

Discussion 11

Who was buried in the tombs?

Objectives: To encourage pupils to think about why people may be buried in different ways. To explore what evidence is needed to come to a conclusion and that evidence can be used to come to different conclusions.

Materials: Plans/description of contents of different tombs, photographs of objects from different tombs.

Class set-up: Whole group discussion/ teacher presentation

Vocabulary: evidence

Discussion:

Explain that archaeologists are detectives. They are looking for evidence to reconstruct the past - just like a police detective looks for clues to a murder. Sometimes the clues can point to the wrong person. Sometimes archaeologists reconstruct the past in one way but new evidence can change their ideas. Get the pupils to think about what evidence they would need to discover who was buried in the grave.

- *How can we tell whether the person buried was a man or a woman?*
- *How might we be able to tell whether it was a man or a woman if the body has rotted away?*

Show the pupils pictures of some of the objects found beside or on the bodies. Ask them to think about which objects buried with the body might help identify a person's sex or profession.

- *How might writing on an object help identify them?*

Discuss why people might be prepared to be buried in the grave.

- *Why do you think some graves have sacrificial victims and not others?*

Tell them that most of the graves had been robbed in the past. Talk about why people might want to rob the tombs.

- *Why do you think Fu Hao's tomb is one of the very few found intact?*

Ask the children to think about what types of materials last. Cloth, wood, bodies rot away easily while metal and stone survives.

- *How would this affect the way we reconstruct what was going on?*

Finish by asking the pupils to think about what will survive from today in four thousand years.

Background Information:

Ancestor Worship, The Tomb of Lady Fu Hao.