

# WORKING METHODS FOR MUSEUM LESSONS

Stichting Musea en  
Herinneringscentra

40  
45

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## Improving Museum Education

The Museums and Memorial Centres 40-45 Foundation (SMH) has introduced the two-year-programme Improving Museum Education (KWIE) in January 2018. In this programme fourteen museums worked together to improve the quality of museum education in Second World War museums and SMH wishes to share their results with the entire field. The products from KWIE have been developed to improve the overall quality of museum education.

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Ministerie van Volksgezondheid,  
Welzijn en Sport

## Colophon

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# Museum lessons

Museum lessons on the Second World War can take many forms. There are also plenty of different ways to build a lesson from multiple exercises to develop skills and increase the knowledge of students. There are, however, a few building blocks that could be used as a starting point for developing a lesson. Choosing a core element or skill to focus on as well as a selection of desired learning goals can help a museum lesson have a clear aim and can act as a measuring tool of whether or not a lesson is a success afterwards. To determine which historical thinking skills should be incorporated in a lesson, please have a look at the Education Programmes rubric. An overview of possible learning goals can be found at the end of this document.

Below there are a few examples of lessons that can be employed in classrooms or museums with an example of an education programme that uses this building block from one of the Netherlands' best Second World War museums.

## EXERCISE

# Giving a tour

## DESCRIPTION

Divide the students in groups. Every group chooses a monument, building or address in the neighbourhood about which they will collect as much information as possible. The information and photographs collected should be connected to the Second World War: military events, persecution, resistance, collaboration etc. When possible, the students will connect a personal story to their location as well. When all students have prepared their location, the groups will walk past the locations. Every group will present their findings to the others.

## SUCCESS

- Using your own neighbourhood will bring history closer and students will likely be more interested and involved.

## LEARNING GOALS

- Exploring (together)
- Interest in history and heritage
- Insight in the different layers of history and the traces of history still visible in the present

## BEST PRACTICE

# Peer tour at Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork

## PROGRAMME

Every group is given a file on a monument, object or location on the terrain. With sources, images and a personal story of a captive, neighbour or perpetrator from the file, students prepare one element of the tour. In the exhibition they can collect additional information on their subject or interesting facts that connect to their story. During the tour, every group will present their findings on the subject they were assigned: facts, personal stories and their own thoughts and impressions. The presentations will act as a complete tour of the grounds. The education guide will make sure the presentations are connected and do not lack essential information.

MEANT FOR Year 7 - 13

CONTACT [info@kampwesterbork.nl](mailto:info@kampwesterbork.nl)



## EXERCISE

# Making your own monument

## DESCRIPTION

Together students create a monument for people who were victims of war or any other violent crime. Besides materials to construct a monument (stones, blocks, boxes etc.) objects also play an important role in the commemoration of lives lost. Think of chairs, notebooks with names or a collection of smaller personal items.

## SUCCESS

- By choosing individual victims from nearby locations (school, town, city) the war suddenly feels closer. By making a monument and giving it space, history and the commemoration thereof seems more tangible.

## LEARNING GOALS

- Exploring (together)
- Knowledge of historical events, people and situations
- Ability to give voice to personal thoughts and observations

## BEST PRACTICE

# In Memoriam at Jewish Cultural Quarter

## PROGRAMME

In the museum, students build a monument with the 172 wooden suitcases from *In Memoriam*, an art installation by Willem Volkersz. First they will view the installation, before deconstructing it and discussing how to build their own. After building it the students will reflect on their own monument.

## MEANT FOR

Year 6 - 10

## CONTACT

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## EXERCISE

# How does the story continue?

## DESCRIPTION

Choose a story which has multiple turning points or dilemmas. Read the story to the students and pause at every moment the protagonist is faced with a choice. Ask the students (to write down) how they think the story will continue. Finish reading the story. Afterwards, the choices and alternatives students thought of can be discussed.

## SUCCESS

- Make sure to emphasise that you do not have to relate to the protagonist. The person in the story is from a different time than the student. Avoid phrases such as "what would you do?" and instead ask "what do you think this person would have done and why?".

## POSSIBLE VARIATION

- Rather than reading and discussing the dilemmas, they can also be incorporated in an escape room. There are multiple tools available online to use an escape room format in classrooms.

## LEARNING GOALS

- Insight in multiple perspectives in stories about the past
- Insight in your own identity and identities of others
- Insight in how your own identity influences your interpretation of the past



## BEST PRACTICE

# Decisions during occupation at the Freedom Museum

## PROGRAMME

Students enter rooms with an historical setting in which a young person on film talks about his or her situation during the Second World War and a dilemma they are faced with. The students choose one of three options of what they think the person should do. Afterwards, they get information about the person the dilemma was based on, what they did in real life and what consequences they faced. After interacting with four young people from different situations, the students reflect on their answers with their museum coach.

MEANT FOR      Year 6 >

CONTACT      [welkom@vrijheidsmuseum.nl](mailto:welkom@vrijheidsmuseum.nl)



## EXERCISE

# Look, think, ask

## DESCRIPTION

Choose a photograph that matches the lesson's subject. The photo will be examined by the students in three rounds. Firstly, the students will describe the photograph. Ask guiding questions such as: what do you see or what is in the foreground or background of the photo? Have them describe the photo as accurately as possible. Secondly, the students will interpret the photo. What do you think you see? What do you think is going on? Why do you think they took this photo? The last round allows the students to wonder. Ask what they would like to know about the photo. By giving every student multiple turns, students are encouraged to look very closely and share their thought process while activating any knowledge they might already possess about the subject.

## SUCCESS

- Choose a photograph which has plenty of identifiable elements and on which a lot of information is available.
- By using these steps, students will look beyond first impressions.
- It should make students curious and inspire them to investigate.

## LEARNING GOALS

- Explore (together)
- The existence of multiple perspectives in stories of the past

## BEST PRACTICE



# Suitcases full of stories at Airborne Museum at Hartenstein

## PROGRAMME

The students start with an interactive exercise with photographs as an introduction to the Battle of Arnhem. Afterwards, they are divided into groups and are each given a suitcase. Each suitcase contains photographs and items that are connected to a personal story. The students investigate these stories through the items in the suitcase and the exhibition in the museum. Finally, the students present their findings to each other and together with the museum guide these stories will be placed within the larger context of the Battle of Arnhem and the Second World War.

## DOELGROEP

Year 6 – 10

## CONTACT

[info@airbornemuseum.nl](mailto:info@airbornemuseum.nl)



## EXERCISE

# The discovery circle

## DESCRIPTION

Choose an object with a strong story. The students will sit in a circle and the object will be placed in the centre. Pass around the object. Every student can note something about the object. Help them along by asking questions such as: what do you see? What do you notice? How does it feel? What does it make you think of? After everyone has had a turn, the object goes around for the second time. Now, every student gets to ask a question. The teacher will answer the questions and bit by bit reveal parts of the story of the object.

## SUCCESS

- An object that has a personal story or is an authentic historical object usually creates more interest.

## POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

- Choose an object of which it is unlikely that any student can identify it. The students can only ask closed questions (yes/no). How many rounds does it take before the students have figured out what it is?

## LEARNING GOALS

- Exploring (together)
- Contextualising traces from the past

## BEST PRACTICE



# Object tour at National Monument Kamp Vught

## PROGRAMME

During the tour students will be shown historical objects (or replicas) which have been owned or made by former captives. Through these objects they will discover the history of National Monument Kamp Vught. The tour guide will ask questions about the objects and will inspire students to ask their own. Together they will discover the stories behind the objects. These personal stories will then be linked to themes of human dignity, compassion, loss of identity and resistance.

## MEANT FOR

Year 6 and 7

## CONTACT

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Foto © Ruud Strobbe

## EXERCISE

# Writing a letter

## DESCRIPTION

During a visit to the museum students will encounter stories and objects from people who lived through the Second World War. To process the information they will choose one person to write a letter to. They can start their letters with, for instance:

- I have heard your story and would like to tell you ...
- I have heard your story and learned that ...
- I have heard your story and now I know that ...

## SUCCESS

- Tell multiple stories from different perspectives. For example (a child of) a resistance fighter, a collaborator, ordinary citizens or people in hiding. It is important that the stories are personal and that they really happened.
- The different perspectives will return in the students' letters. Make sure to discuss the letters properly. What are the similarities and differences?

## POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

- With years passing, there are fewer and fewer people alive who have lived through the Second World War. The letters can also be written to children or families of the people whose stories are told or to the director of the museum.

## LEARNING GOALS

- Knowledge of historical events, people, situations and developments
- Insight in the different perspectives in stories of the past

## BEST PRACTICE

VERZETS  
RESISTANCE  
MUSEUM

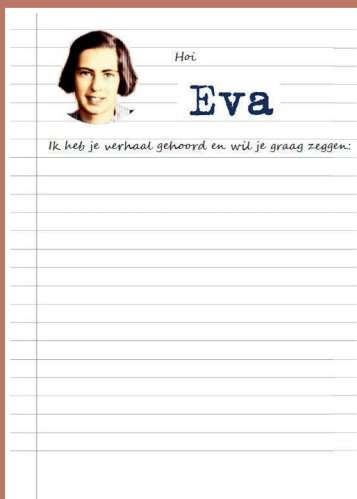
# Resistance museum junior

## PROGRAMME

Students go back in time to 1940: the Netherlands is occupied. In the exhibition the students will discover four true stories of children during the war. Eva is almost 11 years old, Jewish and fled from Austria. Henk is 8 years old, lives in Haarlem and thinks war is kind of exciting. Jan is 7 years old, lives in Heemse and is the son of a resistance fighter. Nelly is 14 years old, lives in a town in Zeeland and is from a family of collaborators. During the visit to the museum, students are given a booklet with a scavenger hunt. At the end they can write a letter to one of the children.

MEANT FOR      Year 6-8

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# LIST WITH POSSIBLE LEARNING GOALS DERIVED FROM *VERLANGEN NAAR TASTBAAR VERLEDEN* - MARIA GREVER EN CARLA VAN BOXTEL

Experiences
wonder and surprise
having fun
exploring together
Attitude
interest in history and heritage
appreciating history
Knowledge of
historical events, people, situations and developments
key terms which are related to the field of history
reasons to keep and preserve traces from the past in the future
Insight in
heritage as a selection process
the existence of multiple perspectives in stories of the past
the different ways of giving meaning to traces from the past in the present and past
the own identity and the identity of others
how your own identity influences your interpretation of the past
Skills
contextualising historical phenomena and traces of the past
identifying aspects of change and continuity
explaining historical phenomena and people's actions
comparing and contrasting historical phenomena and time periods
using historical objects and stories as historical sources in a simple investigation
(critically) interpreting historical exhibits
ability to give voice to personal thoughts and observations

DERIVED FROM : *VERLANGEN NAAR TASTBAAR VERLEDEN* - CARLA VAN BOXTEL, GEERTE SAVENIJE EN MARIA GREVER