



Activity 2: Stratigraphy

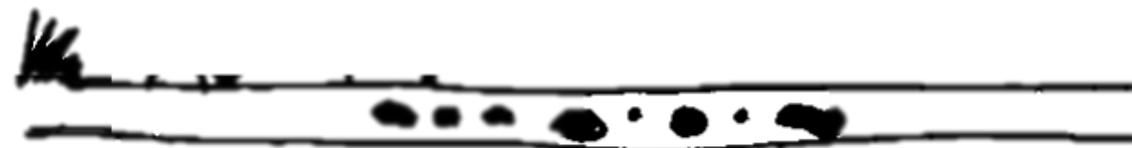
Archaeologists spend a lot of time talking about '**stratigraphy**'. This means the layers of soil that have built up over time. How the layers relate to one another can tell you a lot about what may have happened in the past. We'll start with an example to show how they form.



1. A Neolithic person arrives.



2. They make a flint spear head, with the waste flint being left behind.



3. Plants, leaves and trees die off forming the soil that gradually covers the flint.

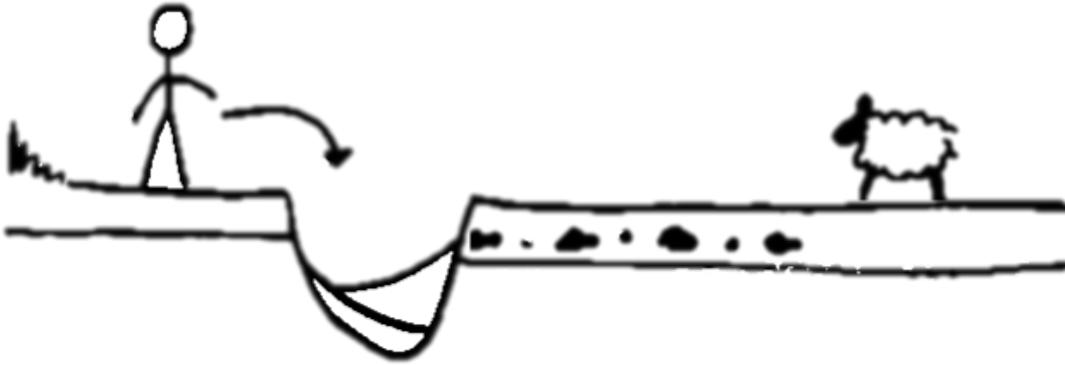


4. In the Iron Age people settle in the area and start farming.



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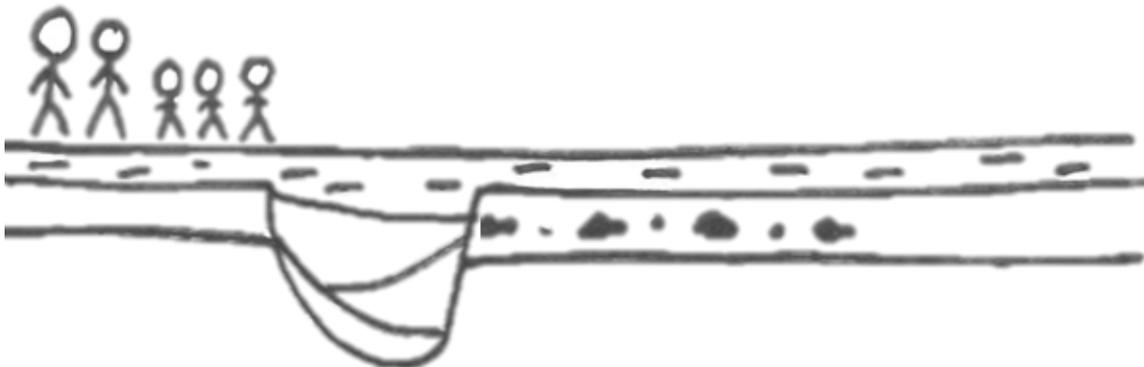
5. Iron age people create field, with ditches to keep animals in.



6. The ditch gets filled in with rubbish and soil washing in.



7. The ditch gradually fills up. A flood may wash a large amount of soil over an area very quickly, covering the ground entirely.



8. Soon afterwards in the Roman period, the land is resettled.

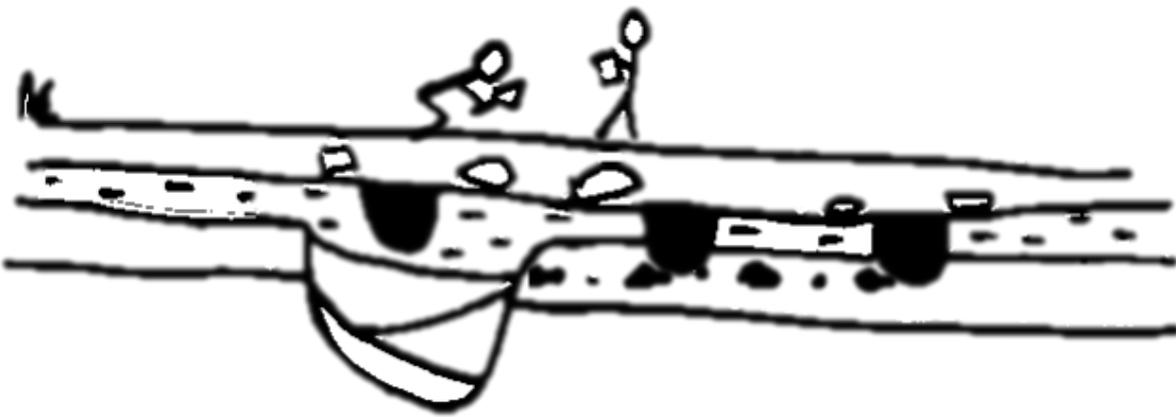


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9. They build a house; the foundations cutting into the ground. Objects and rubbish gets left on the ground.



10. Eventually the house is abandoned, and the remains are again covered over.

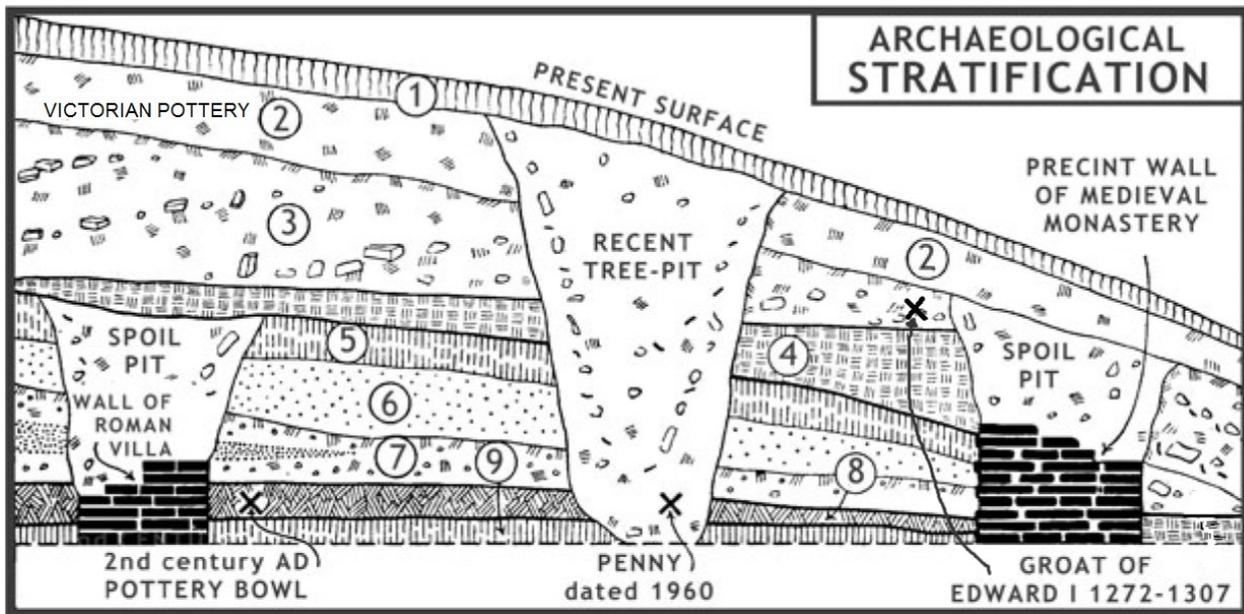


11. Archaeologists then excavate the area, as they dig they reveal each layer and each thing that has happened as they go down.

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Task 1

Now it's your turn! Have a look at the image below, and then answer the questions



©: adapted from Wheeler (1954), *Archaeology from the Earth*, Oxford

Terminus post quem means "limit after which", is the earliest time an event may have happened. Terminus ante quem means "limit before which") is the latest time an event may have happened.

1. What is the earliest date layer 8 could have been formed?
2. Which layers were formed during the Roman period? (The Roman period began in Britain in the mid-1st century AD)
3. Which layers were formed after the Roman period but before the Victorian period?
4. What date must the monastery have been built after?
5. Why is the coin from 1960 found deeper under the ground than the Edward I coin?