

Detective Work: Uncovering Our Local Past

Learning objective: To analyse local historical evidence and investigate how the local area has changed over time.

Ellie the elephant has found a box of old artefacts and photographs from your local area. Your task is to act as a local historian. Look at the 'Evidence List' below. For each item, decide if it is a 'Primary Source' (an original object from the past) or a 'Secondary Source' (something created later to explain the past). Then, use your detective skills to answer the questions about how your local community has evolved.

Word bank: Primary Source · Secondary Source · Artefact · Chronological · Evidence · Local History · Census Records · Oral History

1. A photograph of the high street taken in 1920 shows horses and carts instead of cars. Explain why this photograph is a primary source and what it tells us about transport technology in the past. (2 marks)

2. A textbook published in 2024 describes the building of the local railway in 1850. Is this a primary or secondary source? Justify your answer. (2 marks)

3. If you were interviewing an elderly resident about their childhood memories of the local park, why might this be considered a valuable form of 'oral history'? (2 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the high street of 100 years ago with your high street today. What are two significant differences in the shops or services provided? (2 marks)

5. What might happen to our understanding of the past if all historical records were destroyed? Explain the importance of preserving local archives. (2 marks)

6. Imagine you found a mysterious metal key in your garden. How would you go about researching its history to find out what it belonged to? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Then and Now' split-screen image of a local landmark. On the left, show it as it might have appeared 100 years ago; on the right, draw it as it looks today. Label at least three changes you have identified.



Extension challenge: Design a 'Local History Museum' exhibit. Choose one item from your local area (e.g., an old coin, a piece of pottery, or an old sign). Write a 100-word museum placard that explains what the object is, when it was used, and why it is significant to the story of your town or village.