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CFE Levels 2, 3 and 4 (Ages 8-14)

Responding creatively to history

**Cross-curricular ideas for
investigating the past**

Resource created by Scottish Book Trust

CREATIVE

LAND

SCOT

About this resource

This resource features activities which will help your pupils produce creative texts in response to their investigation of historical topics. Feel free to adapt the activities as you see fit!

Book list

For some tasks, you'll need to have a few images from historical books to hand. There is a great selection of illustrated children's history books out there – the following list features some of the best:

www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/9-non-fiction-books-about-history-8-11

Activities

Use images to inspire a comic strip

Exa 2-03a, Eng 2-31a

Ask your pupils to find an image in one of the books from the above list which shows a character in danger: there are plenty to choose from, from people about to have their heads chopped off to soldiers retreating from enemies. You may wish to steer them clear of images depicting famous figures, unless you are happy for them to deviate from historical fact in their comic strips!

Tell them they are going to write a short comic strip telling the story of what happens next. Ask them to think about the following questions:

- Can the character save themselves, or will they need someone to come in and save the day for them?
- Are they out of danger, or are there more obstacles and surprises waiting for them as they try to make their escape?

Build a castle

Tch 2-12a, Tch 2-14a

This BBC resource helps you to teach pupils about the construction of motte and bailey castles – they will get a chance to choose the ideal site for a castle before building their own: bit.ly/BuildMotteBaileyCastle! There are also suggestions for follow up activities involving problem solving and functional writing.

You can also show the pupils this fascinating BBC series about a project to build a castle using 13th century building methods and materials:

bit.ly/BuildCastleBBC

Persuasive writing

Lit 3-29a, Eng 3-27a, Lit 3-14a

Ask your pupils to go through some of the books from the list on page 1 and find a historical figure who captures their interest. Allow them to spend some time researching the person's life, finding out more interesting facts.

After this, tell your pupils to imagine that a magazine is planning to compile a list of the most fascinating figures in history. The target audience of the magazine is children of the same age as your pupils. Their task is to write a letter to the editor of the magazine, persuading them that their historical figure deserves a place on the list.

There is some useful information on historical figures available at the History Channel's website: www.history.co.uk/biographies

The BBC also has some helpful biographies:
www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/

Informative writing

Lit 3-28a

Ask your pupils to imagine that they are historians hundreds of years from now, and that they are writing a history book about the 21st century aimed at readers their own age. Ask them to think of an interesting topic (for example, technology, transport, entertainment or politics) and ask them to write a short section of the book.

The writing will need to be interesting and entertaining! Ask your pupils to refer to some of the books on the list on page 1. These books present information in different ways: top ten lists of facts, cartoons, diaries and other primary sources like recipes and law books. You could ask your pupils to work in groups, each coming up with different ways to present the information they have found out.

What does the 21st century mean to you?

Lit 3-14a and Lit 3-15a (if research and note taking are involved), Lit 3-25a

This activity may provide an effective follow up to the previous one.

Ask your pupils to consider the following statements:

- The 21st century has been a time of innovation.
- The 21st century has been a time of conflict.
- The 21st century has been a time of freedom.

Ask them to come up with a few 21st century events to support each statement. For instance, the first statement could be supported by citing the release of the Iphone and electric cars.

Ask your pupils to choose one of the statements (or to come up with others). Ask them to create a digital slideshow with images and text. The

slideshow should communicate their arguments and evidence in support of their chosen statement.

Create a news broadcast

Lit 3-14a, Lit 3-03a, Lit 3-09a

Split pupils into teams of five and ask them to create a news broadcast covering a given event in history. This video will show you how a teacher used this activity to cover the death of Henry VIII's wives:

bit.ly/HenryVIIInews. The teacher had some great ideas for assigning roles and modelling the task!

Create a class timeline of a historical period

Lit 3-14a and Lit 3-15a (research and note taking), Lit 3-25a

In this activity pupils will chart landmark events from a time period chosen by you.

Split pupils into groups, and tell them that they will be investigating your chosen historical era. This activity usually works most effectively if you choose a relatively recent time period (for example, Victorian or 20th century Britain). Assign each group a few different areas of research (for example, laws, economy, industry, military conflicts, sporting achievements). Ask them to find out about some landmark events in these areas.

Create a timeline wall display by sticking up pieces of A3 paper alongside each other in landscape orientation. Draw a line horizontally across the middle of all the conjoined pieces of paper to represent a timeline. Now, ask your pupils to create an informative document to stick on the timeline for each event they have found out about. The document could be a leaflet, poster, news report, poem or any other suitable text.

Stage a mock battle

Why not get your pupils to stage a mock battle from history? Here's a good example from the TES website: bit.ly/MockBat

It may be easier to stage a battle from a more modern era, as accounts of battles occurring before the 17th century are less detailed and credible.

There are a lot of different areas to think about and lots of potential for cross-curricular work:

- **Map making** (MTH 3-17c): each army would need a detailed map of the battle area. You can ask your pupils to produce a scale map of your chosen battleground.
- **Reporting** (Eng 3-27a, Lit 3-28a): throughout history battles have been documented by eyewitnesses. You can assign the role of war correspondent to some pupils.
- **Health and wellbeing** (HWB 3-17a): depending on the time period in which your battle occurs, medical staff may have been at hand to help

the wounded. Use this as an opportunity for some pupils to be trained in first aid and step in to bandage the wounded.

- **Speech writing** (Eng 3-27a, Lit 3-29a): writing a rousing speech will be a great chance for your pupils to work on their persuasive writing skills.
- **Military tactics** (Lit 3-14a, Lit 3-25a): studying the strategies at play in a battle is a great way to develop your pupils' ability to understand and use information. You can get them to use the maps they have developed to document their tactics and positioning. Alternatively, you can use the History in Motion website to create an animated map – for more information about this site, have a look at the next activity.

Use History in Motion with the previous activities

(Tch 3-04a)

The History in Motion website is a fantastic free resource which helps you bring history alive and bring together content from around the web. Check out the website, which features a large range of short and helpful tutorial videos: www.historyinmotion.org/

The website can be used to chart historical journeys, document famous incidents, link to web content like articles, images and videos and much more.