & crafts and nature study. It is important that, as far as is possible, the activity is related to the nature of the monument itself. This will enhance the pupils’ understanding of the monument.
- The teacher will need to write/print the instructions for each task on a piece of paper for handing out to the teams at the site.
Let’s get started!

Setting the Scene

The best way to understand an archaeological monument is to explore it in real life. The monument dealt with in Activity Sheet 1 is a ringfort and in Activity Sheet 3 is a graveyard; these are two of the most commonly occurring monuments in the country. Before the pupils visit the monument they will need some basic idea about its date and function e.g. a ringfort is:
- Early Christian - (see place on Timeline- drawing 28- Module 2)
- farmstead
- enclosed by bank of earth
- circular

The Activity Sheet provided can be used at any ringfort but it would be greatly enhanced by the addition of questions that relate to the unique features of the monument to be visited.

Activity Sheets are provided for two monument types but can easily be adapted to whatever monument you decide to visit.

The Activity

At each site allow the pupils a few minutes to explore the monument. Then gather them together and discuss what they have observed and ask the pupils to fill in the first part of the Activity Sheet. This discussion can take the form of a question and answer session led by the questions in the Activity Sheet. These questions are designed to enable the teacher and pupils to discuss the monument in a sequential manner that is brief and to the point. The recommended time for this session is ten to fifteen minutes.

Now divide the pupils into small groups (two or three pupils) and give each group a task. In briefing the pupils regarding the tasks the following points should be noted:
- each team must report back to the class when the task is completed
- allocate a set time for the tasks- its not a competition or a race
- nominate an assembly point when the tasks are completed

N.B. There should be no damage to the monument of any kind- no digging, moving, breaking etc.
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Key Terms
- Monument

Closing Activity
The pupils reassemble after a set time at an assigned assembly point. Each team presents a verbal report on their task.

To conclude the visits organise a group activity or drama pertinent to the monument. This enactment concludes the visit.

When leaving the monument remember to ‘leave no trace’.

Weblinks
Safety and Field Trips
http://www.into.ie/NI/Schools/EducationalVisits/

Recording a Graveyard Memorial
http://historicgraves.com/blog/how/recording-graveyard-memorial

Archaeological Survey of Ireland
www.archaeology.ie

Teacher’s Log
“Through outdoor activities like this that pupils really learn”.

2th Class Teacher
## Ringfort

### Module 11
Activity Sheet 1

**Name**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What type of monument is it?</td>
<td>Megalithic Tomb, Stone Circle, Ringfort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What shape is it?</td>
<td>Circular, Square, Triangular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is its diameter?</td>
<td>10m, 30m, 90m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is it enclosed by?</td>
<td>Stone Wall, Earthen Bank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How old is it?</td>
<td>100 years, 1,000 years, 10,000 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What period does it belong to?</td>
<td>Stone Age, Bronze Age, Early Christian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What was it?</td>
<td>A defended farmstead, An ancient monastery, A Norman castle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What stood on the inside?</td>
<td>A round tower, Thatched houses, A church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. This type of monument is known as a</td>
<td>Gallán, Lios, Cromlech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. It is located on</td>
<td>Top of a hill, On sloping ground, In flat land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Does it have a good view of the surrounding countryside?</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Is the entrance facing?</td>
<td>North, South, East, West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What is the name of the townland?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The name of the townland is: ________________________________
Team 1 Measure the diameter in metres from bank-to-bank across the centre
north - south ............. east - west.................

Team 2 Measure the height of the bank: On the inside ................. On the outside .................
Is the interior higher, lower or the same height as the surrounding ground? .........................

Team 3 Measure the depth of the ditch where it is deepest ..................
Measure the width of the ditch where it is widest ......................
What type of vegetation is growing in the interior? .........................

Team 4 Draw a plan of the ringfort showing the enclosing bank, the ditch, and the entrance.
If there were three round houses inside the ringfort decide on a suitable location for these and show them on your plan.
Why is this a good place for the houses? ................................................

Team 5 There is going to be a feast in the ringfort. Prepare a menu for the feast with appropriate food.

Team 6 Using suitable stones, grind some corn to make flour.

Team 7 Compose a poem to celebrate a great victory by the local Rí against a band of raiding Vikings.

Team 8 You are a band of Vikings about to attack the ringfort. Make up a poem to warn the people living inside the ringfort what will happen if they don’t give you all their gold and valuables.

Team 9 How many different types of vegetation can you identify growing in and around the ringfort?

Team 10 What types of trees are growing in and around the ringfort?
Which of the trees would you say is the oldest?

Team 11 Find a suitable location within the fort and build the outline of a house, using what’s available—broken sticks, grass etc. (This should not involve damage to the monument!)
### Graveyard: part 1

#### Name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is there a stone wall enclosing the graveyard?</td>
<td>all around ❑ part of the way ❑ no wall ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is the wall?</td>
<td>in good repair ❑ broken in parts ❑ very ruinous ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If it does not go all the way around, what else forms the boundary?</td>
<td>earthen bank ❑ concrete wall ❑ iron railing ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the graveyard have paths made of?</td>
<td>concrete ❑ gravel ❑ paving stones ❑ bricks ❑ earthen ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is the graveyard?</td>
<td>well cared for ❑ parts of it tidy and parts covered by overgrowth ❑ mostly covered by overgrowth ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What shape is the graveyard?</td>
<td>square ❑ rectangular ❑ circular ❑ other shape ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is there a modern extension to the graveyard?</td>
<td>Yes ❑ No ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Can you find any of the following in the graveyard?</td>
<td>wild flowers ❑ ground ivy ❑ ferns ❑ gorse ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Can you find any of the following in the graveyard?</td>
<td>yew tree ❑ ash tree ❑ lime tree ❑ oak tree ❑ beech tree ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Are there any other types of tree in the graveyard?</td>
<td>…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Can you hear birds singing in the graveyard?</td>
<td>Yes ❑ No ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Can you see any birds in the graveyard?</td>
<td>What type? …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Are there any signs of animals in the graveyard?</td>
<td>Yes ❑ No ❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. What are these signs?</td>
<td>…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Is there a church in the graveyard that is still in use?  
   Yes ☐  No ☐

2. Where in the graveyard is this church?  
   at centre ☐  north of centre ☐  south of centre ☐  
   east of centre ☐  west of centre ☐

3. Is there an old ruined church in the graveyard?  
   Yes ☐  No ☐

4. Where in the graveyard is this church?  
   at centre ☐  north of centre ☐  south of centre ☐  
   east of centre ☐  west of centre ☐

5. Are the walls of the ruined church?  
   mostly standing ☐  about half fallen ☐  very little left standing ☐

6. Would you say the graveyard is?  
   completely full of burials ☐  half full of burials ☐  only burials in a small part of it ☐

7. Are there headstones in the graveyard?  
   Yes ☐  No ☐

8. Are there less than ten headstones? ☐  between ten and fifty headstones? ☐  
   between fifty and a hundred headstones? ☐  more than a hundred headstones? ☐

9. What is the oldest date you can find on a headstone? ...........................................................

10. Take any old and new headstone and fill in the following:  
    **Old headstone**  **New headstone**
    Name of person ...........................................  Name of person ...........................................
    Date of birth .............................................  Date of birth .............................................
    Date of death .............................................  Date of death .............................................
    Where they lived ...........................................  Where they lived ...........................................

11. Are there any Celtic crosses in the graveyard?  
    Yes ☐  No ☐

12. In what century were most of the crosses put up? ............................................................

12. Are there less than ten Celtic crosses? ☐  between ten and fifty Celtic crosses? ☐  
    between fifty and a hundred Celtic crosses? ☐  more than a hundred Celtic crosses? ☐

13. Is there any chest/box tombs in the graveyard?  
    Yes ☐  No ☐  How many? ........

14. Are there any mausoleums in the graveyard?  
    Yes ☐  No ☐  How many? ........
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Teacher Guidelines

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- Managing the Module
- Background Information
- Skills Development
- Strands

Linkages

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Integration

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<td>Drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaeilge</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have now reached one of the main aims of the resource pack - to get both pupils and teachers out of the classroom to experience at first-hand Ireland’s rich archaeological heritage. This requires extra effort on everyone’s behalf but the rewards of a successful visit to an archaeological monument are bountiful and will greatly enhance the learning experience. Field trips enhance the pupils’ learning experience. They can stimulate inquiry and questioning leading to a deepening of understanding.

Managing the Module: Senior Classes

Choosing a monument: If you decide to visit monuments in the environs of the school they will invariably be in private ownership and not generally accessible to the public. For further information on this type of visit see Module 12. There may be monuments in the locality that have public access, like churches, graveyards and holy wells. Other monuments may be accessible because of their location by the roadside, in a public park etc. In order to find out what monuments are in your locality consult www.archaeology.ie and www.buildingsofireland.ie for exact location and monument description (as available).

In the case of monuments that are on private land permission from the landowner will be required before any site visit. The teacher should also visit the monument beforehand and make a risk assessment of the site (see Resources: Health and Safety Guidelines). There are also many archaeological monuments in State ownership to which the public have access. The Guide to National Monuments of Ireland (see Resources: Source Material) is a good source of information on archaeological monuments in State care and accessible to the public. See also ‘Places to Visit’ at www.archaeology.ie.

The other main type of fieldtrip is to a formal ‘visitor attraction’ where there is probably an entrance fee and a guided tour. In this case, since the fieldtrip for this module is activity based, it will be best to check beforehand if such activities are permissible at the site.

Preparation: Whatever type of fieldtrip is selected, the main focus of the visit should be activity-based using pre-prepared activity sheets. Two exemplar activity sheets are provided for commonly occurring monuments: ringfort (AS1 and AS2) and graveyard (AS3 and AS4). Further ideas for activity sheets at different types of monuments are included in Module 12.

It is important that the pupils know what type of monument they are visiting and have some idea of its date and function. The questions in the activity sheets are designed for this purpose. Each pupil fills in their own sheet but this part of the activity is based on a question and answer session between the teacher and the pupils. It will therefore be necessary for the teacher to provide the relevant answers. For other questions on the activity sheet, it will be more productive for the teacher to provide clues and ideas rather than direct answers. For example, in deciding where the houses were likely to have been located within a ringfort, the pupils should be encouraged to come up with their own ideas, but with gentle hints e.g. what is the most sheltered side of the interior?
Checklist for Fieldtrip
A ratio of one teacher/adult-helper per fifteen pupils is about the average for an effective site visit. As well as the usual waterproofs, the underfoot conditions at the monuments may also require that the pupils wear wellingtons or strong shoes/boots.
If you are travelling by bus check there is parking convenient to the monument.

Meeting point: select the best location at each monument for assembly before and after the tasks. What are the arrangements for lunch and toilets?

(see Resources: Health and Safety Guidelines).

Ringfort: AS1
The first activity sheet (AS1) consists of a series of questions designed to assist both teacher and pupils to explore some basic information about the monument. This is envisaged as a question and answer session led by the teacher with the pupils filling in the activity sheet as the session progresses.

The first question relates to the nature of the monument itself: what is its archaeological classification? Here there is a simple choice and the answer should be obvious. If the answer is ‘ringfort’, the next questions explore why this is the case. In the case of the ringfort, its shape, size and form are then considered. The next questions explore some simple information about the date and function of ringforts. The final questions relate to the situation of the monument in its local environment. These should encourage the pupils to make their own observations. If a copy of the six-inch map is included (see Module 10) then some questions relating to how the monument is depicted on the map and other map information could be included in the questions.

Ringfort: AS2
The second activity sheet (AS2) is a list of tasks to be carried out at the monument. The tasks are organised under six basic headings: measuring; experiments; nature study; poetry/story; drama; arts & crafts. The class or group will need to be divided into the same number of teams as there are tasks. Distribute their ‘task’ to each team and emphasise that the performance of the tasks is not a race, a set time for carrying them out will get over the tendency for teams to compete in this way. The tasks must be within the capacity of all the members of each team.

Measuring: You can use measuring tapes or make your own measuring sticks or use lengths of string cut to a certain length. These could be prepared beforehand otherwise bring the materials and make them on-site. Another way of measuring is by pacing. Get a pupil to take ten regular strides and measure the distance covered. From this calculate their pace and then use this to measure certain distances. It is more accurate if they use their normal strides and not an exaggerated one. If you encounter a high mound an interesting way of measuring its height is to get the pupils to stand at various heights as if standing on each other’s heads when seen from a distance (see illustration p240).
Experiments: These should relate both to the nature and date of the monument itself and to some element of the science curriculum familiar to the pupils. These will need to be designed in advance and the materials brought on site. For example, in the case of the ringfort, the activity is to grind some corn as they did long ago using grinding stones. This will necessitate bringing some grains of corn on site and finding suitable stones to grind the corn.

Nature Study: Most archaeological monuments are situated in the rural countryside and therefore are ideal for nature study. Even monuments in an urban setting are also likely to feature wildlife. Whether the task involves trees, shrubs, wild flowers, birds, animals, insects etc., the teacher will need to visit the monument beforehand as different elements of flora and fauna are likely to be in evidence at different times of the year. It might be useful to bring appropriate guide books (trees, birds, wild flowers) on-site so that the pupils can do some on-site research.

Poetry/Stories & Drama: These activities should be focused on the closing activity. Keep the instructions simple, as the pupils will not have much time for an elaborate composition. It will add an extra dimension to the task if you ask the pupils to compose from memory.

Arts & Crafts: As with the experiments these tasks should relate both to the nature and date of the monument itself. They might also be connected to the closing activity. For example, at a stone circle the task could be to make a garland from twigs and plants, which would be used as part of the drama in the closing activity.

Prompt: If visiting more than one monument on the fieldtrip try and mix the activities so that nobody has to do the same type of task a second time.

Closing Activity

Each team reports back in approximately 15 minutes to make their report to the assembled class.

Finally, divide the pupils into two teams - those who live in the ringfort and those who are going to attack it (Vikings). Those who live in the ringfort elect a king or Rí and recite a praise poem in his honor- Team 7 (AS2). The fort is called after his or her surname e.g. Lios McCarthy. The team inside the fort must protect the Rí. They must also protect their possessions- place five objects to represent cattle inside the fort in the designated safe area.

The objective of the team outside is to get into the fort and steal the cattle and kidnap the Rí. The designated ‘souterrain’ area is the only safe haven. The others are outside the fort ready to charge. They might recite their warning poem to the inhabitants- Team 8 (AS2). On the signal, those on the outside try to get into the ringfort. If touched first by someone else you have to freeze/stop (like tag). If the Rí is caught the game is over. If the cattle are taken the Rí is safe but poor.

Prompt: This activity is fun but needs careful supervision. The fun is in the initial planning and the charge against the ringfort’s defences. The ‘tag’ element is best kept to a very brief period and the ‘attack’ called to a halt. Keep the attack to one designated side of the ringfort and it works better to have more pupils defending than attacking.

NB: Leave the monument and the vegetation as you found it.
Cameras: If the pupils have cameras these can be used to record the monument from various viewpoints, showing different details. Encourage them to note information about each photograph which will allow them to correctly identify it at a later stage, e.g. ‘photo 12: inside the ringfort looking east towards the entrance.’

Placenames: In Module 10 the use of placename evidence is discussed. It would be beneficial to include some placename evidence on the field trip particularly when it is pertinent to the monument, e.g. the name of the townland in which the monument is situated and the Gaelic form of the name e.g. Kilcolman: Cill Colmán- St Colman’s Church. This information, and other information useful for the activity sheets, can be obtained from the Ordnance Survey six-inch map (see Module 10).

Follow-up in the Classroom: The fieldtrip is an ideal focus for written and art work.

Some suggested topics for a visit to ringfort include:
- A day in the life of a child living in the ringfort
- The day the Vikings attacked the ringfort
- What would archaeologists find if they excavated the ringfort?
- Draw a picture of the monument as it was when people lived in it.

Managing the Module: Junior Classes

The junior classes should be encouraged to look at the monument in terms of what is it made of, what shape it is, and what it was used for. They could also do some task together, e.g. count the number of trees growing on the monument. Instead of measuring with a tape they could measure in terms of paces or footsteps. It may be more suitable for younger pupils to use drawing rather than form-filling to record the monument.

The tasks can also be adapted to take the form of a group activity or game led by the teacher, rather than dividing the class into small groups. For example, at a stone circle the ‘ceremony’ could take the form of a group ‘ring-a-ring-a-rosy’.

Background Information: Graveyards

Graveyards (AS3 and AS4): Graveyards are an exceptional resource for teaching history. In every parish there is at least one historic graveyard. They are an important and accessible source of information on local history.
Organising a visit to a graveyard:

- The prepared activity sheet can be used in most graveyards but the teacher should visit the graveyard before a fieldtrip to add some questions to the activity sheet relevant to that particular site.
- If the graveyard has a caretaker please inform him/her of the proposed visit. Also check if there is a burial scheduled for the day of the fieldtrip- this will have to be done immediately prior to the visit. Avoid interrupting a burial service.
- For safety reasons if you are visiting an abandoned or unkempt graveyard check for any hidden hazards.
- Work out an access-plan in terms of the questions in the activity sheet- no question should draw the pupils to an unsafe or restricted part of the graveyard.
- Nature study can be an important part of a graveyard visit. Depending on the season different elements of flora and fauna will be in evidence. This is another reason why the preparatory visit should be conducted shortly before the fieldtrip. For example, check what wild plants will be in bloom in the graveyard at the time of the fieldtrip and include a question on them in the activity sheet.
- Check if any human remains are evident in the graveyard. If the pupils are likely to notice these during their visit they will need to be prepared in advance in terms of appropriate respect and behaviour.
- A record may have been made of the inscriptions in the graveyard. In the 1970s and 1980s many such projects were carried out as employment-relief schemes and the information may either have been published or may be available on the internet. See www.historicgraves.com.

Care and Respect:
Graveyards, no matter what state of abandonment or neglect they may be in, are significant places and should be treated with care and respect. If people are in the graveyard visiting graves it is important that they are not disturbed by whatever activity the pupils are engaged in. Make it clear to the pupils what standard of behaviour is expected of them when they are in the graveyard.

In some graveyards the pupils may encounter human remains in the form of bone fragments. It must be made clear to the pupils that these remains are human and must be treated with due respect. Graveyards are sacred places and should approached in this manner. It is important that the pupils understand this. Then they will be more likely, when adults, to be responsible for the proper care and conservation of the graveyards in their community.

How old is the graveyard?
The type of graveyard most suitable for a fieldtrip is the one that is the site of the medieval parish church, or is associated with a medieval abbey. If the medieval church is present see the sample activity sheet at the end of this section. After the Reformation the old church lands, including the parish church and graveyard, passed to the Church of Ireland. There might, therefore, be a Church of Ireland church, or the ruin of one, in the graveyard. A handy way of checking the old parishes is the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch map (see Module 10). The name of the parish will often be the same name as the graveyard.

How old is the graveyard? If it contains a medieval church then it is at least that old. Some graveyards are very ancient sites and go back to Early Christian times (though the oldest headstone may be 18th century). Is there a holy well nearby? Is it associated with a local Saint? Are there any ancient remains in the graveyard, like a bullaun stone, a cross-inscribed slab? All these are strong indicators that the graveyard may date back over a thousand years as a place of Christian burial.
Graveyards in the ground of Catholic churches are unlikely to be earlier than the 19th century, when these churches were built on new sites after the relaxation of the Penal Laws.

**How many people are buried in the graveyard?**
Grave markers are only a relatively recent feature (see below) so counting them is of little use in answering this question in terms of an ancient graveyard. This is an impossible question to answer but the following calculation will give some rough idea. What would be the average population of the parish over the past thousand years? Allow for a greater population in the 18th and 19th centuries but a much smaller number before then. What is the average age at which people died in that time? Allow for a much lower age than today’s average life expectancy because of harsher living conditions in the past. If the average population is 200, and the average life expectancy is 40, then roughly two hundred people were buried in the graveyard every 40 years. If the graveyard was used over 1,200 years then about 6,000 people were buried there (a recent survey in England estimated that in the average parish graveyard about 10,000 people had been buried).

Where do all the burials fit? The answer to this is that they don’t. Over the centuries the same area was used for burial over and over again. Often there was scant regard for past remains as fresh graves were dug in the same place. In some graveyards the problem of body parts lying around was so great that charnel houses were built for the storage of human remains displaced by grave digging.

**Typical features of an Irish graveyard**

**Enclosing wall and entrance gate:** A stone wall encloses most of our old graveyards. These walls were built in the 18th/19th century to formally define the area of burial around the church. This was part of an attempt to regulate the act of burial by controlling access to the graveyard. With the wall a gate had to be built. If the original gateway survives it is worthy of attention as it is likely to have fine stone piers and a wrought or cast iron gate.

**Graveyard stiles:** Some graveyards also have special stiles. These are designed to facilitate a coffin by having a low central pillar with a flat top. The coffin was rested on this whilst those carrying it passed through the stile. There are a lot of very ancient customs associated with the act of burial, like carrying the coffin around the graveyard in an anti-clockwise direction. Find out if any such traditions survive (ask the caretaker).

**Wrought and cast iron:** Graveyards usually contain examples of both cast and wrought ironwork in the form of railings around burial plots. Though often in a poor state of repair, this ironwork is usually of a high standard of workmanship and well worth drawing to the pupils’ attention. The difference between the two is not difficult to recognise. Wrought iron was produced in a forge and hammered into shape. Cast iron was poured into a mould and is usually more elaborate and uniform in its designs having been mass produced.
Headstones: The earliest headstones in the graveyard will probably date to the mid-18th century, though you may be lucky and find one as early as the very late 17th century. The first appearance of inscribed headstones coincides with a new attitude to the dead where individual family plots were organised and the place of burial was now considered worthy of marking with a permanent stone. Headstones are endlessly fascinating with the various forms the stone is carved into, the changing fashions in inscriptions and the symbols used to decorate the stones.

An activity sheet can easily be designed to record individual headstones. This should include room for a full transcription of the inscription, measurements of the stone and comments on the shape of the stone, the type of stone it is made from and the direction in which it faces. Also allow space for a drawing of any religious symbols (see below) carved on the stone.

Rubbing Headstones: Using a very simple technique the pupils can make rubbings of the headstone inscriptions or of some of the carved decorations. This can be a very rewarding experience and leads to a much greater appreciation of the headstones. All that is needed is poster-size sheets of plain paper and crayons or carbon paper. Place the paper over the headstone and rub over it with the crayon, softly at first and then with more vigour, until the inscription/decoration is copied on the paper. It's as simple as that!

Don’t clean the stone with a wire brush or anything that may damage the inscription. The recent fashion of cleaning old headstones with abrasive chemicals or even disc cutters is very regrettable as it does great damage to the delicate carvings on the stones.

If the pupils are having difficulty reading a worn inscription try a rubbing!

Chest tombs and mausoleums: Old graveyards also contain a number of chest or box tombs. These are usually the burial places of the local landed gentry families. Beneath the chest tomb is probably a subterranean vault containing the coffins of the deceased members of the family. The flat slab on top of the tomb may contain an inscription commemorating whoever is buried therein. Because of the displacement of so many of these families in the late-19th/early-20th centuries most of these tombs are no longer used or cared for. The more important and wealthier families may have a mausoleum in the graveyard. This is a small building, often in a recognisable architectural fashion, which contains the family remains.

Uninscribed gravemarkers: Look out for lines of low uninscribed gravemarkers in the graveyard. These are a common feature of Irish graveyards and mark the burials of those who could not afford headstones. These are a useful prompt for a discussion about the way burials in a graveyard mirror the way society as a whole was ordered in the past. They are also indicative of past events like The Famine and a high mortality rate.

Placement of burials: Notice how all the oldest headstones in the graveyard will be located just south and east of the medieval church. This reflects a very ancient belief that this is the ‘holy’ side of the church. By contrast, the north side of the church was avoided at all cost- usually this area was used only for the burial of strangers or suicides. Another very strongly held belief was the facing of a body towards the east- the direction of the risen Christ on the Day of Redemption. Therefore the body is aligned east-west with the head at the west end as if facing east. Consequently, the headstone inscription will also be on the east face of the headstone that will be at the west end of the grave.
## Common Christian symbols of headstones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A dove</td>
<td>The Holy Spirit; flight of soul up to heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>The Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Jesus Christ the Redeemer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>Guardian Angel; Intercession between God and Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skull and Crossbones</td>
<td>Mortality and Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheaves of Wheat</td>
<td>The Divine Harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourglass</td>
<td>Time and mortality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary Cross</td>
<td>Faith, hope and charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>Salvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHS</td>
<td>First three letters in Greek form of the name Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INRI</td>
<td>Latin initials for Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP</td>
<td>Christ the beginning and the end (from Greek)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown of thorns and nail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamless robe, Scourges,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross and sheet, Ladder and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sponge, Lantern, Five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wounds of Christ, Cockerel,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 pieces of silver,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer and pincers</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Instruments of the Passion**

In many of Ireland’s old graveyards you will find the ruin of a medieval church. This should be included in the activities at the graveyard. Some sample questions and tasks are listed below. The pupils may wonder why the church is in ruins and why it is now full of burials. This is an excellent opportunity to explore some aspects of Irish history and examine a ruined building.

To answer the question about why the church is in ruins you will need to explain the Reformation to the pupils. When Henry VIII split from Rome the old parish churches and churchyards in his kingdom passed to the new Protestant church. Some of the larger of the old churches were then converted into Protestant churches. Hence, Christ Church Cathedral and St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin and St. Canice’s Cathedral in Kilkenny are now Church of Ireland churches though they are all medieval buildings. However, the majority of medieval churches were in ruins after the wars of the 16th and 17th centuries and no longer viable as places of worship. There was a great spurt of building Church of Ireland parish churches after the Act of Union in 1800 and many of these were located, but not all, in the old graveyards. A lot of these are now in ruins as the population to support them was not there.

Catholics were forbidden to build churches because of the Penal Laws, but with Catholic Emancipation in 1829 new churches began to appear everywhere. These were built on new sites, often donated to the church by a local landlord.

When the old medieval churches were abandoned they were immediately seized on as holy places for burial (only very important people were allowed burial within a church in medieval times). In medieval times only the upper crust of society were allowed to be buried inside a church. Once the churches fell into ruins they became a very popular place of burial. Eventually, they became just another part of the graveyard.

For more information on medieval churches see [Resources: Brief Guide to Monuments and Artefacts](#).
Sample Activity Sheet: Medieval Church

1. What type of monument is it? Castle [ ] Church [ ] Ringfort [ ]
2. What shape is it? Rectangular [ ] Cruciform [ ] T-shaped [ ]
3. What is the long axis? East-West [ ] North-South [ ]
4. What are the walls made of? Stone [ ] Mud [ ] Brick [ ]
5. What are the corner stones called? Quoins [ ] Gables [ ] Lintels [ ]
6. In what wall is the door? North wall [ ] East wall [ ] South wall [ ] West wall [ ]
7. What shape is the arch over the door? Rounded [ ] Pointed [ ] Elliptical [ ]
8. Circle the number of windows in the church 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 [ ] 6 [ ] 7 [ ] 8 [ ] 9 [ ] 10 [ ]
9. In which wall is the largest window? North [ ] South [ ] East [ ] West [ ]
10. What shape is the arch over the window? Pointed [ ] Ogee [ ] Rectangular [ ]
11. At which end was the altar? South [ ] North [ ] East [ ] West [ ]
12. How old is the church? 100 years [ ] 500 years [ ] 1500 years [ ]

Team 1
Measure the length and breadth of the church using a measuring stick.

Team 2
Measure the width and height of the entrance door using a hand tape.

Team 3
Measure the width and height of the sidewalls.

Team 4
Take photographs of/draw the church and some important features.

Team 5
Look at the walls of the church and describe the type of material used, was it shaped?, how was it made? If stone built find the biggest stone used in the church wall. Measure it.

Team 6
Design a simple ceremony celebrating the church as an ancient place of Christian worship.
### Skills and Concepts Development: Working as a Historian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Time and Chronology</th>
<th>Change and Continuity</th>
<th>Cause and Effect</th>
<th>Using Evidence</th>
<th>Synthesis and Communication</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFANT CLASSES</strong></td>
<td>By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can become aware of and discuss a simple story based on life in the past as represented by the monument.</td>
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<td>By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can examine how changing times have affected what has survived from the past as part of the built heritage.</td>
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<td>By visiting and recording an archaeological site the pupils are able to communicate an awareness of the past as embodied by an archaeological monument.</td>
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</table>

**INFANT CLASSES**

- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can become aware of and discuss a simple story based on life in the past as represented by the monument.
- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils encounter archaeological evidence.
- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can communicate an awareness of the past in terms of their experience of the monument.

**1ST AND 2ND CLASSES**

- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can begin to distinguish between past, present and future.
- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can develop an understanding of chronology by considering the age of the archaeological monument.
- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can explore ideas of change and continuity in terms of features that have changed or remained unchanged in the landscape.
- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can examine how changing times have affected what has survived from the past as part of the built heritage.
- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can examine aspects of change over time as represented by the archaeological monument.
- By visiting and recording an archaeological site the pupils are able to communicate an awareness of the past as embodied by an archaeological monument.
- By visiting and recording an archaeological monument the pupils can imagine and discuss how people lived and behaved there in the past.

**3RD AND 4TH CLASSES**

- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can begin to distinguish between past, present and future.
- By visiting an archaeological site the pupils can develop an understanding of chronology by considering the age of the archaeological monument.
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**5TH AND 6TH CLASSES**

- By visiting and recording an archaeological monument the pupils can develop an understanding of time and chronology.
- By visiting and recording an archaeological monument the pupils can develop word-phrases and conventions associated with recording dates and periods in the past.
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- By visiting and recording an archaeological monument the pupils can discuss how past events were experienced by those who participated in them.

**6TH CLASSES**

- By visiting and recording an archaeological monument the pupils can develop an understanding of time and chronology.
- By visiting and recording an archaeological monument the pupils can develop word-phrases and conventions associated with recording dates and periods in the past.
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- By visiting and recording an archaeological monument the pupils can discuss how past events were experienced by those who participated in them.
Strand: Story
Strand unit: Stories
The child should be enabled to
- listen to, discuss, retell and record through pictures and other simple writing activities some stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries in a variety of ways
- express or record stories through art work, drama, music, mime and movement and using information and communication technologies.

Strand: Change and continuity
Strand unit: Continuity and change in the local environment
The child should be enabled to
- visit, explore and become aware of elements in the local environment which show continuity and change
- use simple work directives, work cards or trail leaflets
- record findings through drawing and other art work, modelling, photographs, information and communication technologies.

Strand: Story
Strand unit: Stories
The child should be enabled to
- listen to, discuss, retell and record some simply told stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments
- express or record stories through simple writing, art work, drama, music, mime and movement and using information and communication technologies.

Strand: Local Studies
Strand unit: My locality through the ages
The child should be enabled to
- study a period or periods in the history of the local village, town, city area, townland, parish or county
- become familiar with important events in the history of the locality, referring to the wider national context where relevant
- collect related local ballads, stories and traditions.

Strand: Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality
The child should be enabled to
- actively explore some features of the local environment
- investigate various aspects of these sites
- present findings using a variety of media and appropriate timelines.

Strand: Story
Strand unit: Stories from the lives of people in the past
The child should be enabled to
- examine and begin to make deductions from some simple relevant evidence
- express or record stories through oral and written forms, art work, music, drama, mime, movement and information and communication technologies.

Strand: Early people and ancient societies
Strand unit: Stone Age peoples
Strand unit: Bronze Age peoples
Strand unit: Early Christian Ireland
The child should be enabled to
- become familiar with aspects of the lives of these peoples
- examine and become familiar with evidence we have which tells us about these people, especially evidence of these people which may be found locally.

Strand: Society, work and culture in the past
Strand unit: Life in Norman Ireland
Strand unit: Life in mediaeval towns and countryside
The child should be enabled to
- become familiar with aspects of the lives of these people
- examine and become familiar with evidence from the periods studied, especially evidence which may be found locally.

Strand: Continuity and change over time
Strand unit: Food and farming
The child should be enabled to
- identify items of change and continuity in the “line of development”
- identify some of the factors which have caused or prevented change.
### Module 11: Fieldtrip: the Outdoor Classroom

#### Strands

**Strand: Local Studies**

The child should be enabled to
- study a period or periods in the history of the local village, town, city area, townland, parish or county.
- become familiar with important events in the history of the locality, setting local figures or events in the national and international context where relevant.
- use evidence which is more diverse and more complex than heretofore
- collect local ballads, stories and traditions relating to these events.

The child should be enabled to
- actively explore some features of the local environment
- investigate various aspects of these sites.

#### Strand: Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality

The child should be enabled to
- study a period or periods in the history of the local village, town, city area, townland, parish or county.
- become familiar with important events in the history of the locality, setting local figures or events in the national and international context where relevant.
- use evidence which is more diverse and more complex than heretofore
- collect local ballads, stories and traditions relating to these events.

#### Strand: Story

The child should be enabled to
- listen to, discuss, retell and record a wide range of stories from the lives of people who have made a contribution to local and/or national life and to the lives of people in other countries through technological, scientific, cultural and artistic activities as well as those who have contributed to social and political developments.
- examine and begin to make deductions from some simple relevant evidence.

#### Strand: Early people and ancient societies

The child should be enabled to
- become familiar with aspects of the lives of these peoples
- examine critically, and become familiar with, evidence we have which tells us about these people, especially evidence of these people which may be found locally and in Ireland, where appropriate.

#### Strand: Society, work and culture in the past

The child should be enabled to
- become familiar with aspects of the lives of these people
- examine and become familiar with evidence which informs us about the lives of people in the periods studied, their thoughts and concerns, especially evidence which may be found locally.

#### Strand: Continuity and change over time

The child should be enabled to
- identify examples of change and continuity in the “line of development”
- identify the factors which may have caused or prevented change.

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**5th & 6th Classes**

- **Strand unit: My locality through the ages**
- **Strand unit: Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality**
- **Strand unit: Stories from the lives of people in the past**
- **Strand unit: Stone Age peoples**
- **Strand unit: Bronze Age peoples**
- **Strand unit: Early Christian Ireland**
- **Strand unit: Life in Norman Ireland**
- **Strand unit: Life in mediaeval towns and countryside**
- **Strand unit: Food and farming**
### LINKAGES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### INFANTS
- **Strand**: Human environments
  - **Strand Unit**: Living in the local community
- **Strand**: Natural Environments
  - **Strand Unit**: The local natural environment
- **Strand**: Environmental awareness and care
  - **Strand Unit**: Caring for my locality

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  - **Strand Unit**: Living in the local community
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  - **Strand Unit**: The local natural environment
- **Strand**: Environmental awareness and care
  - **Strand Unit**: Caring for my locality

#### 3RD AND 4TH CLASSES
- **Strand**: Human environments
  - **Strand Unit**: People living and working in the local community
- **Strand**: Natural Environments
  - **Strand Unit**: The local natural environment
  - **Strand Unit**: Land, rivers and seas
  - **Strand Unit**: Rocks and soils
- **Strand**: Environmental awareness and care
  - **Strand Unit**: Caring for my locality
  - **Strand Unit**: Environmental awareness

#### 5TH AND 6TH CLASSES
- **Strand**: Human environments
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- **Strand**: Natural Environments
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#### INFANTS
- **Strand**: Living Things
  - **Strand Unit**: Plants and animals
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  - **Strand Unit**: Properties and characteristics of materials
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## INTEGRATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>Strand: Shape and space</th>
<th>Strand: Measures</th>
<th>Strand: Early mathematical activities</th>
<th>Strand: Number</th>
<th>Strand: Data</th>
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### Module 11: Fieldtrip: the Outdoor Classroom

#### Teacher Guidelines: Module 11

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANGANNA NAÍONÁN</th>
<th>Snáithe: Éisteacht</th>
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#### INFANTS
- Strand: Receptiveness to language
- Strand: Competence and confidence in using language
- Strand: Developing cognitive abilities through language
- Strand: Emotional and imaginative development through language

#### 1ST AND 2ND CLASSES
- Strand: Receptiveness to language
- Strand: Competence and confidence in using language
- Strand: Developing cognitive abilities through language
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#### 3RD AND 4TH CLASSES
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#### 5TH AND 6TH CLASSES
- Strand: Receptiveness to language
- Strand: Competence and confidence in using language
- Strand: Developing cognitive abilities through language
- Strand: Emotional and imaginative development through language