

Using Artefacts

Artefacts come in the form of household objects, musical instruments, agricultural tools, toys, items used in worship, decorative items, clothing, footwear, headgear, jewellery and so on.

Why use artefacts?

- Bringing topics to life, to engage pupils
- Used sensitively, they can also inspire critical thinking and enable exploration of values and perceptions.
- To arouse interest at the start of a topic or activity
- To give relevance to a topic being followed
- To deepen understanding
- Explore and challenge stereotypes

Some useful tips

- **Knowing as much as you can** about the context, region, people and cultural values linked to the resources is important.
- **Using a range of resources** allows a range of learning styles to be met. Children can feel and use artefacts in role-play as well as discussing, writing and drawing about associated issues or making things (possibly finding similarities and differences, eg toys from different places).
- **An artefact's life story** is one example of using role play/drawing/writing and discussion, considering why it was made, what it was made from, how it was made, how it is used and (crucially) how it is valued.
- **A sense of respect** in handling any artefact should be conveyed – because of its potential social or religious significance as well as its possible fragility (with due regard to health and safety issues).



Educating for a **fair** and **sustainable** world.

Ideas to address possible difficulties

Stereotyping

The item is “quaint”, “crude”, “backward” or “cheap”

Discussion: Is this an object produced for tourists or a practical tool? What was it made for (aesthetic appeal, religious or social purpose, practical use)? What ingenuity or skill has been applied? What raw materials and energy were available for its manufacture? Can we learn something about sustainability and recycling here? What is the difference between everyday objects and personal or ceremonial ones – what object(s) would you save if you had to get out of your house in a matter of minutes?

Activity: “Bag swap” – each pupil brings in a given number of objects to represent her/himself and these are swapped around (on an anonymous basis) – suggestions are made as to the interests of the owner and discussion pursued about how far this gives a true picture.

Activity: making objects from recycled material – to appreciate the skills involved

Activities: Select an artefact(s) from your own life – how far does it/they represent you? What misconceptions could it/they elicit? Put together a time capsule of your own culture, or a box that you might send to a school in another country to portray your culture. (Does it fully represent your culture? Would the capsule be different if it represented your town/village or county or country?)

Lack of awareness

Comments such as “costumes, clothes, hats are funny or strange”

Discussion: When do you come across ceremonial dress/make-up/costumes in this country? What is the same or different about the ceremonies etc? Why do we make fun of those who are different or mock what we don't understand?

Activity: Role-plays. Can run through a scenario twice, once with mocking/bullying (about differences) in place, once with the opportunity to challenge it.