Classification Activity

This activity uses multiple skills defined under the science section of the national curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2; in particular, classifying, identifying, using observations and reporting.

Classification is an important concept in archaeology and there are many different ways that the objects contained on the database can be classified. For example:

- By material
- By date
- By object type
- Where the object was found

You can also classify objects within these categories. For example, many object types can be further classified based on shape, design, use etc. In this activity we look at an object type known as a *horse harness pendant*.

Horse harness pendants are decorations that would have been hung from the reins and other leather straps on horses during the Medieval period. They were popular in the 13th and 14th centuries and often have heraldic designs on them – designs or emblems that represent a noble person or family, or an organisation such as a religious house.

There are many different types of harness pendant, so they are a good object to use for classifying activities. We will look at *shape* in this activity.

Look at the examples of horse harness pendants and classify them (sort them) based on shape.

Here are some questions to think about:

- How are the objects the same?
- How are they different?
- Are there other ways you can classify them other than by shape?

Follow-on activities:

- Form an object *typology* by giving your classification categories a name.
- Find more examples from the database and see if you can fit them into your classification system. You can find all examples of horse harness pendants on the PAS database by clicking this link:
  https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/q/objecttype%3Aharness+pendant/objectType/HARNESS+PENDANT
- Present your classification system.
- Try the same activity but with a different object type.

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