

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

LOCAL HISTORY

EXPLORERS



Recommended for

KSI-3 (History, Geography)

Learning objectives

- Consider the historical significance of Portchester Castle's location.
- Research the local area and understand how nearby places, plus the people associated with them, relate to the national story.
- Gain a better understanding of the local area and develop a sense of pride in it.

Time to complete

Variable, depending on scope of research



Portchester Castle (red pin) and the surrounding area as seen on Google Maps © Google Data 2021

SUMMARY

This activity helps students conduct a local history research project, exploring the people, places and events that have shaped the place where they live. We recommend doing this in groups of about three.

Select one of the following studies for students to focus on:

- A local depth study, focusing on a specific time period
- A thematic study, focusing on how one particular aspect or theme has changed over time at Portchester.

SETTING UP THE RESEARCH PROJECT

First, read the Teachers' Notes on pages 25–26. Work with the whole class to create a list of effective research skills and techniques. Then use this list as success criteria for the project.

Next, each group should decide on an enquiry question, e.g. 'How has Portchester Castle's architecture changed since Roman times?' or 'What impact did prisoners of war from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars have on Portchester?' Encourage group members to base their research on something they are passionate about, e.g. fashion, food, music, literature, film, etc.

Provide students with Historical Information, Timeline and Sources in this kit to kick-start their research.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

When students visit Portchester Castle, encourage them to use the buildings and objects at the site as a valuable source of information. They can use their trip to gather further evidence, working in their teams to take notes as they explore the site.

Historic England have some useful online resources to support this topic. Search their website for the 'Local Heritage Curriculum Planning' pages.

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TEACHERS' NOTES

Use the guidance below to help students get started with their local history research projects. They should pick a nearby place (e.g. Portchester Castle) and ask the following questions about it.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR KS1

Significant historical events, people and places in their own locality

- Where is it? (regional and national location)
- What other significant places are near to it?
- What are the physical and natural features?
- How are other places similar/different to it?
- Why is your place like it is today?
- What local and national events have had an impact on it?
- Which people have had the biggest impact on how your place is today?

KEY QUESTIONS FOR KS2–3

A local history study

- How was your local area different during these periods: Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian, Victorian, modern?
- How have the people and events from these periods had an impact on how your local area has changed over time and how it is today?
- What would it have been like to live and/or work in your local area at different times in the past?
- What evidence can be found of these past times?
- Which buildings or places can best tell the story of your local area?
- Which nearby buildings or places are of special local, national or even world interest?
- Can you find any evidence of the impact of migration on your local area?
- How well is the UK's rich diversity reflected in your local community?

Continued...

Human and physical geography

- What are some geographical features of your local area?
- How has the natural geography of your local area had an impact on its development?
- What different people groups have settled in your local area in the past, and what did they use it for?
- How has human settlement had an impact on your local area?
- What man-made features can be found in your local area?
- How are other places (local and national) connected with your local area?

LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE OF THE EVENTS, PEOPLE AND PLACES THAT HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUR LOCAL AREA

Analysing and understanding historical evidence is a vital part of studying local history. Primary sources are contemporary – from or around the time of the period of study. Secondary sources are created by people who were not there, for example a modern historian writing about an event. Particular care should be taken with archaeological evidence – excavated objects and deposits are primary, but they're always interpreted by archaeologists so are by definition secondary.

Here are some things you could look for when researching your local area:

- Built heritage, e.g. housing, retail and commercial premises, places of worship, public and community buildings, listed buildings and scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens.
- Visual sources, e.g. photographs, paintings, engravings, historical plans, postcards, murals, TV adverts and films.
- Written sources, e.g. museum archives, local history publications, maps, diaries, military records, government documents, school log books, census records, trade directories, newspapers, and birth/marriage/death certificates.
- Artefacts, e.g. archaeological finds displayed in museums or online, clothes, toys, household items, tools and family memorabilia.
- Remnants of the past, e.g. place names, plaques and memorials.
- Oral history, e.g. talking and listening to people from your locality, asking older generations about the local area, archive recordings and local historians.
- Also look for evidence of local traditions, customs and beliefs, folklore, food, festivals and music particular to your place.