

Planning a museum visit: ideas for teachers

There's so much to see and do at Portsmouth Museums and helpful links to all areas of the KS1 and KS2 Curriculum. A well-planned museum visit is a great way to inspire, engage and motivate your pupils and provides enjoyable opportunities to enrich and build on their school-based learning.

If you have time we recommend that you pop into our museums before organising a school trip. This will help you to plan a really successful visit and ensure that your pupils get the most out of their time with us. For useful advice or to discuss your ideas please contact our Learning Officer, Tracy Teasdale via tracy.teasdale@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or 02392 834752.

We know teachers are busy, so we have put together some general ideas for self-directed activities to get you started:

Young collectors

Tell your pupils that you want to start a school museum and that you have been tasked with collecting important items for possible display. Individually or in groups, challenge pupils to find three to five objects that can be sorted into set categories. Whether birds, beasts or bugs, objects from different countries or essential kitchen equipment from different decades there's always plenty to choose from.

Museum A-Z or star attractions

Why not ask pupils to choose and note the things they liked most during their visit? In groups, pupils might try to create an A-Z of the most interesting things to see at the museum. They don't have to cover all the letters of alphabet but maybe there is a prize for those that do. As individuals pupils could choose their three 'star attractions'. They could talk about them to the rest of the class or maybe write a short review for Trip Advisor.

Then and now

Why not get pupils to make a list or table of similarities and differences between things from the past and the present day. Pupils could compare what Portsmouth was like as a place to live a hundred years ago with how it is today. Or maybe ask pupils to think about how houses and homes have changed over time – identifying things that are different and things that are still more or less the same.

Timelines

Portsmouth's history is packed with interesting and sometimes world-famous events. It can be a challenge to remember everything and put things in a sensible order. Whether focused on a particular period of time or ranging more freely, why not ask pupils to find out and record key events from Portsmouth's history. They could then put them into chronological order. They could focus on a topic inspired by the particular museum or try something more ambitious, like creating a timeline for Portsmouth from its earliest beginnings to the present day.

Fact finders or class quiz

However many times you return to our museums there's always something new to learn. Why not ask pupils to seek out and write down a set number of 'new facts' that they learn during their visit. On your return to school they could teach them to other pupils. Alternatively small groups of pupils could find out facts to create a museum multiple choice or true/false quiz, making sure that they get their facts right. No fake news stories here!

Who's who?

Some of history's most well-known figures were born, lived or spent time in Portsmouth. Why not ask pupils to create a 'who's who' from local history? As they research key figures pupils can collect important dates, locations, events and contributions for well-known and lesser known figures. Individually or in groups, pupils could talk about their favourite person and try to persuade their classmates to vote for their top choice in a poll of Portsmouth's 'greatest figures'.

101 inventions that changed the world – or Portsmouth

Maybe 101 is a bit ambitious, but Portsmouth Museums is home to a wide range of technological innovations and ‘inventions’ ranging from everyday domestic appliances to amphibious landing craft. Large or small, everything has a story to tell. Why not ask pupils to choose those ‘things’ that they believe had the biggest impact on people’s lives. Pupils could write about their choices or try to persuade their peers that they should be included in a newly created Portsmouth Technology Museum.

Observational drawing and design ideas

With so many fascinating objects, exhibitions, galleries and displays, there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their observational drawing skills. Offering a rich source of inspiration for art and design projects or a quiet space in which to make close studies of the natural world, there is something to interest everyone.

Creative writing, drama and role play

Visiting Portsmouth Museums offers fantastic opportunities to fire up pupils’ imagination, build their vocabulary, and teach them fascinating and surprising facts. The lives of everyday or famous people from Portsmouth’s history can be used as a prompt for writing or as a springboard into drama. Why not ask pupils to research and write or role play as: one of Charles Dickens’ servants, a soldier or civilian at the time of the D-Day landings, a member of Henry VIII’s court watching the Mary Rose from Southsea Castle, a child on holiday in Southsea in the 1950s, or a Victorian family moving into their new home.

Workshops

In addition to welcoming self-directed school visits, we also run educational workshops throughout the year for pupils in KS1 and KS2. Popular workshops at Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery include the *Talking Pictures* workshop or CPD session and the *Toys, Games and Pastimes* workshop. At The D-Day Story museum we run a *Life in Second World War Britain* workshop. For details, prices and booking information, please see the museum websites or contact our admin team via mvs@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Wonder Boxes

Why not borrow one of our fabulous Wonder Boxes. They're the perfect stimulus for creative work across the curriculum, including science, art and design, literacy and history. Bring a little awe and wonder into your classroom with bird, mammal, amphibian and reptile specimens or skulls and skeletons. Or bring the past to life with high quality model dinosaurs and original and replica artefacts illustrating life in Ancient Egypt.

For a catalogue listing all of the Wonder Boxes currently available, booking information and terms & conditions, please see our website or contact our admin team via mvs@portsmouthcc.gov.uk