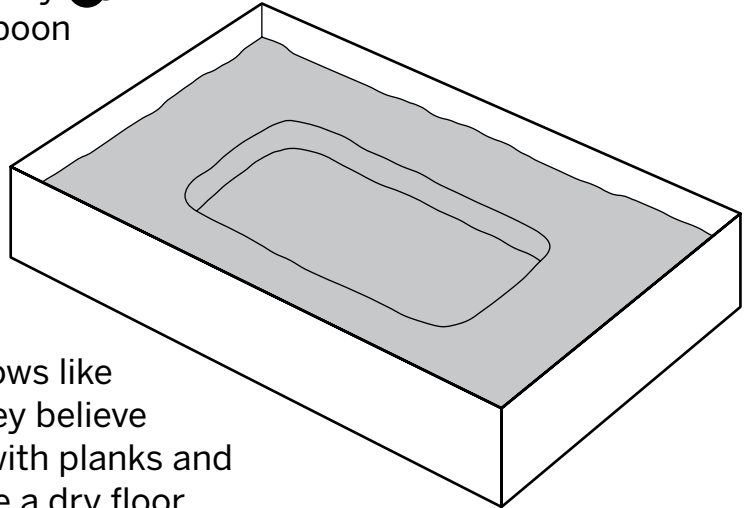


## The hollow under a house

1. Take a tray or bowl and fill it with dry sand.
2. Pour water into the sand until it is firm but not soggy.
3. Put your model house from activity **11A** on the sand. Make a mark with a spoon where the walls touch the sand.
4. Remove the house and inside the markings you have made dig out the sand with a spoon to a depth of about a centimetre.



Archaeologists have found hollows like this in Anglo-Saxon villages. They believe that the hollows were covered with planks and this gave the inside of the house a dry floor.

5. Lay lolly sticks across the hollow to make a wooden floor.
6. Put your house over the floor and you have made a model dwelling with a dry floor.
7. Why do you think the floor kept dry?

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8. Can you think of any other use for the space beneath the floor?

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 .....

9. Why do you think the hollows are almost all that is left of the houses today?

 .....

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# The hollow under a house

## Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

## Resources

Copies of the worksheet, tray, dry sand, jug or water, spoon, dish (to put sand removed from tray).

## Using the worksheet

You need the house from activity **11A** for this activity. Archaeologists detected the presence of some houses in a village by a hollow. At one time it was thought that the floor was sunken and the people went down into their house. Today many archaeologists believe that the hollow was covered with planks and this helped to keep the floor dry. As the floor was dry, it would also be less cold than an earth floor. This activity allows the students to recreate a house with a floor and hollow and answer a few questions about it.

## Answers

- The water in the soil could not reach the planks. Air under the planks would help to keep them dry.
- The hollow could be used as a cellar and objects could be stored in it.
- The rest of the materials such as wood rotted away. (Note there is also evidence of post holes which show the positions of posts that held up the walls. There is more about post holes in activity **2B** *The Romans in Britain Teacher's Resources* in this series).

## Younger students

The students may work in small groups or pairs. The students may lay the lolly sticks along the length of the hollow. It is thought that the planks were laid across the width of the hollow as they would bend much less with any weight placed on them. You may point this out to the students or suggest that they break the lolly sticks in half and lay them across the width to make a more accurate model.

## Outcomes

The students can:

- Follow instructions.
- Use simple materials safely.
- Suggest ideas to explain an archaeological find.

## Older students

The students can work on their own or in pairs. The students may lay the lolly sticks along the length of the hollow. It is thought that the planks were laid across the width of the hollow as they would bend much less with any weight placed on them. You may point this out to the students or ask them if it would be better if the planks were arranged across the width. Look for answers about the planks bending. Ask the students how they could make the model more authentic and look for answers suggesting that the lolly sticks are broken in half and laid across the width.

## Outcomes

The students can:

- Follow instructions.
- Discuss their model and make modifications.
- Suggest ideas to explain an archaeological find.