

Everyday Things

AN INTEGRATION PROJECT (Visual Arts/History/Science)

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Look around your house and you will see that it is in fact a kind of museum. In every room are the exhibits - everyday things that you take for granted - but each of which has its own story. Take a tour of this museum, room by room, from top to bottom, exploring the design, the history and the workings of these everyday objects.

Through working on a project about these everyday things you will:

- look closely at art and design
- study broad historical themes
- study social and cultural change and transformation
- learn about the history of invention
- learn about how things work
- learn how scientific principals apply to things we use in daily life.

What kinds of everyday objects are we talking about? Well here is a list of some of them.

IN THE KITCHEN:

- the dishwasher
- the washing machine and the clothes dryer
- the refrigerator
- the microwave oven
- the mixer / blender / food processor
- the toaster
- the coffee maker
- the kettle
- tea bags and instant coffee
- cans / openers and ring pulls
- corkscrews
- cartons
- Tupperware
- pepper and salt mills
- Pyrex
- cooking utensils
- pedal bins
- paper and plastic bags

Make a close observational drawing of an open fridge or dishwasher in pencil.

Make a drawing from imagination "The Cat decides to wash himself in the Washing Machine" - use coloured drawing pencils.

Make a collection of kitchenware and draw a still life using drawing inks.

Make an observational drawing of a boiling kettle using charcoal.

IN THE BATHROOM

- the thermometer
- toilets and toilet paper
- the shower
- mirrors
- shaving products
- dental products
- lipstick
- deodorant
- tissues and cotton swabs
- hairstyling implements
- first aid materials

Look at yourself in the mirror and make a self-portrait in pencil.
 Make a collection of bathroom products and use them as the basis for a still life - using a variety of coloured drawing tools.
 Draw a picture about "Taking a Bath".
 Invent a new brand of toothpaste - design the new name, logo, etc. - draw a design for the new tube in Indian and coloured inks.

IN THE BEDROOM

- beds
- futons and waterbeds
- clocks and alarm clocks
- blinds
- radios, clockwork radios and radio alarms
- wristwatches
- safety pins
- eyeglasses
- zippers
- buttons
- air conditioners

Draw a self-portrait of yourself in your bed using a variety of coloured drawing tools.

Make a close observational drawing of your alarm clock / wristwatch in pencil.
 Design a fantastic pair of eyeglasses - draw your new design using drawing inks.

IN THE STUDY

- light bulbs
- neon lighting
- table lamps
- plugs and switches
- pens, pencils and erasers
- paperclips
- staplers
- self adhesive tapes
- rulers
- calculators
- scissors
- photocopiers and printers
- telephone, mobile phone and answering machine
- computer peripherals
- personal computers

Gather a collection of everyday writing tools - make a still life drawing of your collection in pencil.

Make a close observational drawing of your mobile phone using charcoal.

Make a close observational drawing of a home computer using coloured drawing materials such as drawing inks.

GENERAL HOUSEHOLD

- matches
- fire extinguishers
- smoke detectors
- clothes iron
- vacuum cleaner
- television, remote controls and VCRs
- personal stereo
- binoculars
- umbrella

Imagine you are looking through a pair of binoculars - draw two circles and draw what you might see using a variety of pencils.
Make a close observational drawing using charcoal of a vacuum cleaner.
Make an oil pastel drawing of your personal stereo.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

- cameras and film
- flashlight
- DIY tools
- Swiss army knife
- bicycle
- waterproof clothing
- trainers and athletic shoes
- barbecues
- kites
- Frisbee
- compass
- fireworks
- maps
- batteries
- lawnmowers

Make a closely observed pencil drawing of a set of DIY tools or of a Swiss army knife - or of a camera, or even of a lawnmower.
Make a cartoon drawing about "The Day the Lawnmower Came to Life".
Make a drawing of your trainer using coloured drawing pencils.
Use pastels to make a drawing about exploding fireworks.

PUBLIC SPACES

- locks, keys, padlocks and key rings
- traffic innovations
- elevators and escalators
- barcodes
- cash dispensers
- vending machines
- drinking fountains and water coolers

Put together a collection of locks, keys and padlocks and make a still life drawing about these using chosen drawing materials - make a photogram (using sugar paper) as a base for your drawing if you like.

A SUGGESTED APPROACH TO AN INTEGRATED PROJECT

Make a decision about whether children are to work individually or in co-operative groups. Individual children might choose a single everyday object to research or a group might choose one of the outlined collections.

Begin by making close observational drawings / labelled diagrams of the objects (using the suggestions above) to be researched. This activity might be actually given as a homework assignment - stress the need for real accuracy in the drawing - take measurements - practice drawing to scale, etc. These drawings might be

done using a range of the drawing and colour materials as outlined in the visual arts curriculum.

Set each child/group a number of questions that they must try to answer in their research - try to make these reasonably open to interpretation

- what is your opinion about the design of this object?
- find some interesting historical information about this object?
- can you write a simple description about how this object works?

Each individual/group must then engage in some simple research about the chosen object/s.

- using reference material and books
- using ICT programmes
- using the internet etc.

Research should then be presented in a variety of ways

- oral presentation to the class (*oral language development*)
- poster presentation (*process writing and visual arts*)
- compiling of simple books for a class library (*writing and visual arts*)
- power point presentation on computer (*ICT and visual arts*)
- multimedia presentation e.g. hyperstudio etc. (*ICT and visual arts*)

Follow up by a discussion on how we feel this everyday object might evolve in the future - using drawing again to show your ideas.

REFERENCES

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WEBSITE RESEARCH

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