Pompeii wardrobe reveals coins and a child's necklace

LEVEL B1


Photo: David Valentine / Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word Pompeii?
2. Have you ever visited ancient ruins? Where and what did you see?
3. Which personal item would you keep safe if you had to leave home quickly?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

archaeologist
A scientist who studies past people and places by examining objects and sites.

eruption
An explosion from a volcano that sends out ash, gas and lava.

wardrobe
A tall cupboard used for storing clothes and personal items.

necklace
Jewellery worn around the neck.

charm
A small decorative piece on a bracelet or necklace.

coins
Flat, round money pieces made of metal.

restoration
Work done to repair and protect an old building or object.

ruins
The broken remains of a building or city from the past.

III. READING

Archaeologists have uncovered personal objects in the ruins of Pompeii, sealed since the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD79. The finds were tucked inside a wooden wardrobe. They were in a home on Via dell'Abbondanza, one of the city's busiest streets.

The items included tweezers, a small glass perfume bottle, an incense burner and a bronze lantern. There were also 38 bronze coins, cooking pots and a wooden box with lead weights. The most striking piece was a child's necklace, a crepundia. It had more than 20 small charms showing gods such as Bes and Mercury.

Archaeologists also found the skeletons of two mice in an amphora kept in a storage area. Gabriel Zuchtriegel, director of the Pompeii archaeological park, commented on the scene. He said the money and personal objects suggest the owners fled quickly.

The house has been linked to a person called Cornelius Maximus from old inscriptions. Its facade was first excavated in 1912. Rooms are now being studied as part of a wider restoration. Work also continues at the Villa of the Mysteries to study servants' daily life.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Perfume bottle and child's necklace among...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where were the objects discovered in Pompeii?
2. Which item was considered the most striking find?
3. How many bronze coins were found in the wardrobe?
4. What does Gabriel Zuchtriegel think the items left behind suggest?
5. Which other site is being excavated to study servants' daily life?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Why do discoveries like this matter to us today?
2. Which personal item would best tell your story to future people?
3. How should authorities protect ancient ruins with many visitors?
4. Would you like to visit Pompeii? Why or why not?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Present perfect vs past simple

Use present perfect (have/has + past participle) for a past action with a result now or no finished time: since/for/so far/this year. Use past simple for a finished past time: in 1912, last week, in AD79.

"Archaeologists **have uncovered** *personal objects in Pompeii."*

"The finds **were tucked** *inside a wooden wardrobe."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each gap with present perfect or past simple.

1. Since AD79, the objects (remain) ___ sealed. _____
2. In 1912, the facade (excavate) ___ for the first time. _____
3. So far, archaeologists (find) ___ a crepundia with 20+ charms. _____
4. Last week, a team (open) ___ a new trench. _____
5. Since the discovery, experts (analyse) ___ the wardrobe items. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach place and history terms students may not know (eruption, ruins, archaeologist, necklace, charm). Show a photo of Pompeii to set context.
- Reading: set a gist task first (what was found and where). Then scan for numbers and names (38 coins, Bes, Mercury, Zuchtriegel, Cornelius Maximus). Pair-check before whole-class feedback.
- Extension/differentiation: stronger students map the locations named (Via dell'Abbondanza, Villa of the Mysteries) and summarise what each adds to our picture of daily life.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Elicit concrete benefits such as learning about daily life and trade; ask for one example from the text.
2. Run it as a quick show-and-tell in pairs; push for a reason why the item represents them.
3. Board ideas (barriers, timed entry, clear paths) and have students weigh access versus protection.
4. Take a quick poll first, then ask for two reasons; invite a follow-up about what they would see.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write an 80-word museum label for the crepundia found in the Pompeii wardrobe.

Role-play: In pairs, act as a guide and a visitor at the house on Via dell'Abbondanza for a 2-minute tour.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Present perfect vs past simple

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where were the objects discovered in Pompeii?
   Inside a wooden wardrobe in a home on Via dell'Abbondanza.
2. Which item was considered the most striking find?
   A child's necklace called a crepundia with over 20 charms.
3. How many bronze coins were found in the wardrobe?
   38 bronze coins.
4. What does Gabriel Zuchtriegel think the items left behind suggest?
   That the owners fled the eruption quickly.
5. Which other site is being excavated to study servants' daily life?
   The Villa of the Mysteries.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each gap with present perfect or past simple.

1. Since AD79, the objects ___ sealed. **have remained**
2. In 1912, the facade ___ for the first time. **was excavated**
3. So far, archaeologists ___ a crepundia with 20+ charms. **have found**
4. Last week, a team ___ a new trench. **opened**
5. Since the discovery, experts ___ the wardrobe items. **have analysed**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use present perfect (have/has + past participle) for a past action with a result now or no finished time: since/for/so far/this year. Use past simple for a finished past time: in 1912, last week, in AD79.

"Archaeologists **have uncovered** *personal objects in Pompeii."*

"The finds **were tucked** *inside a wooden wardrobe."*