

Interpreting Sources Game – suitable for all history topics



Preparation

1. This activity assumes that your class is organised into 5 or 6 table groups. If not, you will need to organise the children into groups. They are now groups of History Detectives. The number of groups is up to you!
2. Make one Identity Card per group. Choose from Aliens, Ancient Greeks (or whichever topic your class is studying), Monsters, Computer Experts, Harry Potters, Dinosaurs – or make up your own! Fold the cards so the identity is not revealed.
3. Make one TOP SECRET folder per group. This could be a paper bag, a large envelope, a box, or even a folded sheet of paper...

Materials needed for each group of History Detectives

Pieces of paper/pencils/scissors/paper bag or large envelope or folded sheet of paper for each group/timer (optional).

How to play the game:

The class is divided into groups of History Detectives.

Give each group of Detectives an Identity Card. This is TOP SECRET – they must NOT reveal the identity on the card to anyone outside of their group! They must not look until you start the timer.

Give each group a 'Top Secret' folder (envelope or paper bag etc)

Ask each group to draw and colour in artefacts/objects that match the secret identity. They will need to perform this task quietly so the other groups don't guess who they are! Cut the objects out and place them inside the Top Secret folder. Start the timer, allowing 5 to 10 minutes for this part of the game.

The folders are then passed around to the other groups.

The Detectives now have 2 minutes to examine and interpret the sources so that they can correctly guess the secret identity.

The game can be repeated as many times as you like. The children could make up their own secret identities.

Information to give the children

Everything that we know about history (the Ancient Greeks etc) is based on lots of different bits of information or **sources**. Some of the sources are tiny, like a piece of broken pottery, and others are huge, like the Parthenon. Historians and archaeologists examine and interpret these sources, piecing them together like a jigsaw puzzle. There are always pieces missing though!

Extending the activity – Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary Sources: first-hand, original materials used or created at the time of the event. For example, the Parthenon, the skeleton of a gladiator, Viking graffiti at Maeshowe, a letter written by Henry VIII etc.

Secondary Sources: second-hand materials or accounts, not created or used at the time of the event. Examples are encyclopedias, a postcard from Nanny describing her visit to the Parthenon, a picture in your text book which shows the Roman Invasion of Britain in 55BC, a FB post about your friend's party, someone's opinion in a newspaper (very different from a factual account!)

Repeat the game using either primary or secondary sources.

