

Key Stage 2: Hands-on Ancient Greece

The final page of these notes can be copied and given to students who you think may need additional support during the workshop or to adult helpers.

Before your visit: preparing for your workshop

- Key themes for the workshop are how we learn about the past through objects and how money reflects the society in which it is used. Explore the idea of money with your students by looking at the coins and banknotes we use today, e.g. the material, value, issuing authority, design and inscription. Where we can use it and what do we use it for?
- Key vocabulary includes Athena, Herakles, Zeus, observation, identification, inscription, and legacy. You might like to discuss these words before the workshop.
- Use the Explore section of the British Museum website (www.britishmuseum.org) to search for money in the Museum's collection and objects from Athens.
- Look at the Ancient Greece learning site at www.ancientgreece.co.uk

During your visit

- The workshop takes place in the study room of the Department of Coins & Medals. We will start by thinking about the Museum and its collection.
- The session consists of two parts. In the first part students will explore money in various forms from around the world. In the second part, students will handle genuine coins from Ancient Greece and use the visual clues to identify them.
- The Museum would very much appreciate it if students wash and dry their hands before the session to help conserve the workshop objects. We also recommend that students wash their hands after the session, particularly if they go straight into their lunch break.
- Galleries with objects relating to the workshop include
 - Room 68: Money Gallery (Ancient Greek coins are in cases 1-2 and 3-6)
 - Room 69: The Labours of Herakles (Cases 8-10), Gods of Olympus (Case 32)
 - Room 18: The Parthenon Sculptures

Hands-on Ancient Greece continued...

After your visit: follow-up activities

- You may like to continue looking at money from the ancient Greek world in the British Museum's collection via the Explore section of the Museum's website at www.britishmuseum.org
- Create a display of images that were used on the coins of Greek city states and rulers and discuss why they were chosen. Has an emblem been chosen to represent your school?
- Coins were issued by an authority and used as a way of presenting information. Discuss whether or not coins are a reliable source of information about past events by considering how people in power use the media today.
- To make money a ruler or state must first have access to the raw materials. Remind the students that the coins they have been holding are made of silver, a precious metal. Where did the metal come from and why is it valuable? What impact could this have on individuals, communities and the environment?
- Explore the difference between money and value. Are there some things that money can't buy?

Curriculum links

Historical interpretation: *Pupils should be taught to recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways, and to give reasons for this.*

Citizenship - developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people: *Pupils should be taught to think about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs.*

developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities:

Pupils should be taught to look after their money and realise that future wants and needs may be met through saving.

This workshop takes place in the study room of the Department of Coins and Medals.

You will learn about:

- a department in the museum and identifying objects
- forms of money that have been valued by different cultures
- the money used in ancient Greece

Key words

observation

identification

ancient

modern

metals – gold, silver, bronze, copper, iron

inscription – the writing on the coin

legacy – something handed down by an ancestor

Introduction

- We will talk about the Museum and the different objects that are held in the Department of Coins and Medals
- We will discuss the different kinds of money that we use today

Different sorts of money

- You will work in a group and handle money objects from different cultures and times.
- You will try to identify them by asking: What is it made of? Where does it come from? When was it used?
- Some money objects might seem unusual. How would they be used as money?

Ancient Greek coins

- In your groups you will handle real coins from ancient Greece. These coins are nearly 2500 years old!
- You will compare the coins and look for similarities and differences between them
- One coin was issued by a city state; the other coin was issued by a person. By looking closely at the coins we will use the designs and inscriptions on the coins to identify them.