

Introducing the Age of Revolution

Suitable for students of all aged 7-14

Begin by looking at the words – AGE and REVOLUTION. What do they mean?

(AGE: something to do with time passing, the past... REVOLUTION: meeting a challenge, having a great idea, making a change to people's lives)

So what might the Age of revolution be about..?

Have you ever..?

Ask the students to stand up or put their hand up if they have ever...

- Travelled on a train
 - Where did you go?
 - How long did it take?
 - How long might it have taken you to walk?
- Ridden a bike
- Been to the doctors for a vaccination (an injection or a 'jab' e.g. a flu jab)
- Had an operation in hospital
 - Could you feel anything?
 - Why not..?
- Used a computer/laptop/tablet/games console

- Sent a text or an email?
- Sent a letter?
- Been to school (girls only)
- Used something made by a machine in a factory
 - What was it?
 - How else could it be made?
- Felt like something was unfair
- Felt like something could be better
- Had a great idea!

Briefly discuss: what would life be like/what might happen if there were no...?

- Trains, cars or buses
- Computers
- Machines
- Vaccinations
- Schools for girls

Tell the students:

There was a time in Britain, when none of this existed. People decided it was time for a change. They tried to make life better.

Some of the changes made such a big difference to peoples' lives that it changed the way we live forever.

Big changes like this are called revolutions.

There were so many changes at this time that it became known as the Age of Revolution.



Revolutionary Enquiries

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The Age of Revolution

Tell students the Age of Revolution took place between 1775 and 1848. Talk about:

- What do we mean by that?
- How long ago was it? About 250 years ago
 - Do you know anyone who is that old?
 - How old is the oldest person you know..?
- How long did it last? About 70 years – one lifetime
- What might life have been like then?

Ask students to find the dates on the class timeline if you have one. Or you could make a simple timeline with some key and familiar periods and dates.

Talk about what happened before and after the Age of Revolution – using references they are familiar with e.g:

Before the Age of Revolution:

- Romans
- Ancient Egyptians
- Saxons
- Vikings
- Tudors

After the Age of Revolution:

- Aeroplanes
- World War I and World War II
- Radio



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- TV
- Neil Armstrong walked on the moon

Some of the Age of Revolution (1837 – 1848) coincided with the early Victorians.

Show students our What does revolution mean to me? animated film - ageofrevolution.org/animated-introduction-to-the-age-of-revolution/

This animation from World Ahoy is also useful - youtube.com/watch?v=leD7mYk_Wq0

Tell the students that the Age of Revolution was a time of extraordinary ideas, inventions, discoveries and change. Two of the most impactful and far-reaching were:

James Watt invented a steam engine that could be used to power machinery in factories, mills, mines and more. Show students the image of James Watt's Steam engine ageofrevolution.org/200-object/boulton-watt-engine/ . Challenge students to find out how it worked. Show them Penry Williams' painting South Wales Industrial Landscape ageofrevolution.org/200-object/south-wales-industrial-landscape/ to show how the landscape began to change as a result of increasing industrialisation and mechanisation.

People campaigned and protested – e.g. against things being unfair between rich and poor, men and women, for enslaved peoples etc. Our Revolutionary collection ageofrevolution.org/200-objects/ includes plenty of images to illustrate this – particularly in the Political revolution ageofrevolution.org/themes/political-revolution/ , Challenging law and order ageofrevolution.org/themes/social-and-cultural-revolution/challenging-law-and-order/ , and Challenging slavery themes ageofrevolution.org/themes/social-and-cultural-revolution/challenging-slavery-abolition-and-opposition/

Exploring further

Now they have been introduced to the Age of Revolution, use our Guides and Activities to help students explore the period further through different objects and themes.

Some useful activities to do next:

Looking closely at images - ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/looking-closely-images/ – try playing the I looked at the painting and I saw game with Penry Williams' painting South Wales Industrial Landscape ageofrevolution.org/200-object/south-wales-industrial-landscape/

Mystery objects - ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/mystery-objects/



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Label mix up - ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/label-mix-up/

Carry out one of our Historical enquiries - ageofrevolution.org/education/enquiries/ – or one of your own, using our Revolutionary collection ageofrevolution.org/200-objects/

Use our Revolutionary collection ageofrevolution.org/200-objects/ and Themes ageofrevolution.org/themes/ to inspire a Creative Challenge ageofrevolution.org/education/creative-challenges/

What does revolution mean to me..?

Students can also go on to relate revolution to their own lives, e.g:

- Name five things you couldn't you do without. Were any of them thought of in the Age of Revolution?
- Design something that would make your life better. Would it make other people's lives better too? Is it revolutionary..?