

Key Stage 3 History: Student Task

Design an exhibition to illustrate the history of Slavery and the Slave Trade.

1. Choose a location in which the exhibition will take place.
2. Decide upon some exhibits and work out how to arrange them in the exhibition.
3. Provide some information that helps people to make sense of each exhibit and/or group of exhibits.

Possible extension activity:

Consider how to make the exhibition inclusive¹ and environmentally sound.

1. The Location

Communicate details of the location in which the exhibition will take place. This could be pre-determined or a place that you decide independently. Options include:

- a) An imaginary setting such as a new purpose-built museum in a particular location with few design constraints.
- b) An existing setting that poses a number of design constraints e.g. a place with limited space (perhaps a room in school), which would necessitate careful consideration in relation to the selection (number/size) and display of exhibits.
- c) A virtual setting such as web pages on a museum or archives website, or even a stand-alone website.

It's up to you to decide how you convey the location of your exhibition:

- If it's a physical location you might opt for a simple plan or a 3D design with cutaways. Note: later on you will need to indicate where your exhibits will be, so a 2D plan is probably the most straightforward option to work with as your project progresses. You could then include elements in your plan to show how your exhibition will be accessible to everyone and you can include details explaining how it will be environmentally friendly.
- If it's a virtual location you'll need to think about simple ways in which to show your website design, for example an illustration of the proposed page layout for content management purposes and accompanying details of the overall design such as the number of pages available. Note: later on you will need to indicate which exhibits will go on which page and illustrate how the pages will link together. Writing ideas for each page on Post It notes and arranging them on a large sheet is a useful starting point when it comes to this exercise.

2. The Exhibits

Select the exhibits that you would like to include in your exhibition. These should be items that are useful in telling the story of Slavery and the Slave. Things to bear in mind:

- a) What exhibits are available? i.e. artefacts (documents and images) that you have come across in your studies and/or other artefacts from different sources.
- b) What message(s) the exhibition will communicate and how.

¹ Access needs can be categorised as follows: Physical; Intellectual (e.g. existing levels of knowledge, English as a foreign language, learning disabilities); Cultural (e.g. interests and life experiences); Attitudinal (e.g. welcoming, positive about diversity, user focussed) and Financial (i.e. something that everyone can afford).

- c) Key messages about the significance of each exhibit.
- d) The location for the exhibition, since this will have a bearing on available space.

When thinking about how to display your exhibits you should consider whether you want to display things thematically (one theme could be The Middle Passage for instance) or chronologically or a mixture of both.

3. Helping people to make sense of the exhibits

You should provide information about the exhibits and explain how they link together/why they are important or significant. A simple way to do this is to treat each description as if it were a label that would be positioned next to the relevant exhibit in the exhibition. There are also lots of other approaches (or combinations of approaches) that you could use.

Things to think about:

- a) How will the displays be organised e.g. thematic, chronological etc?
- b) How might we help others² understand the exhibits? For example, by producing:
 - Written text and images on display panels/ labels/leaflets/exhibition guides
 - Timelines
 - Audio and/or video recordings (usually triggered by motion sensors in places like museums but can also feature on websites/electronic interactives).
 - Electronic publications such as web pages
 - Copies of objects and documents that people can handle
- c) Design layout for displaying the exhibits.

Communicating Your Finished Ideas

How you approach this task and the final decisions on presentation are up to you. Here is a suggestion:

Produce a plan of your building on plain paper detailing the main parts of the exhibition and where the main exhibits are going to be. Include any extra details and a key as required. There might also be room for some illustrations on the plan. Write the details of the exhibits in a booklet like a guide to the exhibition. Include pictures etc. as required. Cross-reference your booklet to your plan.

² More able students could be encouraged to design an exhibition for a particular audience group e.g. a particular age range/ethnic origin, people with a specific disability e.g. visually impaired or wheelchair users.