

BRISTOL OLD VIC HERITAGE

LOAN BOX TEACHER GUIDE

EDUCATION PACK



BRISTOL
ARCHIVES



University of
BRISTOL
Theatre Collection



HERITAGE
FUND

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to help increase the confidence, skills and enjoyment of teachers and other facilitators when using loan box objects.

It is accompanied by an Object Guide which details the historical context and significance of each object in the loan box.

ABOUT BRISTOL OLD VIC

Built in 1766 as a place where the people of Bristol could come together, Bristol Old Vic is the oldest continuously-working theatre in the English-speaking world.

It was built as a symbol of the pride we have in our city and what it can achieve. It remains a place of joy, discovery and adventure to this day.

WHY USE OBJECTS?

Objects get us talking, aiding reminiscence, stimulating conversation and triggering new ideas. They play a vital role in building 'museum confidence', giving us a chance to understand and interpret objects through personal experiences.

SKILLS MAP

Learning with objects can provide learners with opportunities to develop the following skills, supporting them to become confident and effective contributors.

- Problem solving
- Developing questions
- Justification
- Investigation
- Interpretation
- Expression
- Discovery
- Comparison
- Prediction
- Interactivity
- Observation
- Deduction
- Perception
- Sharing
- Description
- Enjoyment
- Empathy
- Listening
- Critical thinking
- Summarise

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR LOAN BOX OBJECTS

For Teachers

Before attempting to pick up an object consider the following:

Am I ready to handle the object?

Make sure your hands are clean and dry before touching the object. Remove jewellery such as rings, watches and necklaces which may scratch or chip objects.

Is my area ready for the object?

Do you have a clear, flat surface large enough for the object? Make sure there is no food or drink in the area where the objects will be handled. Never use pens or felt tips when handling the objects, if you need to make notes or drawings use a pencil.

How delicate is the object?

All objects are put at risk when being handled and therefore need to be treated delicately. It is often hard to tell by sight how delicate an object is. Always assume it is more fragile than it appears to be.

Are there any weak points?

Look for signs of cracking, historical repairs, unsafe joints, loose parts or delicate materials. Sometimes the most robust looking objects can disguise weak areas caused by decay or a bad repair.

Where am I going to move the object to?

If you are involved in moving objects around ALWAYS ensure that you have somewhere to place the object down. Never attempt to lift an object above chest height, even light objects. Work out the shortest and most direct route and prop doors in advance.

How should I pick the object up?

Hold the object close to your body at waist height using both hands to support its weight. (If an object is in parts, either transport it in its container, or carry each item separately taking two trips.) If the object has a handle do not use it!

What should I do when I am done with the object?

Ensure you put back the objects in their correct packaging at the end of each session. Store the loan box in a locked room when it is not in use.

What should I do if an object gets lost or damaged?

Report the loss or theft of an object to Bristol Old Vic immediately. If an object is damaged do not try to repair it, but do ensure all the pieces are retained in the plastic bags provided and the damage/ loss form filled in.

COVID-19 Object Handling Guidance

The loan box should only be used by the booked 'bubble'. If it is being used by multiple 'bubbles' within a school items should be quarantined for at least 72 hours between uses.

Adults and children should wash and dry their hands before and after handling the objects.

Boxes are quarantined at Bristol Old Vic between loans for 72 hours. We allow at least one week between loans for this purpose. Please don't clean objects yourself.

Bristol Old Vic should be contacted immediately at heritage@bristololdvic.org.uk should a Covid-19 outbreak occur in the school whilst the box is on site. In this case we would ask that the box is quarantined in school for 72 hours prior to it being returned to Bristol Old Vic (time for this should be allowed within the loan period).

FOR PUPILS

Make sure your hands are clean and dry

Handle objects whilst sitting at a table or on the floor

Only handle one object at a time

Use two hands to hold the object

Do not hold the object by handles or parts that stick out, as these can easily break off

Do not snatch objects from other people while they are handling them

Do not walk around with objects

Only use a pencil to write with while handling the objects

ACTIVITIES

HISTORY

Curriculum links:

- *Note connections, contrasts and trends over time and develop the appropriate use of historical terms.*
- *Address and devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance.*
- *Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information.*
- *Understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.*
- *Conduct a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066.*
- *Conduct a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.*

ACTIVITY 1 - GUESS WHAT!

This simple exercise supports learners' first steps towards confidence with objects.

Ask each learner to pick up and examine an object that belongs to them and think of 5 descriptive words to sum it up...

For example, this ticket is flat, rectangular, orange, crumpled and torn.

Build on this by asking learners to complete the same task with an unfamiliar object from the loan box.

For example, their pencil case might be round, colourful, sparkly, scruffy and heavy.

ACTIVITY 2 - ANNOTATED DRAWING

This exercise helps learners to develop their close observation skills and encourages them to focus on and record small details accurately.

1. Ask learners to select an object from the loan box.
2. Ask learners to carefully observe and draw their object, making sure that they capture it in as much detail as they can.
3. Once they are happy with their drawing ask them to annotate the different parts of their object.



ACTIVITY 3 – TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

This activity helps learners to develop their debating and critical thinking skills to establish information about each object.

Split your class into groups of 3 or 4 and give each group an object from the loan box.

1. Give each group time to discuss their object and come up with 2 true things about it and 1 false thing. They can use information from the Object Guide to help them. The more plausible the lie the better.
2. Each group should read out their statements to the rest of the class. The class has to decide which statement is the lie.

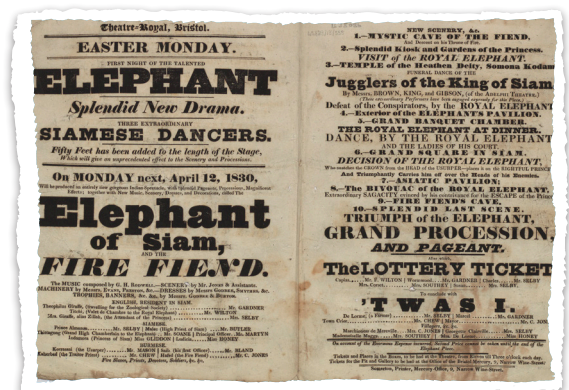
For example, for this playbill they could say:

Truth 1: In 1830 a real elephant appeared on our stage.

Truth 2: Audiences brought their tickets from the offices of a local newspaper, The Bristol Mercury.

Lie: The stage had to be extended by 100 feet to fit the elephant.

(It was actually only 50 feet!)



ACTIVITY 4 – WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW?

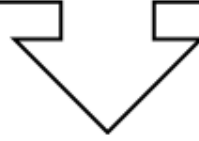
This activity helps develop learners' investigative skills.

Ask each learner to select an object from the loan box and use it to fill out the worksheet on the next page.

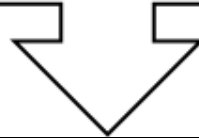
What can be learnt about an object just by looking at it? What questions cannot be answered by observation alone?

ACTIVITIES

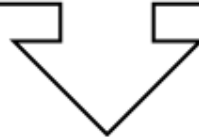
What can you guess from the object?



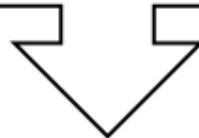
What does the object tell you for certain?



What does the object not tell you?



What would you like to find out about the object?



ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 5 - DESIGN YOUR OWN EXHIBITION

This activity gives learners the opportunity to develop their enquiry skills and practice writing informational text.

Ask each learner to choose an object from the loan box. They should examine the object and do some independent research into its history (the Object Guide will help learners with this).

Once they have done this they should design a beautiful exhibition label which explains what they have found out about their object. Their label should answer the following questions:

- What is your object called?
- What is it made of?
- What does it do?
- Who did it belong to?
- How old is it?

The best exhibition labels are short and sweet, so learners should try and answer these questions in no more than 200 words.

When each learner has completed their label, you will have an entire exhibition ready to display!



Photograph: Chelsey Cliff

ENGLISH AND DRAMA

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Years 3 & 4

- *Compose and rehearse sentences orally, progressively building a varied and rich vocabulary and an increasing range of sentence structures.*
- *Develop positive attitudes towards, and stamina for, writing by:*
 - *writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)*
 - *writing about real events*
 - *writing for different purposes*
- *Read aloud writing, to a group or the whole class, using appropriate intonation and controlling tone and volume so that meaning is clear.*

English Years 5 & 6

- *Identify the audience for and purpose of different pieces of writing.*
- *Note and develop initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary.*
- *Select appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning in narratives.*
- *Describe settings, characters and atmosphere and integrate dialogue to convey character and advance the action.*
- *Perform compositions, using appropriate intonation, volume, and movement so that meaning is clear.*

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1 - OBJECT REBRAND

Develop learners' creative thinking by turning object uses on their head...there are no wrong answers when you use your imagination!

Ask each learner to choose an object from the loan box and invent a brand-new use for it. What amazing uses can they think of?

For example: this clay pipe fragment could be a bubble blower or a teeny tiny megaphone.



ACTIVITY 2 - CONNECTED TALES

Help learners to get their creativity flowing and use objects to trigger their imagination with a group object story.

Divide the class into groups of 5 or 6 and give each learner an object from the loan box. The first object holder uses their object to begin the story. The story then passes to the next member of the group who weaves their object into the story being told. This story is passed around the group until each person has added their object to it.

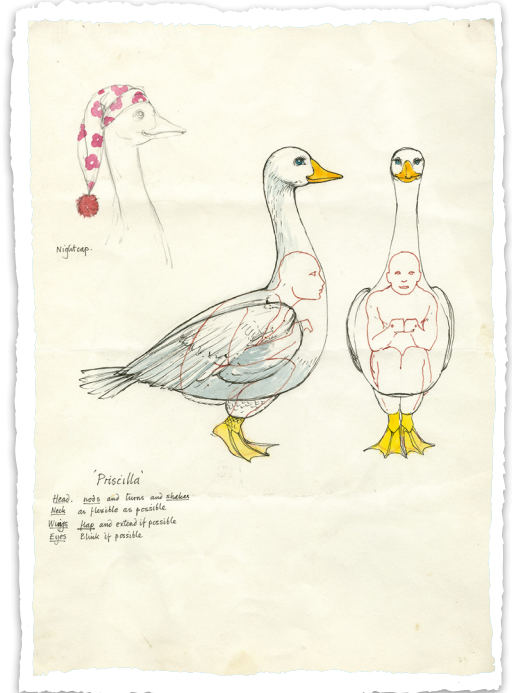
There are no wrong answers in this story, the more imaginative the better!

For example, the story could go like this:

Learner 1: This is a photo of a famous actor...

Learner 2: ... One day while putting on his costume...

Learner 3: ... the actor noticed a very large goose walking by. It almost looked human size....



ACTIVITY 3 - MIME TIME

This activity helps learners develop their performance skills.

Give one learner an object from the loan box, without the rest of the class seeing. Using mime and gesture the learner must help the rest of the class to guess the object.

Remember, the learner cannot speak or show the object to the class!

ACTIVITY 4 – THEFT AT THE THEATRE!

This activity is an ideal link to journalistic writing.

Bristol Old Vic has had a precious object stolen from its store. As journalists, learners must write an article which helps recover the stolen object.

Their article should include:

- Details of the theft: time, date, location.
- The object stolen: what it looks like, when it dates from, how big it is, a short history of the object etc.
- Reward: how much will the Bristol Old Vic pay for information.

BRISTOL OLD VIC TIMELINE

1500s

From 1532 there were visits to Bristol from private theatrical companies and some of the greatest actors of the day.

1729

A theatre was opened on Jacob's Wells Road, which replaced an earlier, smaller theatre in St. Augustine's back.

1764

Jacob's Wells Theatre had become so popular that its capacity was too small. A campaign was started to build a new theatre in Bristol. It was important that Bristol had a theatre worthy of its status as the leading provincial city in England – at this time second only in status to London. King Street, close to Queen's Square where the city's prosperous merchants lived, was selected as the location for the new theatre.

1764

The foundation stone of the Theatre was laid.

1765

The original Theatre was funded by a group of fifty wealthy citizens each of whom invested an initial £50 in the project (approximately £8150 in today's money), in exchange for which they received a silver ticket which entitled them to a "sight" of any show in the Theatre starting from the opening night. These silver tickets have no expiry date, so are still valid today!

1766

The Theatre opened with a capacity of more than 1,000. To gain admission, people had to enter through houses on King Street. They would go through passageways built underneath the houses that led into a courtyard where the Theatre stood.

1778

Despite various Puritan bodies - which were particularly strong in 18th century Bristol - continuing to oppose the Theatre on moral and religious grounds, it was eventually awarded its Royal patent, which enabled it to use the title 'Theatre Royal'. The Theatre was subsequently known as The Theatre Royal Bristol.

1800

During this period the Theatre was run jointly with the Theatre Royal, Bath (which was founded in 1750) with a single company performing in both theatres on different days of the week. Audiences comprised all classes, including people of fashion and, during the Napoleonic Wars, soldiers stationed in the area. The audience's reactions and behaviour could sometimes be noisy, even rowdy.

1830

For a production of The Elephant of Siam on 12 April 1830, an elephant was part of the act on stage. Because the Rackhay entrance was too low to admit the animal, part of the rear wall of the Theatre had to be taken down to get it in!

1834

Sarah Macready became the first female manager of the Theatre, which she ran for nearly 20 years. Her ghost is said to haunt the Theatre to this day.

1850s

The latter half of the 19th century saw social and theatrical decline as the residential focus of the city moved to Clifton and King Street became a risky and undesirable river-side slum due to the smells coming from the floating harbour.

BRISTOL OLD VIC TIMELINE

1867

The New Theatre Royal on Park Row in fashionable Clifton opened as a successor to the Theatre Royal, which became known as the Old Theatre Royal. The New Theatre Royal was later renamed the Prince's Theatre.

1903

Following reports in 1897 that the King Street houses forming the Theatre entrance were in a dangerous state, building works and alterations to the frontage were required. This work provided entrances to the Theatre directly from King Street.

1905

This year marked a significant shift, as electricity was used to light the auditorium for the first time. Theatres were previously lit by gas and, earlier still, by candles and oil lamps, which caused many to burn down. It is remarkable that the Theatre Royal survived the previous 139 years without catching fire. Until the late 19th century, the average lifespan of a theatre was 12-18 years, because they kept burning down!

1912

The Bristol Hippodrome opened in The Centre.

1941

Evening performances at entertainment venues were banned in early 1941 due to World War II. The public tended to only venture to events near to home, and performances at theatres tended to start earlier to be finished by time air raid sirens started.

Much of ancient Bristol was destroyed during World War II, including the Prince's Theatre in Clifton, but the Theatre Royal sustained only slight damage.

1942

After falling into a state of disrepair, the Theatre Royal was sold at auction for £10,500 to the Metal Agencies Company. Clarence Herbert William Davey of Bristol Metal Agencies agreed to buy the building in order that a preservation committee (predominately members of Council for Preservation of Ancient Bristol) could raise money to purchase it from him.

1943

With support from the Committee for Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A, predecessor to the Arts Council) the Theatre reopened.

1946

The London Old Vic company took up residence at The Theatre Royal. The first production by the Bristol Old Vic Company was The Beaux Strategem which opened on Feb 19, 1946. With the establishment of the Bristol Old Vic Company, the Theatre Royal begins to use the name Bristol Old Vic to describe itself occasionally.

1970-72

A highly-controversial refurbishment was carried out by architect Peter Moro. The original stage and 19th century machinery was uprooted to create more space for scenery and enable the Theatre to transfer shows efficiently to bigger theatres in London. The 1970 works also included the construction of a studio theatre, the New Vic, and the conversion of the Coopers' Hall to the Theatre foyer.

2012

The first phase of a major refurbishment was completed. This re-established the original geometry of the Georgian auditorium, replaced and reconfigured the audience seating, improved the backstage and created new rehearsal facilities.

2018

The second phase of the refurbishment was completed, with a brand-new Front of House space and Studio Theatre designed by architects Hayworth Tompkins.

MORE FROM US

MORE FROM BRISTOL OLD VIC HERITAGE

RE:SOURCES

Developed in collaboration with Light Up Learning, the University of Bristol Theatre Collection and Bristol Archives, RE:SOURCES shine a light on the amazing stories of a theatre that has been entertaining Bristol for the last 255 years.

Key parts of the Key Stage 2 history curriculum are all addressed, as are key requirements for other subjects including english, science and design and technology.