

# Making the most of a museum or gallery visit

*This guide is applicable for all age groups.*

Museums and galleries are unique and powerful tools for supporting classroom learning. Visits can ignite imaginations, stimulate curiosity and deepen understanding in ways that are meaningful, relevant and are often remembered for a lifetime. They can be used to support all areas of the curriculum. Visits to museums and galleries are also great fun!

We've chosen a range of museums and galleries that have collections and/or events relating to the Age of Revolution, take a look at our venue and events section [ageofrevolution.org/events-venues/](http://ageofrevolution.org/events-venues/) to help you plan your visit.

Follow these tips to make the most of your visit:

1. Timing: will you use your visit to kick off a project and spark ideas, or to consolidate and deepen skills, knowledge and understanding in a topic already introduced or covered? It's not always possible to book your visit exactly when you want it, but timing your visit carefully can make all the difference to the experience and its impact on classroom learning.
2. Be prepared – students: learning during the visit will be more effective if students have already been introduced to some of the ideas, concepts and things on display that they will encounter. Having some idea of what they might see and do stimulates curiosity, builds anticipation and deepens engagement. Check the museum or gallery website for classroom activities, images or films to help prepare your students and familiarise them with your chosen focus – or ask them to research this themselves and present what they have found to the rest of the group. Use our activity ideas [ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/) to help students practice looking closely and finding out more from objects, paintings and other sources.
3. Be prepared – adults: if possible, take time to make a preliminary visit to the site. Knowing where the best stuff is and where the nearest toilets are can make the world of difference! Bring as many adults with you as you can and brief them carefully.
4. Getting there: leave plenty of time for your journey. Students – of all ages – can help with the planning.
5. During the visit: make the most of the staff's expertise and experience by booking a led session or workshop. Check the museum or gallery website to see whether they have 'trails'

or 'self-led' activities to support and focus exploration of the displays. Group leaders can help students to look closer and investigate further by:

- Asking students to photograph, sketch or make a note of the five most useful items they have found to support their chosen topic, or answer an enquiry question. They must be able to justify their choices.
    - Asking questions about the objects or artworks  
[ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/using-objects-artworks-sources-find-past/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/using-objects-artworks-sources-find-past/)
    - Asking students to personify an object or artwork  
[ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/objects-personified/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/objects-personified/) : if it could talk what would it say? How might it feel? What would it wish for?
  - Asking students to choose which object or artwork they would take back to school with them – what would they tell their peers about it?
6. Following up: how will you use your visit back in the classroom? Students could:
- Use their visit to stimulate ideas for creative work  
[ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/using-museum-collections-creative-starters/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/using-museum-collections-creative-starters/)  
Sketches, photos and notes collected during the visit will prompt memories and can be added to sketchbooks and incorporated into final works.
  - Use their visit to add to classroom investigations and enquiries into the past or artists and art genres. Sketches, photos and notes made during the visit can be added to 'evidence files', written work or presentations.
  - Use the guides [ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/) and activities [ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/) in this resource to consolidate, extend and apply learning from the visit.
7. Does the museum offer loans boxes? Museums often have themes boxes of objects, clothing and other items available to loan for a term or half-term.