

Primary History

# Benin

## Gallery activities

Sainsbury African Galleries

### Contents:

1. Notes for Teachers
2. Explore and Explain
3. Comparisons
4. Now and Then
5. Focus on a Plaque
6. Similarities and Differences
7. Close Observation Puzzle
8. First Impressions
9. Object Interpretation
10. Annotated Illustrations



Commemorative head of a Queen mother  
Benin, Nigeria  
early 16<sup>th</sup> century

# Benin

## Gallery activities

Sainsbury African Galleries

### Notes for teachers

- The activities encourage children to develop gallery skills and literacy skills in tandem. They scan the displays, select the objects and then look at them and their labelling in detail. The activities help to focus the note taking and annotated drawings which many schools encourage.
- The activities encourage children not to follow a fixed route around the exhibits. This means that children are distributed across the space, helping avoid congestion in the crowded galleries.
- Select enough activities to fit the objectives of your visit, but do give the children the time for thought and wonder.
- We strongly recommend that you come on a preliminary visit to check the activities on site.
- This approach to visiting will help you to use the galleries to their best effect, but it does require preparation before the visit and perhaps some changes to the way in which you might use the helpers who come with you.
- A good warm up activity to start with is **You are Here** which will help the children orientate themselves.

**Other resources** from The British Museum learning and Information Department:

- Benin: Pictures from an African Kingdom
- What is African Art?

## Explore and Explain

- ☺ Choose an aspect of the objects from Benin that you would like to explore and explain, or use *one* of the themes suggested below:

materials	art	style	display	fashion
figures	animals	objects	manufacture	

- ☺ Look carefully at the objects in the Benin exhibition.  
☺ Use the objects to guide your explanation.

✍ What are you going to explain?

✍ The short answer is

✍ The details are

1	2
3	4

✍ Concluding sentence

Name:

Date:

Class:

## Comparisons

- ☺ Choose two similar objects, such as two plaques.
- ☺ Observe them closely and record them in the spaces below.
- ✍ A) My first choice is .....

Drawing	Notes
---------	-------

- ✍ B) My second choice is .....

Drawing	Notes
---------	-------

- ✍ Although A) \_\_\_\_\_ and B) \_\_\_\_\_ are different, they are alike in some interesting ways.

- ✍ For example, they both ...

--

- ✍ They are also similar in this way ...

--

- ✍ A is the same as ...

--

- ✍ B resembles ...

--

- ✍ Finally, they both ...

--

Name:

Date:

Class:

Primary History

Benin Sainsbury African Galleries

## Now and Then

- ☺ Use the gallery and your own knowledge to write a comparative report on *The Kingdom of Benin and Britain*
- ☺ Choose whether to write about life in general or choose **one** aspect of life suggested below.

what people wear	jobs people do	contact with other peoples
important people	royal buildings	

- ~~✍~~ I am comparing .....
- ~~✍~~ Beginning- use your own words and / or **one** of the suggestions below:

Nowadays	Modern day	They both	Today	In times past

- ~~✍~~ Middle-

although	but	whilst	in contrast	however	but then

- ~~✍~~ End-

In conclusion	We can see that
Finally in comparison	I have shown that

Name:  
Primary History

Date:

Class:

Benin Sainsbury African Galleries

## Focus on an Object

☺ I have chosen to focus on .....

☺ The plaque I have chosen shows .....

Drawing	Notes

 Here is a list of points about the object

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Name:

Date:

Class:

## Similarities and Differences

- ☺ Choose to work on 2 different images of the Oba or 2 different images of the Queen Mother.
- ✍ I have chosen to work on images of .....
- ☺ Record each image in the boxes below:

Image 1	Image 2
---------	---------

✍ Make notes on the similarities and differences between the two images.

Similarities	Differences
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6

✍ My conclusion is that:

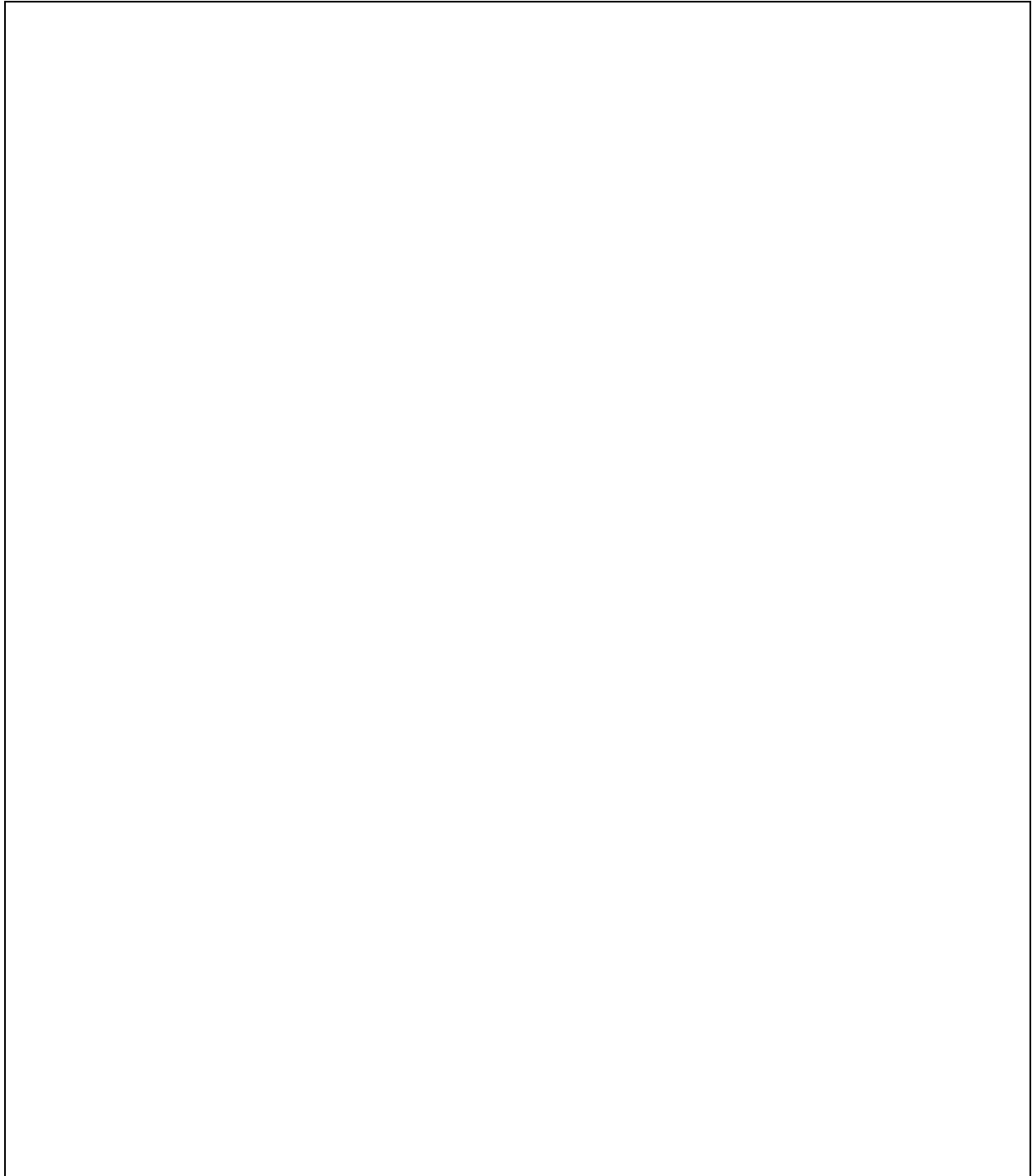
Name:

Date:

Class:

## Close Observation Puzzle

- ☺ Choose one of the object line drawings available.
- ✂ Cut the image into 3 large puzzle pieces.
- ☺ Share the pieces with your classmates.
- ☺ Stick your puzzle piece in the space below.
- ☺ In the museum, find the object.
- ✍ Look carefully at the object and finish the drawing.



Name:

Date:

Class:



## First Impressions

- ☺ In the gallery we have images of both the Edo people of Benin and of Europeans who travelled to Benin to trade.
- ☺ Choose one Oba and one Portugese from the figures on the plaques
- ☺ Imagine the first time a European visited the Oba's court.
- ☺ What did each person want from the meeting?
- ✍ What would people think, and what would they say to each other? .....
- ✍ Under the Oba and the Portugese man below, write a caption which sums up the portrait.....
- ✍ Would the Portugese have spoken directly with the Oba?

The Oba  
Of Benin

A Portugese  
Trader

Name:

Date:

Class:

## Object Interpretation

☺ The brass plaques from Benin were made for one kind of special building.

✍ The building the plaques were made to decorate was:

✍ The plaques were displayed on the:

☺ Here is a sketch of the front of a large building from The Kingdom of Benin. Look carefully for the objects on it which are like those in the gallery.

✍ Some of these objects are shown below. Choose others for yourself.

✍ Use arrows to show where the objects would have been displayed in and on the palace.

## Annotated Illustrations: 1

- ☺ Find this plaque in the gallery.
- ☺ Look closely at the plaque and its picture.
- ☺ Look at the other information sources in the gallery: labels, information panels, video.
- ✍ Make points or notes around the illustration below for use back at school.
- ✍ Note what is shown and what is not shown.

- ✍ The Benin brasses deal with life at the Oba's court. Are there any scenes showing women or daily life?

Name:

Date:

Class:

## Annotated Illustrations: 2

- ☺ Find this plaque in the gallery.
- ☺ Look closely at the plaque and its picture.
- ☺ Look at the other information sources in the gallery: labels, information panels, video.
- ✍ Make points or notes around the illustration below for use back at school.

✍ What types of scene are not shown on the plaques?

Name:

Date:

Class:

## Annotated Illustrations: 3

- ☺ Find this plaque in the gallery.
- ☺ Look closely at the plaque and its picture.
- ☺ Look at the other information sources in the gallery: labels, information panels, video.
- ✍ Make bullet points or notes around the illustration below for use back at school.

- ✍ How similar or different are the scenes on the plaques to the other objects in the gallery from Benin.

Name:

Date:

Class: