This second activity in the *How do archaeologists know where to look?'* section follows on from the first, but can also be used as a stand-alone activity.

The activity introduces the children to the language roots of the place names that still are in use all around them. The children will discover how, like the historic texts, these names also provide clues to archaeologists that can be used to locate places from the past that are no longer visible above ground.

The tasks will also encourage the children to be observant of the area around them and how things that they encounter every day can offer glimpses into how people lived in the past.

RESOURCES PROVIDED

- Early Medieval Place Names

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Map of the area around your school with names clearly marks – eg parishes, villages, towns, parks and streets

METHOD

1 INTRODUCTION

Invite the children to share the names of places where they live and of any other place names they know, such as where cousins and grandparents live. Write these names up on the board.

2 ACTION

Ask the children to try to find connections between the names – they should look for any common words, beginnings or endings. Which ones sound the same? (you can do this verbally, on the board, or children can make their own lists in their notebooks)

3 EXPLANATION

1. Explain that as different groups settled in Britain – Picts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings – they named the places where they settled in their own language.

2. Many of these names are still used today and so provide clues to archaeologists of where these settlements once were, even if there is no longer anything historic visible above the ground.

3. Rhynie is a great example of this. There is no historic text referring to Rhynie and no evidence of a Pictish settlement above ground, however archaeologists suspected there was once an important settlement there because the place name, Rhynie, is derived from the early Pictish word *rīg*, which means 'king'.

4. Like Rhynie, other place names offer clues to the what was there in the past.

4 ACTION

1. Explain that many historic place names were descriptions of the landscape and the people that lived there.

2. Hand out the <u>Early Medieval</u> place names sheet.

3. Ask the children to read through the sheet and to find the two royal residences used as examples – Rendlesham and Sutton Courtenay. Discuss their meanings and any other questions the children may have.

4. Work together to compare the sheet with the list of place names made at the beginning of the activity. They should underline any <u>Early Medieval</u> place names among those that they listed.

5. For each <u>Early Medieval</u> place name, they should try to work out the original meaning (they could write these out or this could be done verbally)

6. If they quickly exhaust the list from the board, you could hand out the maps of the local area and ask if they can find any other <u>Early Medieval</u> place names.

OPTIONAL OPEN-ENDED ACTIVITIES

Have a go at making up your own place names:

1. You can try using the <u>Early Medieval</u> place name terms or alternatively, use modern words following the <u>Early Medieval</u> patterns and combinations.

2. Think of descriptive words that identify your home, is it high up on a hill, or down low in a valley? Red brick or covered in ivy?

3. What landscape features are nearby? A field, some trees, a farm, a river?

4. Is it near something that would enable you to use 'north', 'south', 'east' or 'west'?

5. Include your name (as the leader of the settlement) or your family name, or even that of your pet!

EARLY MEDIEVAL PLACE NAMES

Place name	Meaning	Examples	Origin
Places named after important men (the word in front is the name of the local leader)			
-----ing / ings	'people'	Hastings = Haesta's people Worthing = Wurth's people	Anglo-Saxon
-----ham	'homestead' or 'settlement'	Rendlesham = Rendil's homestead Nottingham = settlement of Snot's people (the 's' has since been dropped).	Anglo-Saxon
-----field	'open land'	Wokefield = Wocc's open land	Anglo-Saxon
Places named after features of the landscape			
---ford	'a place to cross a river'	Oxford = river crossing for oxen Hertford = river crossing for stags	Anglo-Saxon
---worth / worthy	'enclosure'	Hinxworth = horse enclosure Turnworth = enclosure of thorn trees	Anglo-Saxon
---ton	'farmstead' or 'village'	Northampton = north village Littlehampton = little village	Anglo-Saxon
---ley / lee / leigh	'wood' or 'clearing in wood'	Oakley = oak wood, Ashley = ash wood Thornley = thorn wood	Anglo-Saxon
---wick / wich	'premises' or 'farm'	Woolwich = sheep farm Butterwick. = dairy farm	Anglo-Saxon
Aber / Abhir---	'rivermouth'	Aberdeen = the mouth of the river Dee	Pictish
Pert---	'copse of woodland'	Perthshire = place by a thicket	Pictish
Dal / Dol---	'meadow'	Dallas = meadow dwelling	Pictish
Places that begin with adjectives (descriptive words to describe the location)			
Little---	'small'	Littleworth = small enclosure	Anglo-Saxon
High---	'high (ground)'	Highworth = high enclosure	Anglo-Saxon
Nor---	'north'	Norton = north village	Anglo-Saxon
Su---	'south'	Sutton = south village (like Sutton Courtenay)	Anglo-Saxon
Wes---	'west'	Weston = west village	Anglo-Saxon
Es---	'east'	Eston = east village	Anglo-Saxon