

HISTORY HUNT

ACTIVITY 1

Learning Objectives

To understand Castle Acre Priory's importance as a source of historical evidence. To develop skills of sourcing and scrutinising historical evidence.

Recommended for

KS2-4 (History)

Summary

Around the site are various pieces of evidence which can help students to build up an impression of how it has developed. Divide the class into groups, making sure each group has a notebook or camera to share.

Give each group a theme to explore, such as:

- Buildings and architecture – walls, ceilings, arches, pillars, windows, staircases, size and shape of rooms
- Comfort and conditions – for the prior and the monks, compare/contrast fireplaces, sleeping areas, seats, wbenches
- Food and facilities – kitchens, dining room, bread oven, latrines
- Detail and decoration – Norman stonework, paint, tiles, carvings
- Religion and ritual – church, chapel, cloister, chapter house

Each group should gather evidence for their assigned theme. Ask each group to feed back to the rest of the class about what they have found. You could close the activity by asking your class if they have found any similarities and/or differences between Castle Acre Priory and their own homes.

EH Education suggests

Students' notes and photos can be used for post-visit work back in the classroom.

PHOTO TOUR

ACTIVITY 2

Learning Objectives

To explore the site and understand its various phases. To create your own photo tour of the site.

Recommended for

KS2-4 (History)

Summary

Students tour the site, recording important information as they do so. They could log information using cameras, school exercise books or notepads. It might be helpful to put students into groups and send each group to one specific location on site, so that they can become experts. They can use the interpretation boards already on site, plus the site tour resource which you can download from our teacher information webpage. Once completed, students can guide their class mates to their special location and share their expert knowledge.

EH Education suggests

Back in the classroom, the images could be put together to form a complete class tour, charting the development of the site.

To extend this activity, you could scan and upload your images to Google Maps, for other schools to look at.

MEASURING DIFFERENCE

ACTIVITY 3

Learning Objectives

To identify the difference between the monks' and prior's living conditions. To calculate length, width and area.

Recommended for
KS2 and KS3 (Maths)

Summary

The prior had very different living conditions to the monks who shared a dorm. Numeracy skills can be developed by finding ways to quantify the differences between the two living spaces. Take pupils to the dormitory (where the monks would have slept in a shared room). They would have been upstairs; the floor is no longer there but you can still see remains of the stairs today.

EH Education suggests

Bring a few tape measures or measuring wheels and get students to work in groups on the challenges. Alternatively, you could ask students to use meter-long strides to measure approximate length and width.

Discuss

Is this fair? Why were the living spaces so different?

- 1) Look for evidence of decoration.
- 2) Check the windows – decorated or plain? Different shapes/sizes?
- 3) Fireplaces – was the living area heated or not?
- 4) Measure the length and width of the dormitory (this is the same as the floor area below).
- 5) Calculate the area of the dormitory.
- 6) Divide the area – if 30 monks shared this area, how much space did they have each?
- 7) Your whole class could try it out by lying on the grass.

Now do the same in the prior's lodgings. Step 4) is tricky because we don't know the area of the prior's chambers but it was roughly the same size as the prior's study so measure this instead.

Finally, work out the following: One monk has X space. One prior has Y space.

PATTERNS AT THE PRIORY

ACTIVITY 4

Learning Objectives

To explore the Norman stonework at the priory. To develop understanding of Norman shape, colour, texture and patterns. To apply understanding to a souvenir design.

Recommended for

KS2-4 (Art and Design)

Summary

Students explore the priory to find one piece of patterned stonework that intrigues them. This priory exploration will become the inspiration for a homemade souvenir which they are going to design from scratch. The end product could be a key ring, bookmark, fridge magnet, ruler etc.

Start at the west front of the church as there is a concentration of carved stonework here. Pupils should sketch patterns and shapes which they want to use in their own souvenir to remind them of the site. They should collect evidence of colours and shapes. The next step is designing the souvenir. This can be done in our on-site education space or back in the classroom.

EH Education suggests

You may want to provide templates to help younger students with their souvenir design, such as an outlined shape of a ruler or key ring. Back at school, sketches and designs can be made into the real thing using arts and crafts materials. You could send students' work to the site and we'll display them in the on-site education room.

PRIORY POETRY

ACTIVITY 5

Learning Objectives

To explore the priory as a stimulus for imagination and poetry. To develop and improve vocabulary. To develop figurative writing skills.

Recommended for

KS2 and KS3 (English)

Summary

Using the 'y-chart' technique, students roam the priory, writing down a list of words to finish the three sentences: I see..., I hear..., I feel... Come back together as a class and feedback. Did anyone get matching/contrasting words? Make a word bank from student suggestions to help with the next part of the activity.

Following on from the word bank activity, students should find a 'frame' within the structure of the building. This could be an interesting window, doorway or arch. There are a number of frames throughout the priory which pupils can safely look through.

Once they have chosen their frame, students should settle there and write a poem which explores how the priory might have looked, felt and sounded in medieval times. Students can entitle their poem 'My window to the past...' For the less confident students, this can be a simple list of their 'I see, I hear, I feel' sentences.

For the more confident poets, encourage students to include some of the following features: The five senses, alliteration, metaphor, simile, imagery, personification, sibilance, assonance and onomatopoeia.

If students would like to use rhyme in their poem, this word bank might help:



WEST FRONT:

grunt, stunt, hunt, blunt

PRIOR:

inspire, admire, desire, fire

MONK:

trunk, junk, sunk, clunk

STONE:

atone, alone, throne, moan, grown

PRAY:

grey, hallway, day, stay, play

STREAM:

gleam, dream, beam, supreme, regime

GREEN:

teen, screen, hygiene, routine

BLUE:

pew, through, you, mildew

PEACE:

cease, increase, deceased, crease

WINDOW:

flow, meadow, shadow, tiptoe

RELIGION:

vision, tuition, tradition, precision