

Object Handling Sessions

This activity can be carried out at the venue with prior agreement with the venues.

If museums have kit bags, object boxes or loan boxes the following guidance can be used for hands-on sessions.

Before you start

Interactive sessions with young people do not have to be high tech. Allowing young people to handle objects will help them to connect with the past. But it is important that young people understand that objects are precious and must be handled carefully.

Even though objects may be fairly robust, it is important to stress that they are special objects. Ask young people to check that their hands are clean, if they are not suggest they wash and dry them thoroughly.

One activity suggested by Renaissance South East to get the point across is to pass around a blank sheet of white paper. After just one or two rounds it starts to look creased and a bit dirty. This is a very simple way to explain that handling objects can cause damage if we are not very careful.

It is also important to make sure the surface or table you are working on is clean and clear. It is safer to be seated when handling objects, if someone is standing and drops an object it is likely to be damaged.

Aims of the session

Identify objects and materials

Develop young people's knowledge and understanding of events

Evaluate sources of information

Identify objects used for particular tasks

Select and organise information to produce structured work

Investigate what life was like during the Second World War

Resources

Artefacts

Paper, pencils

Question/prompt sheet

Creative writing ideas sheet

Venues

All

Object Handling Sessions

This activity will work for many themes. Women at War, Volunteers, Bomber Command etc. Museums may provide a range of artefacts. Please work with the museums to find out if there are objects that young people can handle. They must be robust and replaceable.

Starter activity

Arrange a variety of objects that relate to a particular wartime theme on a table for young people to handle.

In pairs ask young people to become detectives.

Ask young people to think about and discuss each object. Choose three questions from the following. Either write them on the white board or put them next to the object for the young people to answer.

Choose from:

- Who might have used it?
- What do they think this object was used for?
- What is it made from?
- Why do you think it is made from this material?
- Is there anything similar to it that might be used today? (What is similar to the modern day version and what is different?)
- When do they think it was made?
- Has it been changed?
- Does it move?
- Which parts move?

After two /three minutes ask the young people to move on to the next object.

Plenary

Ask the young people to feedback their thoughts on each object.

When the young people have provided their feedback, tell them about the object. What it was used for, if there are any special stories behind the object etc.

Activity

Ask the young people to choose an object and make up a short story or poem about that object. There are lots of different ways to get started.

Plenary

Ask one or two willing young people to read out their stories or poems.