

Tudor Gun Drill

Teacher's Guide – Key Stage 3

Our very popular two-part workshop combines teamwork, practical challenge, specialised vocabulary, and strategic thinking. Part of the session is battle planning, learning about the Battle of the Solent and creating a plan to either defend Portsmouth or attack with a French fleet. The other half involves dismantling, loading, and firing a replica Tudor gun as part of a gun crew.

Skills covered:

- Key listening and communication skills.
- Specialised and unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Characteristic features of Tudor warfare and local history.

Links to the aims of the National Curriculum for History:

- 'gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections...between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history'.
- 'understand how different types of historical sources are used rigorously to make historical claims'.

Links to the subject content of the National Curriculum for History:

- 'the English Reformation and Counter Reformation (Henry VIII to Mary I)'.
- 'society, economy and culture across the period'

Links to other areas of the National Curriculum:

English: 'acquire a wide vocabulary.

English: 'Pupils should be...giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point...participating in formal debates and structured discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said'.

Geography: 'understand how human and physical processes interact to influence, and change landscapes, environments and the climate'.

Geography: 'interpret...maps...including using grid references and scale, topographical and other thematic mapping, and aerial and satellite photographs'.

Physical Education: ‘take part in...adventurous activities which present intellectual and physical challenges and be encouraged to work in a team, building on trust and developing skills to solve problems, either individually or as a group’.

Links to the Curriculum Review (November 2025)

- This workshop supports a widening understanding of the ways in which history can be explored, with a diverse use of source material.

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...

- Imagine some of the other tasks that would take place on the ship and the movements our crew would be doing. Create a Tudor Training session to ensure the crew are in top fighting form!
- Make a guide to the vocabulary they used during the activity with explanations for each word.
- Write a poem, as inspired by our very own Gunner: <https://maryrose.org/blog/tudor-gun-drills-at-the-mary-rose-museum/>
- Investigate the real ‘Battle of the Solent’ and map out how actually it happened.
- Investigate Henry’s castles: Southsea, Hurst, Calshot, Netley (no longer extant), and Carisbrooke. How were they used for defence?
- Write a battle report of their plan. Think about the strengths and weaknesses.
- Create an advert for one of the guns on the *Mary Rose* – how would you sell it to Henry VIII?
- Compare the *Mary Rose* with an earlier warship, the *Grace Dieu*, which also sunk in Hampshire (in the Hamble) <https://maryrose.org/blog/the-grace-dieu-of-henry-v/> or with Henry VIII’s other big warship the *Henry Grace a Dieu* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Grace_%C3%A0_Dieu.