

What did they find at Sutton Hoo?

Gold in the Ground · KS2 History · Years 3 to 6

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

1 How long was it down there?

MATHS LINK

Year	What happened
about AD _____	A king is buried inside a ship at Sutton Hoo
AD 1939	A man called _____ opens the largest mound

- The burial was about AD 625. Roughly how many years passed before it was found? about _____ years
- The ship was nearly **30 metres** of oak. A tennis court is about **24 metres** long. How much longer was the ship? about _____ metres

2 Words to know

VOCABULARY

a. Draw a line to match each word to its meaning.

mound	a deep red stone, cut into tiny flat pieces
rivet	a room in the middle of the ship holding everything buried with the king
burial chamber	a low hill of earth raised over a grave
garnet	a short iron bolt that held a ship's planks together

b. Finish these sentences using three of the words above.

- Basil Brown opened the smaller _____ first, and every one had been robbed.
- The wood had gone, but the _____ still sat in the lines the planks had left.
- The shoulder clasps were made of gold and deep red _____.

3 Digging out something made of nothing

EVIDENCE

The oak had rotted away completely. The sand had kept its shape, and the iron nails were still where the planks had left them.

- So what was Basil Brown actually uncovering?

There was no body in the chamber, only a body-shaped gap. Most people think the king was Rædwald, but nobody can prove it.

- Why can nobody be sure who was buried there?

4 Write about the moment you found it

ENGLISH LINK

You are Basil Brown, kneeling in the sand. You have just brushed away one rivet, then another, then a whole line of them curving into the ground. You do not know yet what it is. Write three or four sentences about what you can see and what you think it might be.

Use at least one modal verb — **might**, **may** or **could** — because you cannot be certain yet.

Answers and teaching notes

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1 · How long was it down there?

625 · Basil Brown

a. $1939 - 625 = 1,314$ years (accept “about 1,300”, which is what the film says).

b. $30 - 24 = \text{about } 6$ metres. Worth pacing out in the hall or on the field: the ship is a tennis court and then a classroom.

2 · Words to know

a. mound → a low hill of earth raised over a grave · rivet → a short iron bolt holding planks together · burial chamber → the room amidships holding the grave goods · garnet → a deep red stone cut into tiny flat pieces

b. mounds · rivets · garnet

3 · Digging out something made of nothing

a. Not a ship — **the shape of one**. A dark stain in the sand where the timber had lain, with the iron rivets still in their rows. Accept any answer that reaches “the ship was gone and only its shape was left”.

b. The soil at Sutton Hoo is acid, so it had taken the bones. There is no name on anything in the grave. Rædwald fits the date and the place, so most people think it is him, but **fitting is not the same as proving**. This is the historical-thinking point of the film, and it is worth more than the gold.

4 · Write about the moment you found it

Not marked for content. Look for: at least one **modal verb** showing uncertainty — *might, may, could* (Year 5 statutory); detail drawn from the film (pale sand, rust, the curve of the line, the brush); and first person held throughout.

The grammar and the history are the same lesson here. Basil Brown could not know what he had either. A child who writes *it might be a boat* is doing what an archaeologist does.

Curriculum

National Curriculum KS2 History — *Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots*, Anglo-Saxon art and culture. Question 1 links to Maths (intervals between years, subtraction with measures) and question 4 to English (modal verbs, Year 5 statutory).

Answers the enquiry question *How can archaeologists use artefacts to construct a representation of the past?*

Where each question comes from in the film

Chapter 1 — The Ship on the Hill · the field, Edith Pretty, Basil Brown, the first rivet (Q1, Q2)

Chapter 2 — The Shape in the Sand · the stain, the chamber, the clasps, the gap (Q2, Q3)

Chapter 3 — A Face and a Dragon · the helmet, the Dark Ages, what rots and what does not

Three things the film is careful about

The ship was hauled up from a river, not carried from the sea. Sutton Hoo stands on a hill above the river Deben. The film says the river ran out to the sea at the bottom of the slope.

The ship had rotted away completely. What survived was a stain in the sand and the iron rivets. The film says Basil Brown was uncovering the shape of a ship, not a ship, and that distinction is the whole of chapter 2.

Rædwald is not proved. The film says *most people think* and *nobody can prove it*. If a child asks whose grave it was, the honest answer is that we do not know, and that is allowed.