

And the Romans came

Task 1 Museums

Which of these words do you associate with museums?

cool	intellectual	trendy	noisy	exciting
serious	boring	quiet	dull	fun

Task 2 Your experience

Ask your partner these questions

- Have you ever visited a museum with the school?
- What was the last exhibition you saw?
- Has your town or area got any good museums?
- Are there any special exhibitions on at the moment?
- Why do people go to museums?
- What things might make a museum attractive to teenagers?

Task 3 Adjective hunt

Read the reviews of two museums in Newcastle.

- Underline all the adjectives used to describe the exhibition and the activities.
- Compare them to those in task 1. Did you choose the same ones?
- Make a list of the activities that can be described as 'hands-on'.

Students in the UK: Visiting museums

Students all around the UK spend a week on half-term holiday three times a year. If they aren't rushing off to ski slopes, foreign cities or visiting relatives, they are joining the crowds in the UK's growing number of interactive exhibitions and museums. Research shows that half of children in the UK visit a museum at least once a year and there were over 100 million visits to national museums last year. That is more visits than to all the UK's live sports events.

We asked teenagers in Newcastle Upon Tyne to tell us what they saw during their week in February and which activities they enjoyed most.

The Life Science Centre

I've been to the Life Science Centre a few times and it is great fun, especially as you get to touch so many of the exhibits and play on the computers. The half term theme was 'Chocolate'. It isn't a good idea to come to this exhibition if you're on a diet as you get to eat a lot of the exhibits and taste the experiments! It was very hands-on. We made candy floss from sugar to see what happens to the sugar and we found out how long it takes to burn off the calories in a smartie. I ate some smarties too.

As you go through the exhibits you can do experiments with real sweets and follow a treasure hunt called the 'Chocolate Hunt' to find clues. We were very involved and lots of helpers were there to explain things. There was just the right combination of fun and factual information, which is important as we are on half term holiday.

I hate museums which make you feel like you are in the classroom with some boring Professor. As a self confessed chocoholic, I would give this exhibition ten out of ten. It got me interested in the science of food and I can remember everything I heard, saw and tasted. The chemistry of chocolate is seriously cool!

The Roman Fort at Segedunum

We did The Roman Empire in primary school history lessons but I don't remember much. I had no idea how interesting life was in Roman Britain until I had a day at the Roman Museum in Wallsend. It is unexpected. I think of Wallsend as an industrial town with shipyards. Wallsend means 'end of the wall' and it is at the end of Hadrian's Wall, just outside Newcastle. The Romans built a very important fort here to protect their wall. The fort was a hidden treasure, buried for hundreds of years.

When you get off the train at Wallsend metro the signs are in English and in Latin! Then just down from the metro station, next to the river and the shipyards, is the site of the Roman fort Segedunum. It is another world. The foundations of the fort are all there and inside an amazing visitors' centre you can travel back in time.

The best bits for me were the games room where you can sit down and play some of the games that the Romans played and the interactive computer room where you can hear about life in the fort told by different people of that time. I really enjoyed visiting the Bath house because they have rebuilt a communal toilet and reconstructed a whole building where the Romans bathed. They were like Turkish baths with hot rooms, cold rooms and also a big room for chatting and playing games. The walls are decorated with frescos. You can just imagine spending a few hours in there! Fascinating.

It's OK to look at maps and diagrams but tasting food and trying on Roman clothes brings everything to life. I have never enjoyed history so much. It is amazing that this frontier post to the Roman Empire is right on my own doorstep! 600 Roman soldiers lived here and their fort was buried for centuries under houses. When the old houses were demolished the archaeologists were able to discover a whole way of life.

The best thing about this special centre is that instead of having lots to read and objects in glass cases, you have lots to do with puzzles and hand-held computer games and you can touch things too. I would recommend it to anyone, even small children can enjoy it. The activities are practical and challenging. It is a whole day out for all the family. You will learn so much about what the Romans brought to Britain and about their daily life in the fort. You might start to enjoy history!

Task 4 Preparing a review

The students in Newcastle were asked to write a review for their local newspaper. Here are the main areas of the plan.

The name of the Museum
The main theme of the exhibition
Examples of activities and exhibits
Your favourite activity at the exhibition
Who the exhibition is aimed at
Your overall opinion of the exhibition

- Use the headings to make notes about each exhibition
- Say which museum you would prefer to visit and why
- Prepare a review of a museum or exhibition you have visited

Task 5 Making subjects come to life

Experts agree that making learning fun can help students study.

- Which school subjects are catered for in the two exhibitions?
- Describe two methods used by the museums to make their subjects 'come to life'.
- What are your favourite school subjects? Why?
- Describe activities that help you enjoy learning.
- Prepare a list of suggestions for new teachers: How to make your students enjoy learning.
- Show your suggestions to your classmates. Do you all agree?

Task 6 The Sweet tooth challenge

Make a list of all the sweet things you might eat on a normal day.

- Who eats the most sweet stuff?
- What's the most popular type of sweet snack?
- Which sweet snack has the most calories?
- Do you eat more sweet stuff than your grandparents did?

Task 7 Chocolate fun

Write as many sentences as you can about chocolate. Use words like cocoa bean, Easter eggs, milk, and sugar.

- Compile your sentences in groups and try to think of more
- Score a point for each correct sentence
- Try our chocolate quiz: Which group knows the most about chocolate and its history?

The Chocolate Quiz

1. Where do cocoa beans grow?

- a) On bushes b) On trees c) In the ground

2. Where was cocoa discovered?

- a) In West Africa b) In Mexico c) In Spain

3. When was the cocoa bean introduced into Europe?

- a) In the 1200s b) In the 1500s c) In the 1800s

4. Who enjoyed the first chocolate drinks?

- a) The Ancient Greeks b) The Mayans c) The Native Americans

5. Who brought the first cocoa bean to Europe?

- a) Cortez b) Cook c) Columbus

6. Who kept the new hot chocolate drink a secret for a century?

- a) English explorers
b) French nuns
c) Spanish monks

7. Who used the cocoa bean as money?

- a) The Spanish
b) The Aztecs
c) The North American Indians

8. What is the main ingredient of good quality chocolate bars?

- a) A high percentage of milk
b) A high percentage of sugar
c) A high percentage of cocoa solids

9. Which of these products contain cocoa butter?

- a) Toothpaste
b) Lipstick
c) Furniture polish

10. Which animal loves chocolate?

- a) Horses b) Mice c) Sheep

Task 8 Roman Britain - Project

Take a blank map of Europe

- Mark the countries, which were part of the Roman Empire.
- Draw a line to indicate where The Roman wall was in Britain and the fort of Segedunum.
- Find the Roman names for the countries in Europe, including countries in the UK.

The Romans introduced many things to Britain that are still in use today. A recent TV programme asked: What did the Romans do for us? Here are some examples.

Sanitation	Irrigation	Roads	Laws	Shops
The calendar	Coins	Paved streets and pavements		
Cement and bricks	Towns	Wine	Glass	
Language (new words)		Central heating		

- Does your country have a Roman history?
- Find out what the Romans introduced.
- Describe the historical period which interests you most.