Decoding Diversity

Teacher's Guide – Key Stage 2

This workshop explores the diversity and difference that was present in the crew of the *Mary Rose*. Pupils will explore archaeological and scientific sources of evidence for the past, working just like the curators and staff of the museum. Utilising the isotope and DNA analysis that was undertaken as part of a Channel 4 documentary in 2019, activities in this workshop include object handling, costumes, and an introduction to DNA.

Skills covered:

- Historical and scientific enquiry skills.
- Understanding changes in social history and connections over time.
- Exploring and classifying characteristics.
- Using multiple sources.

Links to the aims of the National Curriculum for History (KS2)

- 'how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world'.
- 'understand historical concepts such as …similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically valid questions and create their own structured accounts'.
- 'understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed'
- 'gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history'.

Links to the subject content of the National Curriculum for History

- 'a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality'.
- 'changes in an aspect of social history'.

Links to other areas of the National Curriculum

Science: 'gathering, recording, classifying and presenting data in a variety of ways to help in answering questions'.

Science: 'reporting on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions'.

Science: ‘using straightforward scientific evidence to answer questions or to support their findings’.

Science: ‘recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents’.

Links to the Curriculum Review (November 2025)

- This workshop is a simple way of incorporating ‘a broader mix of perspectives and connections across different times and places’.
- It provides clear opportunities for students to demonstrate media literacy over a wide range of sources and consists of a significant oral element in presenting back their work.

Expanding the Learning

Here at the Mary Rose, we understand the importance of making the most of educational trips and giving students experiences and memories to last. We aim to support teachers in giving their students the chance to reflect upon their time here at the museum and relate that to their classroom work to make it more fun, enjoyable and memorable.

The following are some ideas for classroom activities that could aid students in recalling what they have learnt here at the Mary Rose Museum and to solidify that understanding.

Students can…

- Explore their own differences and similarities in appearance and behaviour – group them into things they might have inherited, things that they have learnt from their environment.
- Write a recipe for their own DNA or a pet’s DNA.
- Draw their own family tree.
- Write a diary from the perspective of one of the non-English crew. What is the experience of being on the *Mary Rose* like for them?
- Create a guide to the Mary Rose for crew coming from abroad – include helpful language, guide to food and drink aboard, a packing guide.
- Write an archaeological report on the crew member they learnt about including the different types of evidence and pictures.
- Find other examples of science (especially DNA) being used in historical projects – such as with Richard III.