

Decoding Diversity

Teacher's Guide – Key Stage 3

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 coding.

Skills covered:

- Social and cultural development, 1509 – 1745
- Understanding identity
- Using rigorous scientific method
- Ideas about inheritance, heredity, and variation.

Links to the aims of the National Curriculum for History

- 'understand how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world'
- 'frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses'
- 'understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims'
- '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; and between short- and long-term timescales.'

Links to the subject content of the National Curriculum for History

- 'understand how different types of historical sources are used rigorously to make historical claims.'
- 'discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.'
- 'society, economy and culture across the period'.
- 'a study over time, testing how far sites in their locality reflect aspects of national history (some sites may predate 1066).'
- 'a study of an aspect of social history, such as the impact through time of the migration of people to, from and within the British Isles.'

Links to other areas of the National Curriculum:

Citizenship: ‘to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events’.

Citizenship: ‘to reflect on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences’.

Citizenship: ‘to appreciate the range of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom’.

Citizenship: ‘to think about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs’.

English: ‘giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point’.

Science: ‘heredity as the process by which genetic information is transmitted from one generation to the next’.

Science: ‘the variation between individuals within a species’.

Science: ‘interpret observations and data, including identifying patterns and using observations, measurements and data to draw conclusions’.

Science: ‘understand that scientific methods and theories develop as earlier explanations are modified to take account of new evidence and ideas’.

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 the life of Jacques Francis, salvage diver who worked on the sunken *Mary Rose*.
- Write an imagined account from the perspective of one of the crew they investigated – a diary or piece of personal writing.

- Write a poem about their responses to this information in the light of the current political landscape.
- Use this as a starting point or a continuation of studies around Miranda Kaufman's 'Black Tudors: The Untold Story' and other related resources.
- Explore other archaeological projects that use isotopic and DNA analysis, such as Richard III, or the Ivory Bangle Lady
(<https://www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk/collections/collections-highlights/ivory-bangle-lady/>)