

Heritage at your fingertips

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

© Julie Howden

Planning on introducing the concept of heritage to your learners? Starting a local history topic? Here are a few ideas to get started.

1. Introducing heritage

The activity below will help introduce the concept of heritage and how we all play a part in deciding what parts of our heritage will be passed on to future generations.

Suggested activity:

Give small groups of learners the same sets of photographs of different aspects of heritage – buildings, places, biodiversity, objects, languages, songs, music, stories, art and activities. scran.ac.uk is an excellent source of photos.

1. Ask them to sort the images into 2 piles: **'worth keeping for the future'** and **'not worth keeping'**.
2. Compare how different groups have sorted their piles and ask them to explain their decisions.

Some definitions of heritage that can be discussed as a large group include:

- Anything passed on from one generation to the next (links to the word 'inherit' may be useful here)
- Buildings, places, or activities from the past, often connected with a specific area or place, which we think matter today – this can include traditions such as Gala Days, Common Ridings, guising, Hogmanay.

2. The heritage that matters to me

The parts of our heritage we particularly value can be influenced by things like where we've lived, what we've learned and what's important to our families and friends.

Suggested activity:

1. Ask your learners to **list buildings, places, objects, songs, music, stories, or activities from the past that matter** to them today. In pairs they could discuss what might be some of the 'oldest' items on their list and what might be more recent – or how they would rank their lists in order of importance.
2. Display these lists on a wall. Ask each person to see if they can find **a connection between their list and another person's list**. Is there anything that they've found on someone else's list that they'd like to add to their own? Is there anything they'd like to ask someone about to learn more about their peer's heritage?
3. An extension could be to encourage each person to **investigate one thing** on their list that they'd like to understand better, and to present what they learn.

3. The diversity of built heritage

One way to think about heritage is what makes one place unique, or different to another. Built heritage (homes, workplaces, leisure and cultural buildings etc) is a good place to start looking at differences. Photos and other archives based on places can be found at canmore.org.uk/site/search – is your school building listed?

Suggested activity:

1. Show your learners **pictures of different types of buildings** – houses, schools, bridges, car parks, shops, offices – from different parts of the country or the world. Or you could ask your learners to do this research in small groups and present their findings back to the class. Have they been built to impress and inspire, or was functionality the main concern?
2. Encourage discussion of **similarities and differences** between the buildings they've looked at and the buildings in their own local area. Why do your learners think they are different? Is it to do with climate? Available building materials? Different views about what looks best?

4. Mapping your heritage

A great way of seeing the changes in our built landscape is through maps. The National Library of Scotland's online map viewer shows maps of different ages side-by-side: maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side. Their [top tips](#) are very helpful.

Suggested activity:

1. Look at your local area using the **side by side maps**. What has changed and what has stayed the same? Can your learners ask **family members or local residents** about changes that have happened within their lifetimes?
2. Place names often have interesting connections to the local landscape and people. Can your learners find out **information about place names** in your local area through local history books or by contacting a local heritage society?
3. An extension could be to encourage your learners to **draw a map of the local area** including their school. Which public buildings have they never been into? Which ones do they use often? What are their favourite local landmarks?

5. Our heritage on screen

The National Library of Scotland's Moving Image Archive preserves film footage from the past 100 years. You can search for footage 'available remotely' at movingimage.nls.uk/search or see content curated specially for learners at scotlandonscreen.org.uk.

Suggested activity:

1. Try searching for **films of some of the places near to you**. You could choose an area of a city, a village, or a local landmark.
2. Discuss **whether the places look different in the film to how they look today**. If so, how? Why do you think these changes have happened?

