

Teaching notes

This is an extremely memorable lesson! It works well after students have looked at the causes of the Black Death.

Students work in groups to investigate what people believed could cure the Black Death in order to try and cure it in their own village. Each group should have 4-6 students. They should each visit at least one evidence box and deduce what the cure might be.



They could consider the following:

- Who might they go to find cures like these?
- Do they trust them?
- Are they likely to be believed to be effective (in medieval times!)
- How might it cure the Black Death?

Students should then return to their groups to discuss their findings. They should discuss the various cures and then determine which cure will be the most effective cure for their village. They then must justify to the class their choice.

This does involve quite a lot of preparation. Each of the seven evidence trays or boxes should have a selection of items and an envelope with clues inside. You can label the evidence one to seven but don't give away the categories - this is something for your students to deduce. Some of the evidence would be ideally be props but a selection of images are included below and it is possible to substitute items or reduce the range.

Print out these labels for your props:

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Urine (do not open!) | Blood (do not open!) | Phlegm (do not open!) |
| Yellow Bile (do not open!) | Black Bile (do not open!) | Buboes (require lancing!) |
| Vinegar Smell me! | Herbs Smell me! | Faeces (do not touch!) |
| Leeches | Rose water Smell me! | Herbs Smell me! |

| Evidence box/tray | What you need | How to make! |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Religion | Whip Bible Bell | Could be homemade using string and a pencil! Borrow from your RE department. Print out some prayers as an alternative. Borrow the school bell or print off image below. |
| 2. Smells | Herbs Vinegar Rose water Posy Cleanliness sign Pomander | Herb sachet or bunch of fresh herbs (label provided). Vinegar: in a jar (label provided). Jar with water and rose petals/potpourri (label provided). Bunch of flowers (or use image). Cleanliness sign (print off image below). Orange studded with cloves. |
| 3. Magic / witchcraft | Magic wand Precious gems Frog Chicken | A wand or alternative magician-style items or use image below. Fake gems/stones or use image below. Rubber frog or use image below. Rubber chicken or use image below |
| 4. Doctors / surgeons | Jars of blood, phlegm and yellow and black bile. Leeches Lance & butter Buboes | Use jam jars and labels provided. You might like to seal the lids with sticky tape to discourage opening! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood: red food colouring and water • Yellow bile: watered down custard mix • Phlegm: green food colouring mixed with custard • Black bile: black food colouring with thinned custard mix. Use Jellybeans or liquorice (label provided). Toothpicks and a small pot of butter. Use chocolate custard doughnuts, or bake your own: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a basic bread dough, and wearing gloves, add some black food dye. Make a very thick custard with custard powder and add a few drops of black food dye. • Cut 4x4cm circles from the dough and put a dollop of the stodgy black custard into the centre. Fold and roll into a ball shape, and bake in the oven at 200c until the outside of the balls is sufficiently stable. • Get students to lance the buboes and black custard should come flowing out! |
| 5. Quarantine | Warning signs | Series of signs and warnings (images provided below). |
| 6. Healthy eating | Healthy foods | Bread, fruit & vegetables. |
| 7. Pestilence cures | Faeces Urine Special brew drink! | Mix Nutella with twiglets (label provided)! Jar with water and yellow food colouring (label provided). A glass containing a vile looking mixture (mix crushed eggshells with black treacle or black food colouring, chopped herbs/leaves with water). <i>Do not allow students to actually drink!</i> |

Clue cards

Evidence box/tray

Clues

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <p>Flagellants used to whip themselves to say sorry to God for their sins</p> <p>Pray to God to forgive your sins</p> <p>Ring church bells loudly to push away bad air.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Sweet smells will keep bad air away.</p> <p>Strong smells will clear the air.</p> <p>Wash with rosewater</p> <p>Remove bad smells streets might keep you healthy: clear out your toilet, don't leave out rubbish!</p> |
| 3 | <p>Abracadabra! Magicians write it to ward off the evil eye!</p> <p>Amulets emeralds & charms will stop curses.</p> <p>Put these creatures on buboes to drain poison - they will suck up the poison and swell until they burst.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Medical ideas revolved around the principle of trying to balance the 'four humours' in order to restore good health.</p> <p>Suck out bad blood.</p> <p>Lance the buboes: smear butter and herbs onto buboes and lance them.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Forbid strangers: turn them away from the village. Don't let them in!</p> <p>Lock them up and stay away: those with the plague should be locked in their houses until they are dead. Then we should burn their clothes!</p> <p>Avoid body fluids being exchanged! Ensure that no phlegm or spit (due to coughing or sneezing) is allowed to travel from person to person.</p> |
| 6 | <p>Eat fruit and vegetables.</p> <p>Avoid food that goes bad easily and smells bad such as meat and fish.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Try smearing dried poo on to the buboes.</p> <p>Bathe in urine once a day.</p> <p>Follow this recipe and drink the mixture daily:</p> <p><i>Roast the shells of newly laid eggs. Ground the roasted shells into a powder. Chop up the leaves and petals of marigold flowers. Put the egg shells and marigolds into a pot of good ale. Add treacle and warm over a fire.</i></p> |



