

## Get your hands on some rubbish! (clues for 21<sup>st</sup> century living)

### Aims of the exercise

1. To find out about people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by looking for clues in the things we throw away, as archaeologists examine ancient 'rubbish'.
2. To think about how much we could say if some of the evidence rotted away over time.



### Preparation

You will need to collect some household rubbish in advance of the activity. Ideally you want a variety of materials and things which illustrate age, gender and lifestyle. For example:

Food leftovers, various

Coke, beer cans

Pet food can

Pencil stub

Old make-up

Plastic packaging

Lists, receipts, greetings card

Baby food jar

Newspaper, comic

Theatre, cinema ticket

Low-fat food containers

Cigarette packet

Broken toys, CDs

You can of course contrive it, for example to represent a family with a pet.

### As a group, spread the rubbish out and ask some questions

Q. Are there any clues to suggest adults or children?

Q. Are there any clues to suggest male or female?

Q. Is there any evidence for animals?

Q. What kinds of food are present? Does it look like a healthy diet?

Q. Is there any indication of social status? (literate, wealthy?)

Q. Is there any evidence for hobbies, leisure activities?

### Group separates the things made from *organic* materials

Q. If these things rotted away (decomposed), how much would we be able to say then?