Workshop Notes for teachers

National curriculum links

- History, Citizenship, Personal and Social Education, Geography, Art, cross curricular

About this session

This workshop introduces students to a selection of African Kingdoms. Using objects as evidence, students will explore the themes of power, trade, innovation, creativity and belief to develop a critical understanding of how the kingdoms developed over time and what made each kingdom unique and powerful.

During the session there will be opportunities to work independently and in small groups, share ideas and draw conclusions, practise speaking, listening and questioning skills.

Session outline

The session will be divided into two parts. Each part will last for approximately 1 hour.
Part A: Workshop led by British Museum staff
Part B: Independent gallery visit led by school staff using British Museum resources.

Part A: Workshop led by British Museum staff
Location: Gallery 25
Focus: Kingdoms of Benin, Kongo and Kuba
Led by a museum staff, students will use their critical thinking and investigative skills to build on their ideas of what makes a successful kingdom. Through a series of creative activities and discussions students will find out more about life in the individual kingdoms and interrogate the intersections between the themes of power, trade, innovation, creativity and belief.

Part B: Independent gallery visit led by school staff using British Museum resources
Location: Gallery 64, 65 and 68  
Focus: The kingdoms of Egypt, Kush and Aksum.  

Through object enquiry and comparative study, students will be encouraged to look at how objects can shed light onto life in these kingdoms. Activity cards will be provided to support small groups of students and their teachers to discover how the skilled use of natural resources brought innovation, industry and wealth; the challenges of unifying disparate peoples under one ruler and the relationship between kings and gods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Gallery 25, 64, 65 and 68</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Workshop and gallery activity cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>Max 35 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>2 x 60 mins sessions with a 30 minute lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Times</td>
<td>10:30 – 13:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The class will be divided in half following the timetable below:

10:00 – 10:30 Go to School Lunch Room to leave belongings in lockers and use toilets  
Welcome and introduction to the day

Group A (approx. 15 students)
10:30 – 11:30 Gallery workshop led by museum staff in Room 25  
12:00 – 12:30 Lunch  
12:30 – 13:30 Independent teacher led gallery activities

Group B (approx. 15 students)
10:30 – 11:30 Independent teacher led gallery activities  
12:00 – 12:30 Lunch  
12:30 – 13:30 Gallery workshop led by museum staff in Room 25

13:30 – 14:00 Return to School Lunch Room to collect belongings

**Room 25 workshop in detail**

- Students will begin by discussing what makes a successful kingdom and look at the geographical locations of the kingdoms being discussed.
- Students will consider how the three African kingdoms being explored during the workshop developed and how and why their rulers gained and retained or lost power.
• Students will discuss the innovations and creative skills of the people of the focus kingdoms.
• Students consider how people use personal adornment and different materials as a signifiers of status.
• Students will work in small groups to take part in a trading activity.
• Students will be encouraged to understand that the past is constructed through different interpretations of evidence and to think critically about how histories are interpreted.
• The session will develop close observational skills as students explore primary evidence to investigate the different themes.
• The workshop will end with a plenary giving the students an opportunity to bring together the ideas discussed during the workshop.

Independent teacher led gallery activities in detail
• The independent gallery activities will focus on 7 objects on display in Rooms 65, 64 and 68 on the upper floor. For each object there will be an activity card with information and suggestions which will encourage the students to look at the object in detail, search for related objects in the gallery and stimulate discussion. The cards can be used in any order.

Key themes
• Power, creativity, innovation, belief, trade

Before your visit
• Please make the purpose of the Museum visit clear to your students before they arrive so know the expected outcomes of the visit.
• You might want to look at a modern map of the continent of Africa.

After your visit
• Your visit can be a platform for wider work back at school. It can be documented during the session, e.g. using digital cameras so that further discussions can take place around the themes back at school.

Find out more
• Museum sessions and classroom resources
  www.britishmuseum.org/schools

• Search the British Museum collection online
  www.britishmuseum.org/collection