

## Follow Up 6

### Personal Time Capsule

**Objectives:** To encourage pupils to think about the reasons why we know a great amount about the Shang Dynasty but not the Xia.  
To understand the importance of written evidence to historians.  
To look at how historians interpret what they see, and how two historians may interpret things differently.

**Materials:** Personal items, photographs, writing materials. You need to ask the children to bring in the items the night before.

**Class set-up:** Individuals and partner work.

**Vocabulary:** Time Capsule, written evidence

**Activity:** Discuss what we know about the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, their beliefs, trades and so on. Then ask what we know about the Xia Dynasty. Why do they think there is such a difference in knowledge of these dynasties.

When there is no written evidence available, ask the children what objects might give archaeologists information about people in the past.

Ask the children to write a short life history (half a page or so). Then ask them to show their life history using only five objects. Only one of these can be a photograph and only one can be a drawing. All the other objects must be something that means a lot to them, reminds them of something, or an object that they use a lot. Ask them to think of objects that will tell other people something about their lives or experiences.

When they have brought these objects in, discuss which was the more difficult exercise – writing their biography or finding objects to illustrate their lives. Why do they think this is?

Get them to pass their objects over to their partner. They are not allowed to tell their partner anything about the objects. Give the partners 10 minutes to look at the objects and write the pupil's life story based on the items in front of them.

Ask the partners to read to each other the real and interpreted biographies. They can then explain to their partners the real meaning behind the objects they have chosen.

**Background Information:** Xia dynasty, Shang dynasty, Western Zhou Dynasty, Eastern Zhou Dynasty, Writing, Language, The Tomb of Lady Fu Hao.