



CIVIL WAR TIME CAPSULE DISCOVERED



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
17DM-S788-45ES



Source: Reuters

1

Warm up

Look at the pictures and discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.



the hieroglyphs, Egypt



the Strahov library, Prague



Machu Picchu, Peru

1. Do you find history interesting? What kinds of things do you think we can learn from the past?
2. Do you think it's important to preserve items from our time for future generations? Why/why not?
3. When was the last time you visited a museum? Did you enjoy the experience?
4. Which historical period do you find the most fascinating?
5. In general, do you feel positive or negative about the future?



2

Vocabulary focus

Part A: Match the words and phrases with the correct definitions.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. time <u>capsule</u> | a. a conflict between groups of people in the same country |
| 2. <u>excavation</u> | b. a container filled with objects typical of the time it was buried in |
| 3. <u>pedestal</u> | c. an area surrounded by walls |
| 4. <u>seal</u> | d. a red-brown metal often used for making pipes, coins and wires |
| 5. <u>waterlogged</u> | e. a substance or material used to close an opening to secure a container |
| 6. <u>copper</u> | f. describing something that has become wet to the point of being damaged |
| 7. <u>civil war</u> | g. the activity of digging into the ground to look for old objects or buildings |
| 8. <u>enclosure</u> | h. the base of a statue or column |

Part B: Complete the sentences with the missing words and phrases from Part A. You may need to change the form of the word or phrase.

1. I returned the tin of biscuits to the supermarket as the _____ had been broken.
2. After a series of protests, the statue was removed from its _____.
3. During the English _____, brothers often fought against each other.
4. Our teacher made us place letters we had written inside the _____, which she buried outside the school.
5. They found the tomb inside a stone _____, and the contents were very well-preserved.
6. My school's old car park was dug up as part of an _____ to find the bones of a long-dead king.
7. After the flood, all of our books on the first floor of the house were _____ and unreadable.
8. We found some old _____ coins in our back garden. I think they might be Roman!

3

Listening for specific information

Listen to the report. Match the people and organisations mentioned with the things they relate to.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. General Robert Lee | a. a conservation laboratory |
| 2. President Abraham Lincoln | b. a rare photo |
| 3. thousands of people | c. a special ceremony |
| 4. The Department of Historic Resources | d. a statue |
| 5. Governor Ralph Northam | e. a tweet |



4 Listening comprehension

Read the questions below then listen to the report again. Answer the questions *true, false or not given*.

1. The second box discovered was made of lead.
2. Some of the items found in the first box were damaged.
3. Experts are optimistic about the potential contents of the second box.
4. The reason historians believe the second box may contain a photo of Abraham Lincoln is because of accounts in historical records.
5. The search for the time capsule has taken many years.
6. After it was dug up, the box was moved to a lab for further study.
7. Officials are expecting bad news regarding the contents of the box.

5 Reading: general vocabulary

Part A: Match the words in bold with the correct definitions.

1. The **weathervane** had stood on top of the church for years, but it fell during the recent storm.
 2. The dinosaur bones were put **on display** in the local museum.
 3. Computers are evolving so quickly that a machine purchased five years ago may be **obsolete** by next year.
 4. Our **descendants** may well be angry with us for our failure to stop global warming.
 5. Jane's pocket watch has been **passed down** to her from her great-grandfather.
 6. The sale of the house was **duly** completed later that day, and we celebrated with champagne.
 7. The week before Christmas, I had to **conceal** the children's presents in secret locations around the house, so that they wouldn't be able to find them.
 8. My grandfather collected many useless **trinkets** over his life.
- a. a metal object on the roof of a building that turns with the wind to show which direction it is coming from
 - b. an object or personal possession that isn't worth much money
 - c. a person related to you who lives after you
 - d. describing something that happens at the correct time or in the correct way
 - e. in a place where something can be viewed by people
 - f. not in use anymore, having been replaced by something newer, better or more fashionable
 - g. to give something to a person from the next generation
 - h. to prevent something from being known about or seen



Part B: Complete the short text with the correct words from Part A. You may need to change the form of the words.

When I took the job at the museum, I wasn't expecting much. I thought that I would spend my days removing things from dusty cupboards - objects of no real value, such as _____¹ and old documents. However, even though my town is small I fell in love with local history through my work. Last month we discovered a _____² that had been _____³ in somebody's attic. It turned out it used to stand on top of the cathedral! The woman who brought it in was a _____⁴ of a priest who had taken it home after a minor hurricane hit the building. The same woman came back the next week with a whole box of treasures for us to take a look at! Apparently, they had been _____⁵ to her by various family members over the last hundred years. We arranged for the items to go _____⁶ the next week, and we _____⁷ opened the museum with a special ceremony, which the owner of the collection attended. I've heard that many museums are switching to digital exhibitions, but I hope that our in-person displays don't become _____⁸ in the future. There's something so fascinating about seeing these little pieces of history with your own eyes.

Discuss these questions in pairs.

1. Do you collect **trinkets** or souvenirs? If not, do you know anyone who does? Why do you think people collect these kinds of items?
2. Will mobile phones become **obsolete** within the next 20 years, or do you believe they are going to be around for a while?
3. Do you think some historical artefacts should remain **concealed**, or should anything of public interest be put **on display** in museums?
4. Do you own any possessions that were **passed down** by family members? Is there anything you own that you might like to give to your children?

6

Reading for general understanding

You are going to read a text about time capsules. Scan the text quickly and find out which heading best matches paragraphs 1-5. One of the headings doesn't relate to any paragraph and should be marked "not given".

- a. An idea that needs improving
- b. A historical need to share our stories
- c. Could time capsules be bad for the environment?
- d. An evolving concept through the ages
- e. A record for the future
- f. Opening up the past

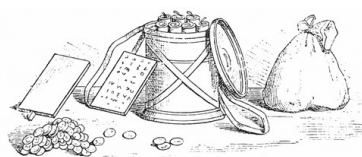


A brief history of time capsules

Passing down the past

1. It is, perhaps, human nature to want to preserve the past. As a species, we have passed many things down through the centuries: stories, ideas, possessions. The desire to leave something behind for future generations has prompted many to experiment with the concept of the time capsule. On the face of it, concealing items inside a sealed container and burying it might seem a little strange. Typically, historical artefacts are displayed in a museum – although history has shown us that museums can be destroyed, books burnt and collections lost forever. Time capsules, then, may well present a way of transferring little pieces of our lives to the people who will come after us, secure and hidden from the passages of time until the date of excavation.
2. The practice appears to have begun in the 18th century. Early forms of the time capsule include dated items found inside a hollow weathervane in Boston, USA and a document placed within a wooden statue of Jesus Christ in Sotillo de la Ribera, Spain. Perhaps one of the most famous early examples was a capsule from the time of the American Revolution, which is believed to have been buried in 1795. It was dug up 60 years later, opened and reinstalled – with some new additions relating to the time. In 2015, in a special ceremony at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the capsule was opened once again. The contents were put on display for a brief time before being returned to the capsule, which was reburied in its original location.
3. The time capsule found increasing popularity in the 20th century. The Detroit Century Box, a copper box filled with photographs and letters, was installed in 1900, to be opened in the year 2000. City officials duly unsealed the capsule on the final day of that year, discovering descriptions of life in 1900 and predictions that residents had made for the future. In Norway, a capsule was prepared in 1912 with the label "Can open in 2012". Prior to the opening of the box, there was excitement in the media, but its contents proved somewhat disappointing – a collection of newspaper pages and notebooks.
4. Although time capsules remain popular, historians have noted that they often offer very little in terms of historical significance. Items stored by members of the public may have great personal value, but might not be of much cultural interest. Experts have suggested that, instead of trinkets and possessions, those who wish to create a time capsule should focus on descriptions of daily life, ideally in a format that will not become obsolete in the future. This last point is crucial – there have long been concerns with the idea of the "digital dark age", a potential era in which our descendants are unable to access the digital information we have left behind, due to technological advances or a global disaster.
5. In a remote area of Tasmania, scientists, artists and architects are working on another time capsule – around the size of a bus, this huge construction aims to store the collected knowledge of researchers on the climate crisis. The capsule, which has been nicknamed "Earth's Black Box", will record the warming weather patterns of the world, and the steps that **humanity** took to reach a point of no return. Its creators hope that the box will never need to be opened, just like the black box of a plane, which retains vital information in case of a crash. If it does, they say, perhaps it can help future human beings to understand what happened to our planet and why.

Sources: CNN, The Guardian, Reuters, The New York Times





7

Reading comprehension

Read the article again. Complete the sentences with between ONE to THREE words from the article.

1. Time capsules may have been invented because people have a basic need to _____ for future generations.
2. The idea of burying our possessions underground seems a _____ at first glance.
3. Items placed inside a hollow weathervane found in Boston and a wooden statue of Jesus Christ can be seen as _____ of the time capsule.
4. One of the most famous early examples _____ to have been buried in 1795.
5. The Detroit Box contained _____ including descriptions of life in the city and predictions about the future.
6. A capsule installed in Norway ultimately proved to be _____ when opened.
7. One of the issues raised by historians with the concept of time capsules is that they _____ very little in terms of historical significance.
8. A potential _____ known as the "digital dark age" describes a time in the future in which our descendants may not be able to access the information we have left behind.
9. Scientists, artists and architects are constructing a new time capsule in a _____ of Tasmania.
10. The capsule aims to record the _____ patterns of the world.

8

Talking point

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Imagine you are preparing a time capsule. Which items would you put inside, and why?
2. Do you think that time capsules are a good idea, or are there better ways of preserving the past?
3. How can we prevent information loss from a potential "digital dark age"? In our digital world, is it already too late to preserve knowledge in non-digital formats?
4. Aside from "Earth's Black Box" in Tasmania, time capsules have been launched into space. What do you think a future alien species would think when opening such a time capsule?
5. What kinds of predictions would you make about the future if you were writing a letter to be included in a time capsule?
6. If you could pass down a message to your great-great grandchildren, what would you say to them?
7. Do you think life in your hometown will change a lot in the next one hundred years?



9

Extended activity/writing homework

Pick one of the topics.

1) Write a discussion essay on the following statement. Your essay should present contrasting opinions and should begin with an introduction and end with a conclusion, in which you should offer your own view on the topic. The essay should be between 240 – 280 words.

Time capsules are a nice idea, but remain a passive and ultimately ineffective way to preserve the past.

2) Imagine that you are writing a letter to future generations. Choose a topic and write the letter in no more than 280 words. Suggested topics: My hometown in 2022, My daily life, Culture in my country. If you wish, you may create your own topic for the letter.



Transcripts

3. Listening for specific information

Reporter: A box that appears to be a second time capsule has been found beneath a statue of Confederate General Robert Lee in Richmond, Virginia.

Reporter: The container was found inside a granite enclosure below the pedestal of the statue. It appears to be made of copper and follows a previous discovery, earlier in the month, of a lead box which was initially believed to be a time capsule, but turned out to contain several waterlogged books, an envelope and a silver coin.

Reporter: Experts have high hopes for the second box. Apart from items dating from the time of the Civil War, some have suggested that a rare photo of President Abraham Lincoln might have been placed inside the capsule.

Reporter: The discovery may mark the end of a months-long search for the time capsule. According to historical news accounts from the time period, a capsule was placed during a special ceremony taking place in 1887, which was attended by thousands of people.

Reporter: Following the excavation, the box was transferred to the conservation laboratory at the Department of Historic Resources. The next stage is for the potential time capsule to be assessed. It is possible that the seals may have been damaged, which could be bad news for the treasures within.

Reporter: However, officials remain hopeful. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam tweeted, "They found it! This is likely the time capsule everyone was looking for." With luck, this second container will provide historians with a valuable window into the past.



Key

1. Warm up

5 mins.

Tell the students they will be reading an article about the history of time capsules and listening to a report about a recent time capsule discovery in the United States. The discussion activity is suitable for pairs or groups.

Note:

to *preserve* something is to make sure that something is kept safe e.g. for next generations

2. Vocabulary focus

10 mins.

Ask students to match the words and phrases with the correct definitions. For the second part, students should fill in the gaps in the sentences in pairs or individually. Ensure that students know how to pronounce the target vocabulary.

Part A

1. b 2. g 3. h 4. e 5. f 6. d 7. a 8. c

Part B

1. seal 2. pedestal 3. Civil War 4. time capsule
5. enclosure 6. excavation 7. waterlogged 8. copper

Note:

a *tomb* is a place where a dead person is buried, usually built of stone above or below the ground

3. Listening for specific information

5 mins.

Individually or in pairs, ask students to listen to the report and match the people or organisations they hear mentioned with the correct answer.

1. d 2. b 3. c 4. a 5. e

4. Listening comprehension

5 mins.

Students should answer the questions true, false or not given.

1. False. The first was made of lead, the second appears to be made of copper.
2. True. The books are described as waterlogged.
3. True. Experts have high hopes for the second box.
4. Not given. We are not told the reason.
5. False. The discovery may mark the end of a months-long search for the time capsule.
6. True. Following the excavation, the box was transferred to the conservation laboratory at the Department of Historic Resources. The next stage is for the potential time capsule to be assessed.
7. False. Officials remain hopeful.



5. Reading: general vocabulary

10 mins.

Students should match the words and phrases in bold with the correct definitions. Ensure students know how to pronounce target vocabulary. For part B, students should read the short text and fill in the gaps with the words and phrases from part A. For the discussion activity, students should answer the questions in pairs or small groups.

Part A

1. a 2. e 3. f 4. c 5. g 6. d 7. h 8. b

Part B:

1. trinkets 2. weathervane 3. concealed 4. descendant
5. passed down 6. on display 7. duly 8. obsolete

6. Reading for general understanding

5 mins.

Ask students to skim through the text quickly to match the headings to the correct paragraphs. You may want to do this as a strictly-timed exercise.

Note:

humanity - people in general

a. paragraph 4 b. paragraph 1 c. not given
d. paragraph 2 e. paragraph 5 f. paragraph 3

7. Reading comprehension

10 mins.

Students should complete the task individually or in pairs. Students should read the article again, and complete the sentences with between one to three words from the text itself.

1. leave something behind 2. little strange 3. early forms
4. is believed 5. photographs and letters 6. somewhat disappointing
7. often offer 8. era 9. remote area
10. warming weather

8. Talking point

10-15 mins.

Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs or small groups. Encourage good discussion. Monitor the task.

9. Extended activity/writing homework

At least 40 mins.

For the first option, you should ask students to do their own research on the topic and use the information contained in the lesson to write their discussion essay. Ensure that students know how to present two sides of an argument in an essay. Essays should be 240 – 280 words. For the second option, students should imagine that they are submitting a letter for a time capsule and write about one of the suggested topics, or a topic of their own choosing.