

The Oldest Venus: A Magical Journey to Sarab

AGES 3-12 · 64 PAGES · TEPE SARAB, NEAR KERMANSHAH, WESTERN IRAN

Aryan wonders whether his own country hides anything older than the famous figures of Europe. Homa carries them eight thousand years back to Sarab, a village of the first farmers, where someone sat down with a lump of clay and made a small statue.

THE BIG QUESTION — FOR EVERY STUDENT

Why does *where* something was buried matter as much as the thing itself?

Ask it of the whole class. The supports below are for students who need a way in — not an easier question.

Words to know

excavation

figurine

Neolithic

layer

record

Before you read

- What is the difference between an ordinary hill and a hill made of buried houses?

Talk about it

- Someone made this little figure with their hands. What might they have been thinking about while they made her?
IF STUCK *I think they were making her for ...*
- At Sarab there were no cities yet — people were only just learning to plant seeds. What would a day there have been like?
IF STUCK *In one day they would have to ...*
- We do not know what the figure was for. What should a museum label say when nobody knows?
IF STUCK *The label should say ... because ...*
- Why would an archaeologist draw an object before lifting it out of the ground?
IF STUCK *If you pick it up first, you lose ...*

Make it

Bury It, Then Dig It Up

35-40 MINUTES, OR SPLIT ACROSS TWO LESSONS

Air-dry clay, a shallow tray of sand or soil per group, an old paintbrush each.

Step-by-step instructions are on the student sheet overleaf — photocopy one per child.

Check they got it

Before any group lifts anything, stop them and ask: **what have you written down so far?** A group with an empty record sheet and a figure already in their hand has missed the whole lesson — have them rebury it and start again. Recording before lifting is the rule on a real dig.

What students often get wrong

- ✗ That archaeology is about finding treasure. It is about finding *information*, most of which is in the position, not the object.
- ✗ That deeper always means older — usually true, but digging, building and flooding can shuffle the layers.
- ✗ That experts always know what an object was for. Often they genuinely do not, and saying so is good science.

The real archaeology

- Tepe Sarab is a low mound near Kermanshah — a village that was buried gradually over a very long time.
- It dates from before cities existed, when people were first planting seeds deliberately and keeping sheep and goats near home.
- The figure was uncovered by archaeologists brushing dirt away by hand, which is still how delicate finds are lifted today.

Free to copy and use in your classroom.

Read more: [The Venus of Sarab: a clay lady 8,000 years old](#)

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Be the archaeologist

Eight thousand years ago someone in a village called Sarab made a small clay figure. Archaeologists found her by brushing away dirt, one careful stroke at a time. Now it is your turn — and there is one rule: **write it down before you pick it up.**

- 1 Take another group's tray. Do not shake it, do not tip it.
- 2 Brush the sand away gently. Use the brush, never your fingers.
- 3 STOP when you can see the object. Do not lift it yet.
- 4 Fill in the record below and draw exactly how it was lying. **Then** you may lift it out.

I am excavating the tray belonging to:

How deep was it?

Which way was it facing?

What is it made of?

Draw it exactly where it lay



Now think: Why does drawing it first matter more than digging it up fast?

One question I would ask the person who made the real figure:

.....

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Finished early? Swap sheets with another group. Could you find their object using only their notes?