

Keeping Warm in the Arctic



Secondary Education Workshop
Support Notes for Teachers

Science at The British Museum

North America: Key Stage 2 Science, priced £1.50, is available from the Education Department. This booklet provides plenty of suggestions for preparatory and follow up work based on the Native North American collections at The British Museum.

Workshop structure

The session consists of a sequence of interactive activities to provide pupils with an exciting and motivational use of science in the cultural context of Inuit life in the Arctic.

Primary Objectives

- To encourage students to compare clothing materials and understand continuity and change in their use.
- To develop an awareness of the Arctic environment and Native culture.
- To provide opportunities for students to observe closely a range of objects from the North American handling collection and by doing so to enhance understanding of materials and their properties.

Session Outline

1. Introduction

The session will begin with a brief question and answer session to establish the level of student knowledge about the Arctic. Students will then be asked to complete a survival quiz which lists nine questions. This will help students see whether they could successfully live a traditional life-style in the Arctic. Students will find out how they did at the end of the session. A ten minute film entitled 'Living Arctic' will be shown to introduce children to the Arctic environment and the way of life of the Native peoples who live there.

2. Insulation Demonstration

An experiment will be set up using data loggers and an interactive white board. Different materials will be compared to see which is the most effective insulator.

3. Investigating Traditional Inuit Clothing

Students will be divided into small groups. Each group will be given several items of Inuit clothing to handle and investigate. These will be used to explore the Inuit approach to coping with the harsh Arctic climate.

4. The Science of Snow Shoes

At this point students will look at the results from the insulation experiment and will be asked to draw conclusions from the data collected. This section of the session will explore some of the difficulties the Arctic can pose in terms of moving around. The science behind Inuit solutions to these problems will be revealed.

5. Investigating Modern Clothing

Students will have an opportunity to investigate the cutting edge technology that scientists, working in Polar regions, use to stay warm, fit and healthy. Modern techniques and materials will be contrasted with traditional Inuit approaches.

6. Plenary Session

Students will have an opportunity to see how they fared in the Arctic survival quiz which began the session. They will be given a few minutes to change their initial answers in the light of what they have experienced during the session. The concluding comments and quiz results will highlight objects which students may like to see in the Native North American gallery after the session has ended.

Important Note: Object Conservation

During the course of the workshop the pupils will be handling a range of replica and real objects. Some of these objects are drawn from the collection of the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum. The Museum would, therefore, very much appreciate it if pupils attending the workshop could wash and dry their hands before the start of the session to help conserve the objects being handled.

Some of the handling objects are composed of metal, bone and animal skins. Please notify the workshop facilitator if any pupils have allergies to furs at the start of the session.

We recommend that pupils wash their hands after the session, particularly if they are due to go straight into their lunch break.

Further Information

COMPASS

COMPASS is the British Museum's on-line collections database. You can use COMPASS to explore the Museum's collections and find out about life for Native North Americans in the Arctic. COMPASS allows you to identify key objects on display in the Museum which you may like to investigate with your students. It is a useful way of acquiring some background knowledge in advance of your trip. Log on to COMPASS at www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass

You will also find two interesting virtual exhibitions listed under the *Tours* heading on the COMPASS home page:

Annuraaq: clothing of Arctic North America

This virtual tour provides an opportunity to see material from a fascinating temporary exhibition which is no longer on display at the Museum

Kayak clothing in Greenland

As well as keeping warm it is important to keep dry. This tour provides some interesting information about clothing and materials suitable for wetter conditions!

The British Antarctic Survey

The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) provided the contemporary clothing which is used during the workshop. Their website at www.antarctic.ac.uk provides a fascinating insight into the work of BAS and lists resources for schools together with details of an Antarctic schools pack.

Scott Polar Research Institute (University of Cambridge)

The Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) provided some of the images used during the workshop. SPRI is the oldest international research centre in the world covering both the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

Creswell Crags

This website provides information about how Stone Age people coped with life in the Ice Age. There is a survival skills quiz for children which allows them to see how well they would have coped. Log on at www.creswell-crags.org.uk/virtuallytheiceage

Curriculum Links

Workshop activities cover a range of scientific concepts and link in particular to aspects of the National Curriculum for Science relating to Sc1: Scientific Enquiry and Sc 3: Materials and their properties.

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