

Notable Victorians Loan Box Notes for Teachers

Introduction

Welcome to the Bank of England Museum's loan box service.

We have over 40,000 objects in our collection and have started to include some of these in our new loan box service. The boxes are primarily designed for schools and community groups, which we hope will make our collection more accessible to a broader audience.

The boxes are loaned for up to six weeks at a time, and can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. Object-based learning can be a great way to engage learners in new topics and allow them to develop a number of key transferable skills, including analytical, oracy and literacy skills. We have included some suggestions as part of this resource pack.

We hope you and your students enjoy interacting with the objects and that they provide a new way to explore topics and ideas.

If you have any ideas or feedback to help us improve our loan box service, please let us know by completing the evaluation form included with the box, or emailing Education@bankofengland.co.uk.

We are very keen to hear from you!

The Benefits of Object-based Learning

The opportunity to handle objects is a unique experience and allows participants to learn in a very different way. Interacting with objects is a multisensory experience and offers a tangible connection to the past, which can help to support engagement and deepen understanding.

Observing, critical thinking, problem solving, questioning, making predictions and drawing conclusions are all skills which can all be promoted and developed through the use of object-based learning. Creative expression can also be encouraged through drawing, designing and writing.

Object Handling Guidelines

All of the items in the handling collection are unique, and although they may not be highly valuable in monetary terms, we want as many people as possible to enjoy and interact with the objects both now and in the future.

Please make sure the guidelines below are followed, to minimise wear and tear and ensure that learners understand why there are rules given the age, fragility and difficulty in replacing the items. Alternatively, classes may find it helpful to come up with their own rules for handling.

- All participants should thoroughly wash and dry their hands before handling any of the objects. Any cuts and grazes on hands should be dressed and covered.
- One person should handle one object at any given time (unless passing the object to someone else).
- Always pick up objects with two (dry) hands.
- Always pass an object carefully, using both hands, while both parties are seated (or standing over a table).
- Paper-based objects should be handled with care. Please ensure they are not snatched, crumpled or folded.
- For safety reasons, please do not leave the objects with unsupervised children.
- All items should be stored securely; they should not be separated for use elsewhere or used as part of a display.

Notable Victorians

This loan box explores notable historical figures who feature on banknotes, and who lived in Victorian England, and how their contributions to society continue to shape the way we live today.

Real-life people have appeared on our banknotes since 1970. We call them 'historical' figures. We do not include fictional characters, or people who are still alive (except for the Queen, who is on the front of all of our notes).

This loan box has links to a number of different topics and themes across the curriculum, including history, art & design, English, science, and Citizenship at key stage 2/P5 and P6.

Relevant links to the curriculum for Key Stage 2/P5 which can be explored through the loan box include:

History:

- Studying an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066...such as a significant turning point in British History'.
- Discussing why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence.

Citizenship:

- Thinking about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs.

Art & Design:

- Recording observations in sketchbooks and use them to review and revisit ideas.
- Improving mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials.
- Learning about great artists, architects and designers in history.
- Creating images and objects through observing and recording experiences from across the curriculum, which demonstrates pupils' awareness and recognition of detail.
- Expressing and communicating ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design.

Science:

- Learning about the work of naturalists and animal behaviourists.
- Understanding the concepts of evolution and inheritance.

Activity Ideas and Suggestions

There are many ways that you can introduce object-based learning into your classroom teaching. Below are some suggested ways that you might want to incorporate objects into your lesson:

- Introducing a new topic or module of work
- A revision tool
- To draw connections between two different topics
- Part of a skills development workshop
- Extra-curricular activity
- A themed education week

Objects can be used to facilitate learning in pairs, small groups or a whole class. Here are a few ideas for activities:

Observing

- Draw details which are on a part of a banknote, or the same object from different or unusual perspectives.
- Label the drawings to explain the materials and functions of the various components.
- Measure the object and record its dimensions.
- Which features on the banknotes make them unique? Look for the different serial numbers, marks, creases, or small tears on the notes.

Deducing

Sometimes, details on a banknote can give people a lot of clues about the lives of the people who appear on them. Ask the class questions such as:

- What does the figure's clothing tell us about their profession, or the era they lived in?
- What do details on the notes tell you about the figures' lives and achievements?

Comparing

- Which figures are on the banknotes in circulation today?
- How are the banknotes similar?
- How are they different?
- Compare the similarities and differences between the banknotes in the loan box and the banknotes in circulation today.
- You could produce a table for the students to write their answers in.
- Children could also classify, sort, or group the banknotes based on certain criteria (such as age, colour, size and value), then justify their decisions and compare the groups.

Questioning

Ask participants to examine the banknotes. Then, in groups, devise a list of questions they have in order to find out more about them.

As a class, work out which of the questions are easy to answer, and which require more research or cannot be answered. Divide up the research tasks for participants to investigate at home.

Describing

- Create a “feely box” in which the group can touch a banknote without seeing it. Ask them to describe how it feels to the class or group, and for the rest of the children to guess what it is from the description. Or ask some of the children to describe the banknote to the rest of the class and ask them to guess which note / banknote figure is being described.
- Provide a vocabulary list for children to select all the words relevant to the object they are studying (see Page 1 of ‘suggested activities and exercises’ document for some examples).

Imagining

- Role-play using the banknotes as inspiration.
- Ask the children to imagine they are one of the people on the banknotes, or someone using a banknote. Ask them to imagine a day in the life of that person. **Please do not use the notes as props during role-play exercises.**

Presenting

- Ask children to investigate a banknote in groups or pairs. This could be through drawing, or through research in library books or the internet. The children should then present their findings to the rest of the class.

Designing

- Ask the children to re-design a banknote for the future. What technologies will be used? What will it be made of? What will it do and how will it work?
- Design a poster or advert for the banknote appropriate to its time. Children decide on and promote the object's USP (unique selling point).

Evaluating

- Use the following questions to thoroughly evaluate an object or group of objects:

Aesthetics to consider

- Colour
- Shape
- Size (in comparison to X)
- Decorative style
- Inspiration behind the design
- How and why has it been decorated? Does it have any signs of age and/or wear?

Materials

What is it made of? Why do you think that material was chosen? What are the properties of those materials? How heavy is it (in comparison to another object or everyday item)? What does it feel like? How was it made? What technology does it require?

Function

What does it do? How was it used? How have these objects changed over time? How well do you think it would have worked? How easy would it be to use (ergonomic)?

Context

Who might have owned it? What is its value - historical/sentimental/financial/cultural? What can it tell us about the past? Why is it important today? If it could tell a story, what would it be? How important was it to the people who made/owned/used it? How does it compare with modern equivalents?

Discursive Exercise

Banknote Historical Figure Selection Process

Background

Choosing the historical figure which appear on our banknotes is a detailed process. We want to make sure that the figures on our banknotes come from different backgrounds and fields. When selecting a new figure, we think about who has been on notes in the past and look for figures who are fairly well known.

Of course, banknotes need to be easily recognisable and universally accepted, too. So we look for UK figures who are fairly well known, and have made an important contribution to British lives through their ideas, leadership or values.¹

Until recently, banknote figures used to be discussed and chosen by a small group of people inside the Bank of England as part of a specific committee.

Today, there's a new method for selecting banknote figures. First, our [Banknote Figure Advisory Committee](#) selects the field we want to represent, such as 'science' or 'visual arts'. Specialists in that field are also invited to join the committee. We then ask members of public to nominate people from the chosen field.

In 2015, we used this method for the first time, and artist JMW Turner was chosen to appear on our [polymer £20 note](#).

In 2018, we received 227,299 nominations for a scientist to appear on [our polymer £50 note](#). 989 eligible scientists were then identified and scaled down to a shortlist of twelve finalists. The Advisory Committee considered these nominations and in July 2019, we announced that Alan Turing had been chosen to feature on the note (which entered circulation on 23 June 2021).

¹ [Choosing banknote characters](#) | Bank of England

Activity

The aim of this exercise is to encourage the development of oracy skills via a discussion/debating activity. The activity focuses on which person, or people, should appear on a new Bank of England banknote.

Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Assign the class or small groups with a topic, subject or field – some examples are below, but the list is not exhaustive:

Literature

Art and design

Science

Music

Sports

Technology

Once the fields have been allocated, each member of the group should then research a famous person from that area. They should discuss why they have chosen that person, and then agree as a group which of their famous individuals should be selected.

You may wish to include certain rules, such as:

- The person / people chosen must not be fictitious
- They must no longer be living
- They must have made a positive difference to British society and values.

Once the groups have made their decisions, they should present the reasoning behind their choices to the rest of the group. You may even want to then get the whole class to collectively decide from the 'shortlist' of figures which person should appear on a banknote.