Architectural Hats

Here's a bright idea that could be tried out in any classroom to give history a real third dimension.

This project was undertaken as part of my teaching practice at The Central Foundation Girl's School in Bow. The hats seen here were made by Year Nine pupils, but the project could easily be adapted to suit any age group.

We started by looking at hat designs through the ages and then listed famous buildings and parts of buildings, which we might use as inspiration for our hat designs.

The pupils then went off to the library to look at books of architecture and proceeded to record and make studies of buildings or aspects of architectural form which interested them.

I did not limit them to architecture from any particular time or place, but I am sure that excellent results could be obtained by limiting the research to local architecture, domestic or historical interest. These options have the added advantage that pupils can record directly from observation or take their own photographs rather than relying solely on books.

After the research had been completed, we returned to the classroom to make two basic hats using rolls of old wallpaper. We each made a conical hat and a pillbox hat, variations and combinations of which were to form the basis of their final hat designs.

The diagrams below show how these were made.

conical hat

pillbox hat

The next stage of the project involved using their pages of architectural research on design a hat and then to translate that two-dimensional design into a three-dimensional form to fit their head. At this stage I imposed certain constraints, they were to use paper not card, and I limited them to black, white, grey and brown shades of paper. They used a quick drying glue like Pritt Stick or tape such as sellotape or gummed brown paper tape to hold the various elements of their hat together.

I encouraged the pupils to make a small scale test model of their design to start with, so that they could experiment with how to achieve the form they required without wasting large sheets of good paper. I also stressed that any gluing and taping should be hidden from view on the finished hat.

When they had completed their hats, they mounted all their research and design ideas onto a large sheet of paper, including a diagram and a written account of how their hat had been constructed. Finally they all made a hat stand from corrugated cardboard boxes to display their hats on.

We were all very pleased with the results. The pupils had copied very well with solving the often difficult problems they encountered whilst translating their two-dimensional designs into three-dimensional forms. They also learnt a lot about the capabilities and limitations of paper as a construction material.

I intend to use this project in my new school and hope that you may find all or parts of it useful in your classroom activities.

Karen Dadd
Winsted High School, Redbridge, London E1.
Framing Opinions

In April English Heritage launched its Framing Opinions campaign to protect our heritage of traditional windows and doors. Here the campaign’s director, John Fidler, explains its objectives and suggests opportunities for schools involvement.

English Heritage has become increasingly concerned about the long-term insidious decline in the appearance of historic towns and villages brought about by well-intentioned but unwittingly misguided home improvements made by residents. Chief amongst the agents of erosion are replacement windows and doors. Large numbers of these so-called ‘improvements’ are inappropriate designed and installed and detrimentally affect the special architectural or historic interest of older buildings – diluting the local vernacular character of historic areas and making one place look very much like everywhere else. Perhaps as many as four million windows and doors are at risk.

Homeowners are changing their windows because they believe old ones are rotten and beyond economic repair; they want to reduce heating bills and draughts; they want to reduce noise; they believe new replacements in plastic or metal are maintenance free, and they find old ones difficult to clean. However decay and maintenance issues concerning their homes are little understood and access to genuine expertise on period products and services is limited. Most home improvements do not need planning permission and published guidance is in short supply. How is the problem manifested? Traditional timber windows and doors have a multitude of subtle craft and design details that encompass the changing taste and technology of building through history. Architectural historians date a house by these features and from their mated development over time. We also date buildings by where the window sits in the wall. Early eighteenth century London fire regulations required timber sashes to be moved back from the face of an elevation into a brick reveal. In the provinces this functional requirement was later copied as the latest fashion. Now however, the country is being homogenised by standardized plastic and metal component systems that barely pay lip service to local detailing or the subtleties of history. English Heritage’s campaign seeks to counter this trend by raising awareness of the issue and by encouraging local authorities and others to educate homeowners, designers, specifiers, manufacturers and builders as to the best ways to retain the old features and enhance their performance. Replacement windows rarely increase the value of property if they do not in some way recreate the special character of the building.

Inappropriate Changes

There are many ways that the Framing Opinions campaign can provide opportunities for the teacher in schools. Environmental studies could carry out local assessment of change in historic areas (windows are the eyes on the building’s face) and debate private rights versus public interests in the planning context. Historical studies can plot the development of windows and doors through time and differentiate between pole(architecturally designed) work and the vernacular (craft) in concept and detailing. Teachers wanting to illustrate mutual craftsmanship could tour local carpenters or joiners workshops, or ask local architects or the planning department’s conservation officer to speak on the issue. At English Heritage, we have produced a reading list to stimulate ideas and focus interest. It is available from your office price £2.50 inc VAT post and packing.

The Framing Opinions campaign offers challenges and benefits to everyone. Schools can easily become involved as the teaching resource is universally available in every street. Windows of opportunity so to speak.

John Fidler
Director, Framing Opinions campaign, English Heritage Room 525, Keynes House, 429 Oxford Street, London W1R 2HD

First Impressions

One good way of beginning a visit to any historic site or monument is to get children to write the first three or four words that come to their mind up to four different locations. Be careful to choose different types of locations – for example, outside the monument, inside a room, on top of a wall walk, outside in an open area. There should be a good cross-section of dark, light, open/closed locations and so on.

Then move straight on to other activities without discussing the words. At the end of the day children should go back to the same places – are their feelings the same after studying the monument? How have they changed? Back at school the words can be used as the basis of creative work, especially if the children have been able to photograph their locations.

I often use this as an introduction for INSET courses on site. Here is one poem written by Head of Humanities Mariyn Whitlock that was stimulated by doing this activity at Sherborne Old Castle. The four locations and words were:

Outside gatehouse: towering, broken, sprawling;Inside gatehouse: dark, claustrophobic, damp, oppressive
Facing the keep: open, light, spacious, revealed
In the north range: grand, pomp, spectacular, heavy with history

Sherborne Castle

The treacherous of a ditched leys,发病, charred by ancient storm. Swells up the tidal races of time and left to decompose and tum these fossil Who into the sky.

The light tipped mouth a gale giving entrance; the teeth long pulled And, O men, let Start in the keep, and down the stairs, claustrophobic And swimming of spit and lost sand.


I stand amidst an ancient carnage Washed clear of blood by summer rain And winter frost. A grand, dead testimony. Short bark of home is witness to the Pump of flash which filled it once.

A great whale of a thing, hurled by An ancient storm. Swells up the tidal races of time.

M J Whitlock
Head of Humanities
The Wye Valley School
Wye

Contrasts in Character

A row of eight Victorian semi-detached house in the Alexandra Grange Estate conservation area, Bromley, London. On the left hand side – double glazed, whitelacquered, iron-framed windows; on the right – traditional timber sashes with timber framing and glazing bars. On the left, the windows are on the ground floor and have been removed; in the centre, the windows are on the ground floor and are in situ; on the right, the windows are on the first floor and are in situ.

In the north range: grand, pomp, spectacular, heavy with history

English Heritage Room 525, Keynes House, 429 Oxford Street, London W1R 2HD
Archaeology and Education Series

1. Southdown Town Walls £14.50
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9. The Iron Age £2.50
10. Alderstock; The Other Side of the Tracks £4.00

Available from the Archaeology Department, University of Southampton, Southampton, S09 5NH. Please make cheques payable to University of Southampton. Post and package £1 per copy (postage for multiple copies).

This series is for use by teachers in the classroom. Do not put off by the word ‘archaeology’ or the fact that these books are focused on sites in the south of England. Archaeologists have defined in the series as people who examine the physical remains of the past, whether these remains are yesterday’s breakfast or Lindow man’s hat, and the authors adopt an enquiry approach which can be applied as productively to the hillfort or housing eminence as each garden as it was to the ones in theirs.

The first thing that strikes me about this series is that is it teaching. And the all the material has been tried and tested in the classroom. All the books concentrate on the archaeologists’ approach of examining the physical evidence, offering the information it yields for possible explanations, bias, and conclusions, testing it against hypothesis, and checking it against other types of evidence, or known patterns where they exist. It is an approach that spans subject disciplines effortlessly. Key Stage One does not get much of a look-in, but the rest cover a variety of ages, and each one can be easily adapted to other levels. Most represent an absolute pedagogy for teachers looking for ideas for GCSE coursework.

The Shirley Park Project, for instance, looks at the immediate residential re nonexistent of the school doing the project, asking what function did it change over the years and what it looked like before. The book follows a scheme of work, detailing key ideas, contents, activities, resources and time scale. Other forms of study are drawn to the study — maps, Kelly’s, and so on — for a firm and professional contact with the community. The pitfalls and benefits for延续ing for follow-up are suggested. Teachers thinking about doing a similar project in their immediate environment will find that the leg work has been done for them.

The last two, The First Farmers, The Iron Age, and Dead Men Don’t Tell Tales (A Grayeveyard Project) are mine of information and are a good read in their own right, as well as containing original ideas for teaching strategies. It is in this stamp of knowing what teachers are going to find useful that characterises the series — that and the easy to digest style: hand on heart, could you resist a series that exhorts you to “put a little death and damnation into your teaching”?

Five side plates connected with the series are also available from the above address.

Liz Hollinhead, Regional Education Officer, Midlands, English Heritage

Pot Luck

Cooking and recipes from the past
Jo Lawrie
ISBN 0-7136-3321-2 £7.95
Here is a reference book for the seven to eleven-year-old which complements the adult English Heritage ‘Food & Cooking in British series.
It covers cooking from prehistoric times up to 1900 in six chronological sections: Prehistoric Times, The Romans, The Middle Ages, Tudors & Stuarts, The Georgians and the Victorians.
For the primary school teacher who is looking for methods of fulfilling the National Curriculum History Attainment Target 1 ‘Knowing about and understanding change and continuity in the past’, food and cookery is an ideal theme and the recipes and background information ‘Pot Luck’ provide a wealth of material for both general and specific historical study.
Jo Lawrie uses original written sources such as the ‘Boke of Curtisaye’ for medieval advice on food-manners, and Parson Woodforde’s Diary for an example of an indigent eighteenth century diet. There are also contemporary illustrations, which include eighteenth

Educational Catalogue Update

RESOURCES

English Heritage Education Service

EDUCATION ON SITE

These books suggest educational strategies for teachers to use the historic environment as part of programmes of study across many curriculum subjects. Each is packed with practical exercises and ideas to aid understanding for children at all Key Stages.

A Teacher’s Guide to Maths and the Historic Environment
Tim Copeland
Maths is not just for the classroom. It is all around us in both the natural world and in the structures people have created. This book explores the unique problem-solving aspects of mathematical processes when applied to the historic environment. It will help teachers prepare to get the maximum from a visit to historic house or building. All Key Stages. 56 pages. £4.99. ISBN 1-85704-329-0 Price £3.95
Quote Code: KP 19490 Publication December 1991

A Teacher’s Guide to Science and the Historic Environment
Jane Powell and Nick Buxton
Children love to explore, to investigate and to question. What better or more exciting vehicle for encouraging these enquiries than the historic environment, where all human development and progress are encapsulated in one form or another? This book explores the links between history and science, and will help teachers spot new opportunities to bring science alive. All Key Stages. 36 pages. £4.99. ISBN 1-85704-207-9 Price £3.95
Quote Code: KP 11942 Publication December 1991

Lullingstone Roman Villa

Lullingstone in Kent is a classic example of a villa site in Britain, with fine mosaics. The Handbook is relevant to the study of Roman Britain, the analysis of archaeological evidence and to schools studying history and tourism.

Key Stages 2 and 3. GCSE. 36 pages. £4.99. ISBN 1-85704-319-3 Price £2.95
Quote Code: XP 10477

Handbooks for Teachers

Teaching on Site: History and Geography

This video shows teachers preparing ideas and materials and sorting out the practicalities for a ‘pupils’ visit to the historic site of Lullingstone Roman Villa. The video shows the school visit to Lullingstone and the classroom as well as an evaluation of the project with an Advisory Teacher.

In-service training: Initial teacher training; Key Stages 2 and 3. 22 minutes. £9.95
Quote Code: XP 11943

Lullingstone Roman Villa

Lullingstone in Kent is a classic example of a villa site in Britain, with fine mosaics. The Handbook is relevant to the study of Roman Britain, the analysis of archaeological evidence and to schools studying history and tourism.

Key Stages 2 and 3. GCSE. 36 pages. £4.99. ISBN 1-85704-319-3 Price £2.95
Quote Code: XP 11942

Handbooks for Teachers

A Teacher’s Guide to Using Listed Buildings
Crapan Keith
About 4400 historic buildings of all shapes and sizes are protected through listing. They are an easily and cheaply available local source, with a wealth of interesting and important issues to be tackled. This book explains what listing is and how teachers can make the best educational use of listed buildings. All Key Stages. 36 pages. £4.99. ISBN 1-85704-207-9 Price £3.95
Quote Code: KP 11942
Publication December 1991

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