



The Extraordinary Gertrude Bell

Classroom activity 7

KS2



7

GERTRUDE BELL EXHIBITION FOLLOW UP



I have been spending the afternoon today trying to learn a little about arranging a museum. Oh dear! There's such a lot to be learnt that my heart sinks. However, I know what I shall do. I shall concentrate on exhibiting the best objects properly and get the others done little by little
(Gertrude Bell, [Letters](#)).

As soon as the new state of Iraq was created at the end of World War I, Gertrude Bell was appointed Honorary Director of Antiquities by King Faisal. In her new role, she drafted the first antiquities legislation for Iraq, supervised all the foreign archaeological missions in the country and opened the Iraq Museum, filling it with the collections that were flowing at the time from the excavations of the Assyrian, Babylonian and Sumerian sites. She remained director of the museum until her death. The museum is the ultimate testament to the love of Gertrude Bell for archaeology and to her pivotal role in the protection of cultural heritage in the early years of the Iraqi nation.

RESEARCH TOOLS:

- Discover Gertrude Bell Research website: [click here](#).
- Read Gertrude Bell Comics: [click here](#).
- Watch the introductory video: [click here](#).

Discover more about Gertrude Bell's role as the director of the Iraq Museum:

- Read Gertrude's letters here: [click here](#).
 - Discussing the draft of the Antiquities Law, 20/07/1922

- Explaining how negotiations were carried out in order to divide artefacts found during excavations between the Iraqi state and the foreign missions that worked in the country, 6/03/1924
- Recalling how she got the building that she wanted to host the museum, 3/3/1926
- Watch Gertrude Bell with the archaeologist Leonard Wooley at Ur: [click here](#).
- Watch Gertrude Bell and other Europeans including Lionel Smith dividing archaeological finds after excavations: [click here](#).

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: GERTRUDE BELL EXHIBITION

Encourage your pupils to use creatively the Gertrude Bell archive and set up a Museum Junior Board in school. The MJB will be composed by pupils with the aim to set up a small exhibition in school on a topic of their choice, related to the life and adventures of Gertrude Bell.

Encourage your pupils to research on their topic and then to draw a story line. The storyline will be the backbone of your exhibition. Small groups of students could be in charge of different elements of the exhibition: the objects to display, texts, images, labels, music and videos. Ideas for topics for a school exhibition could be:

- Memories from the First World War
- The history of Red Barns
- Exploring the desert
- People of the world

LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM:

This activity can be used as a cross-curricular resource, for literacy (recounts, information texts), history (local history study), geography (to locate Iraq on map of world, desert, rivers, cities, aspects of life in modern Iraq), art (to investigate Islamic art, to create own artwork based on Islamic examples).