

Council for British Archaeology

CBA Factsheet 4: Teaching archaeology

Archaeology is a great subject to teach. Not only is it a broad subject with many ways to apply more abstract principles (eg radiocarbon dating to illustrate isotopes in chemistry or physics), but it also has the ability to excite and enthuse learners with a subject that is truly different to that which they have studied in other lessons.

Within schools the scope for using archaeology is not limited to the history classroom. Archaeology can be used to examine citizenship, language, mathematics, science, religion, and art as well as technology, design, music etc. There are few subjects with such a broad reach.

How can I teach archaeology?

Archaeology can be included and taught within the full range of education from primary to adult and continuing education.

Within pre-16 education archaeology can be included within History, Art, Science, English, Maths, Design and many other subjects. To teach at this level you need to be a Qualified Teacher. For those teachers within school age education who wish to incorporate archaeology within their teaching we would suggest that you take a look at the teacher resources section of our website for ideas, information and resources (www.britarch.ac.uk/teach/resources). We would love to hear about how you are using archaeology in your teaching.

If you have archaeological experience that you think could contribute to school lessons and would like to volunteer some of your time, you should contact your local school who will usually be delighted to let you get involved. They may need to run a routine criminal records check in some circumstances so it is best to contact your local school in reasonable time in advance of any specific events you might wish to offer.

Teaching in Further Education

All tutors in the post-compulsory education sector (ie 16–19) now must have a teaching qualification or be working towards one within two years of beginning teaching. To teach full time you should consider a PGCE in

advance of looking for a teaching post. If you would like to teach archaeology in this sector we would suggest you contact the CBA Education team by email via www.britarch.ac.uk/contact and we can add your name to our list of potential tutors. We will then contact you if a college or school in your area is looking for a tutor to teach a course. You should also approach your local college. As archaeology does not have many learners each year it is usually taught as either an evening class or as a small subject during the day in which case you may, as a full-time teacher, be expected to teach other subjects within your college.

If you would like to teach a continuing education class we have provided some guidance on teaching CE and Adult Education classes below.

Teaching in the Higher Education sector

Whilst the majority of university teaching is carried out by members of staff within the university, many archaeology departments use external speakers, lecturers and teachers to deliver some teaching. Often this is by people who are working in the commercial sector of archaeology. The number of modules taught by external speakers and experts is increasing as universities address the need for their courses to equip their graduates with the skills to work within the commercial sector.

If you are interested in providing this sort of teaching then you should contact your nearest university archaeology department to offer your services. A list of university archaeology departments is available through the Training Online Resource Centre (www.torc.org.uk).

The CBA provides a range of teaching resources, lists of sources of information etc which can be invaluable to teachers and tutors just starting out in their teaching careers. Visit the teachers' resources section of our website for more information:
www.britarch.ac.uk/teach/resources

Do you want to teach archaeology in Continuing Education or in another part-time capacity?

Unlike many avenues in education, there is no set pattern for teaching archaeology in part-time or Continuing Education. Regardless of whether you are currently a student, or perhaps a former student with a strong knowledge of a specific subject, or an archaeologist interested in teaching your specialised area, or indeed anyone else with a burning passion to teach within the remit of archaeology, the standard approach is simply to contact the part-time studies institution you would like to teach for and ask to become involved in their teaching programme. You will probably be invited to an interview, sometimes just an informal chat, about what

qualifies you to teach your subject and if you have any prior experience of teaching. The fact that you may not have any prior teaching experience is not a barrier to you becoming involved in teaching. The department that you have contacted will most probably be very pleased to hear from you and appreciative of your contribution.

Continuing Education is usually taught to an adult group and does not require you to have a PGCE or other teaching qualification. It will require you to have a demonstrable knowledge, perhaps a BA, or experience of the area in which you would like to teach, regardless of whether that is Roman Britain, New Kingdom Egypt, Landscape and GIS Surveying, the Funerary Practices of Celtic Britain, Medieval Building Practices or Underwater Archaeology. You will be expected to produce some form of teaching plan or course outline to give an outline of what you propose to teach. If you are not sure whether your ideas for a course/module will be popular then suggest it to the organisation anyway; they will soon tell you whether it is a viable option or not.

New to teaching?

If you have never taught before and are nervous about standing in front of a group of people, don't worry. The students are there because they want to hear what you have to say about your subject. Adult learners are more forgiving and generous than typical school or college learners. Project your voice well, be as clear as possible, know your subject, and you'll do well.

You will also discover that teaching is a two-way process and that you will also learn more than you will have anticipated about your own subject! Class size is usually around 15–20 students. Most departments will have a minimum number of required students before a course can be allowed to run, but this is often very low.

The class

The requirements of teaching are usually two-fold: a course that lasts for 10 meetings, for example from October to December, or January to March, or a longer course of 22 meetings that will cover the whole of that period. Classes are usually two hours in length and held in the evening. The two-hour class is usually split by a 15 minute break, with the first hour being a presentation by the tutor, and the second hour, ideally, being a combination of tutor presentation and discussion with the group. This format can be more difficult to achieve when the class is not accredited. Students on an accredited course tend to be more involved in the subject and have a greater willingness to discuss the subject in the group.

If you teach an accredited course, for example a Certificate or Diploma in Archaeology, or your class is a module of a part-time degree you will be required to set work that will be assessed for the qualification. Normally this requires essay questions to be set, with appropriate reading being suggested, for which you will then be required to mark/assess the students work. Some organisations will provide you with some training for this, whilst others will simply leave you to it. As long as you know your subject, you will quickly realise that this is not as daunting a task as you may imagine. Either way, it is a great learning experience and one from which you will benefit as well.

Resources

Most Continuing Education/part-time study centres will give you a relatively free reign to design and assemble the curriculum for your course. When it comes to the resources that an institution can offer to you as a tutor, this will depend on the organisation. Some institutions will offer you the use of PowerPoint to present your classes, whilst others will just offer a slide projector, an overhead projector and a white board.

If you use slides you will be expected to provide them yourself. Likewise if you are using PowerPoint, you will need to have access to a resource that can provide you with visual images. Generally speaking, a department will usually offer to do any photocopying for you. If you are teaching an accredited course you will have a greater choice of resources than if not. But the essential core data, images, plans or maps, you will need to provide yourself. The resources the department will have available, or whether they will pay you for preparation time, will vary between each institution.

Availability of resources

If you have access to your own images and information, this is going to be your best resource. As already stated, most institutions will probably not be able to assist you in this matter. There are a number of online resources that may be useful however:

The Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology has a dedicated Archaeology Image Bank (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/learning/image_bank). Images placed here are available free-of-charge for educational non-profit use, and include sites, excavations, artefacts and buildings (images of Stonehenge, Maiden Castle and the Rillaton Cup are all examples of images within the archive). You should also feel free to donate your own images for others to share.

Archaeology resources for teachers

Our education staff here at the CBA all have teaching experience, so we know that developing lessons is hard work and takes time. To help encourage teachers to develop the use of archaeology in their teaching we know you need easily available resources that are free to use...

...So as part of the new CBA website we are in the process of developing a new resource hub for teachers. Aimed at teachers of all levels (KS1 to CE) in both formal and informal education, the new section will provide session plans, activity ideas, worksheets, case studies, photos (artefacts, sites, reconstructions, techniques), teachers' notes, contact information, details of artefact lending schemes etc. These resources will all be downloadable free for educational use so that you can get what you need for lesson planning fast.

The resource hub will also link to other online resources that you can use – providing you with a central portal to reach anything related to archaeology, heritage and the historic environment. We ask only that you tell others about the resource site and that you let us know about new and interesting websites, activities, information that you find so that the resource site can grow and help make teaching about the past exciting and engaging for learners.

In addition, for KS2 and KS3 teachers, there is a great free resource by Creative Minds to provide lesson plans and ideas to allow you to teach the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects using archaeology. The resource can be found at www.mylearning.org and is also well worth a look for teachers teaching above and below key stages 2 and 3 as many of the ideas could be scaled to suit your teaching.

Teaching Archaeology online forum

As many of our education team are teachers, we know that archaeology teachers are usually the only subject specialist in their institution and that having someone to bounce ideas off or ask for suggestions is therefore difficult. So to solve this we have established an online discussion list for archaeology teachers and tutors. The list can only be read and contributed to by members so all discussions on it are done in private amongst other teachers using archaeology.

If you would like to join the Teaching Archaeology list please get in touch via the contact page of our website (details below) stating your name, email and where you teach archaeology and include in your message that you would like to be added to the 'Teaching Archaeology Britarch List' and our education team will add you to the list.

Considering starting a new course in archaeology?

If you are considering starting a new course in archaeology we would like to hear from you as we may be able to help. The CBA regularly receives requests from prospective learners asking where they can study archaeology and we therefore try to maintain an up-to-date list of all courses relating to archaeology throughout the UK. By including your new course on our list you can gain additional students and therefore increase its likelihood of success.

If you are looking for a tutor then the CBA maintains a list of potential tutors with experience in archaeology and we would be happy to help by acting as a contact for the potential tutors in your area. Many successful courses are based on the ability of the institution to provide a tutor who is knowledgeable and experienced in both teaching and archaeology.

Additionally we provide help to tutors through our free online resources which can make the process of curriculum development easier for a new tutor and therefore increase the chance of success for a new course.

If you have any questions, suggestions for resources or have any teaching ideas that you would be happy to donate for free educational use then please contact us using our online contact form at www.britarch.ac.uk/contact or telephone us via the number at the bottom of the page.

For further information, please contact:

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