

# Making connections

Using museum collections to connect historical and contemporary global issues  
A practical resource for developing **Global Citizenship** through Museum Education

Refugees

Suffragettes

Genocide

World War 1

Slavery

# Why this resource?

Museum Education often involves learning about what happened in the past. This can be fascinating, but is only of real educational value when it supports learners to make the connections with similar issues today. While conflict, violence, exploitation and inequality persist, learners can be inspired by activists and pacifists from the past in order to take action alive today. Within **Curriculum for Excellence**, this kind of learning develops the skills, values and attitudes of [Global Citizenship](#).

**The tasks and activities contained within this resource** are aimed at providing ideas for museum educators and can work either in a gallery or classroom setting. Many of the techniques and approaches are transferrable to a range of different themes and collections.

This resource has been created through the **Museums Galleries Scotland funded 'Brushes with War' schools project** which centred around a temporary exhibition of World War I soldiers' art at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum.

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## Creating a safe learning environment

**Exploring controversial issues** within a museum education session is particularly challenging, as we often don't have a previous relationship with learners or the time to get to know their individual backgrounds.

Taking five minutes at the start of your session to co-create a group agreement for an inclusive and supportive learning environment will pay dividends. Be aware that some learners may have first-hand experience of some of the situations being explored. Ensure all learners know what you will be covering so they can opt out of particular activities or have a designated person to speak to if needed. The activities in this pack help learners explore values and actions, express themselves, listen to others, develop empathy and share their ideas and feelings. Fostering an environment of trust and openness will enable educators to handle moments of uncertainty in discussion. Let learners know that you are not an expert on the issue, and that your interest is in how thoughtful responses and questions are, rather than a 'right' answer. It is important to judge when, how, and if to express personal views and opinions.

**Further guidance and support** See online Oxfam's [Teaching Controversial Issues guide](#) and British Red Cross's ['Creating a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment'](#)

Illustration by Natasha Sirovica from www.supercoloring.com



# Artworks as a source for learning

Artworks are not just a resource for groups studying Art and Design. They can be used to support learning in a wide range of subjects including History, Modern Studies, Citizenship, Religious and Moral Education and English. Artworks are powerful. Visual images speak to us in ways that words often cannot. They can provide an insight into a period in history, a person's life, convey an important message or be the starting point for a piece of writing. Your pupils don't need to know lots about the artist or artistic techniques – often the answers come from looking, reflecting and discussing what is seen.

**The first step is to encourage your pupils to stop and really look at an artwork.**

Here are some ideas:

## Activity 1: What's the content?

Give the pupils the title only of the artwork before they see it. From the title, can they think what the artwork might show? What sort of content will it have? Now reveal the actual artwork. Are they surprised?

## Activity 2: Cropping

Show pupils just a section of an artwork (see top right of this page). Based on that section, what do they think the rest of the artwork contains? Can they sketch it? Now reveal the whole picture and discuss what was different or similar to what they had drawn.

**Exploring further** [The Belgian Refugee Glasgow City Archives, have digitised records](#) relating to Belgian refugees who came to Scotland between 1914 and 1915. Find out where they came from in Belgium, what their occupations were, and where they were housed in Scotland. How were the Belgians perceived in Scotland? How does this compare with the experiences of refugees coming to Scotland today? Research on the BBC.



## Activity 3: Back to back 'blind' describing

**You will need:** • 1 clipboard • sheet of paper and pencil per pair • various artworks on display. **Ask pupils to go into pairs.** Pupil A faces an artwork. Pupil B goes back to back with them, so they can't see the artwork. Pupil A verbally describes the artwork whilst Pupil B makes a sketch based on the description. Give a time limit then allow Pupil B to look. **This activity always promotes lots of looking and discussing.**

## Activity 4: Mind map

**This painting** shows a Belgium refugee from World War 1. Many Belgians came to Scotland during the first World War.

**Use a mind map sheet** and ask the pupils to write down words to describe the man, his features and his clothing, and to reflect on how he might be feeling.



Noah Nelson Gray, Belgian Refugee, ca. 1915-21. (Reproduced with kind permission of Glasgow Museums)

# Refugees

## Fleeing conflict: what has changed over the years?

Headlines of a refugee crises have been dominating the news in recent years. In times of **'fake news'** it is more important than ever to distinguish between dangerous rhetoric and the actual facts, especially when they relate to real people and their personal stories.

### Activity 1: Jigsawing

**Cut up a selection of images** that depict refugees from **past conflicts**, and refugees from **conflicts today**. Each image should be cut into **3 or 4 pieces** (as shown here top right). Ensure the pictures are muddled so that when you give them out, learners near each other have different images.

- What can they see in their piece?
- What do they think is 'beyond the frame'?
- What questions do learners have of their jigsaw piece?

**Learners then find** who has the other parts of their jigsaw and complete the image. Ask groups of learners to swap and look at an image that they think is from a different time.

- What is similar and what is different?
- Are the root causes of the people fleeing similar or different?

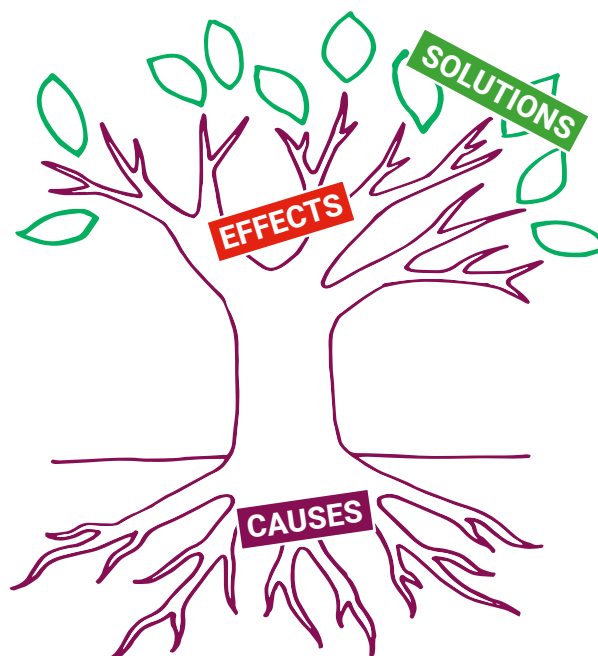
### Further resources

- BBC video: ['Refugees in the digital age'](#)
- [Action Aid Refugee Crisis resources](#)
- Oxfam: [Refugee Quiz](#)
- Oxfam: [Stand with Refugees](#)



### Activity 2: Issue tree

**Split the group in two** and give each a blank drawing of an **issue tree**. The first half should complete it with their understanding of the **root causes and effects** of refugees fleeing past conflicts. The other half should complete the same but with their understanding of the **causes and effects for refugees** fleeing current conflicts.



**Come back to the trees** after facilitating your session, looking at your relevant art and objects and exploring the issues.

- What might learners change/add to the roots or branches?
- Have they any ideas for the leaves?

# World War I

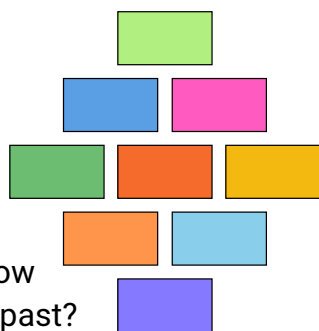
## Exploring conflict and warfare

World War 1 was to be the war that ended all wars. Unfortunately that was not to be the case and humans still resort to warfare over issues of resource and territory. Explore with your learners whether there's such a thing as a **'just war'**, what they perceive as acceptable and unacceptable warfare, and how it impacts those directly involved.

### Activity 1: Diamond 9 – weapons of war

**Prepare packs** containing **9 different images** depicting weapons of war through history, from the historical weapons in your museum to present day unmanned technology such as drones. In groups of three or four, learners should **diamond rank** the images in order of most fair to least fair.

- Is war ever fair?
- Does war ever lead to lasting peace?
- What are the alternatives to war?
- Are these different now to alternatives in the past?



### Further ideas and resources

- British Red Cross: [The Unknown Soldier](#) (film) and [learning resource pack](#)
- Stride Magazine for Global Citizenship: [War and Peace: article and learning activities](#)
- Quakers: [Conscience and Conviction – WW1 learning resources](#)



Here & front cover: FJ Mears, Carno 15-inch Howitzer, 1916 (Reproduced with kind permission of Joel Parkinson)

### Activity 2: Step into the picture

**Ask learners** to take a good look at the content and mood of this artwork:



Robert Lortac, A Shelter in the Trench, 1915 (Reproduced with kind permission of Joel Parkinson)

Imagine they were to step into the picture and be part of it, then make notes explaining what they would:

- **See...**
- **Hear...**
- **Smell...**
- **Touch...**

**This activity works** with a wide range of artworks, encouraging the learner to see events and experiences from someone else's perspective.





# Suffragettes

## Do women still need to fight for their rights today?

Nowadays in the UK we take the right to vote for granted. But before British women gained this right in 1918, both the suffragette and the anti-suffragette movements had a lot of supporters. It is important to understand where both sides in a heated debate come from in order to stand up against injustices, especially since women's rights around the world are still not a given.

### Activity 1: Speak up

**Look at the caricature**, top right of this page. Do you think it was in favour of the cause of the suffragettes, or against it?

**Look at other images and objects** which relate to the suffragettes, as well as those relating to recent women's rights campaigns around the world. Discuss with learners whether the issues and tactics have changed over time.

**Split your learners into two groups.**

Ask one team to write a speech supporting the cause of the suffragettes and one team arguing against it. The speech should be one minute long. Participants should use clear language, short sentences and rehearse before delivery. Make sure to have rules in place during the delivery (e.g. there should be no heckling or inappropriate language) and debrief afterwards.

### Further resources

- Robert Munsch picture book: 'The Paper Bag Princess'
- Stride Magazine for Global Citizenship, Summer 2013 issue: [What Does Gender Equality Mean?](#)
- Oxfam: [Raising her voice music resource](#)
- British Council: [Gender Equality through Citizenship Learning Resource](#)



### Activity 2: Here I stand

**Explain to students** that they are going to start this lesson by having them listen to some statements about gender and inequality and decide to what extent they agree or disagree with each. Place the word 'agree' and 'disagree' at either end of the room. Following each statement, each pupil must indicate their opinion by positioning themselves along an imaginary line, depending upon how strongly they agree or disagree. The whole exercise must be undertaken in silence. After the activity, pupils have the possibility to explain their stance.

### Example statements:

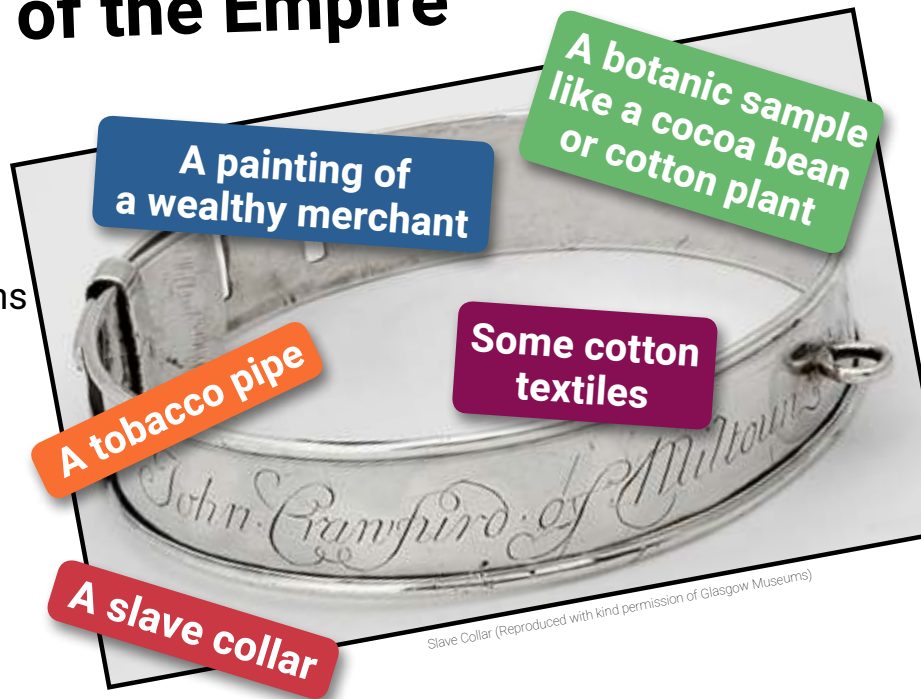
- Girls and boys are always treated equally ♪
- It was right and necessary that the suffragettes used acts of terrorism ♪
- Gender stereotypes mostly hurt girls and women ♪
- All women should be feminists ♪
- Men don't experience harassment ♪
- Feminism should include the rights and needs of trans women ♪
- We don't need feminism anymore ♪



# Slavery

## The dark side of the Empire

Museums across the UK have only in recent decades started to acknowledge the horrors of slavery linked with their collections and sites. This conversation is absolutely crucial – the objects and stories in museums can encourage pupils not only to acknowledge the past but also make connections with their own consumerism and contemporary slavery.



### Activity 1: Britain and the transatlantic slave trade – global connections

**Find an object in your museum** that is connected to the transatlantic slave trade – see some examples here on the slave collar image (top right of this page).

**Explore the provenance** of the object or the biography of the person. Can your learners identify how that object or artwork is related to the slave trade? Discuss the global connections and impacts of the transatlantic slave trade.

### Activity 2: Exploring contemporary slavery – match the stats

Slavery still exists sadly, and there are more enslaved people around the world today than they ever were during the transatlantic slave trade. To get an idea of the sheer scale on a global level, **print and cut out the figures and facts below** and then ask your learners to match them up. Discuss with your group which surprised them most, and what the implications of these figures are.

40.3 million

25

43

16 million

74 countries

136

116

51 hundred

people in modern slavery

percentage of those that are children

weekly hours children in forced labour work

people in forced labour in the private sector

worldwide where slavery has been detected

kinds of goods produced from modern slavery

nationalities of victims in the UK

number of victims in the UK in 2017



# Slavery

## The dark side of the Empire

continued...

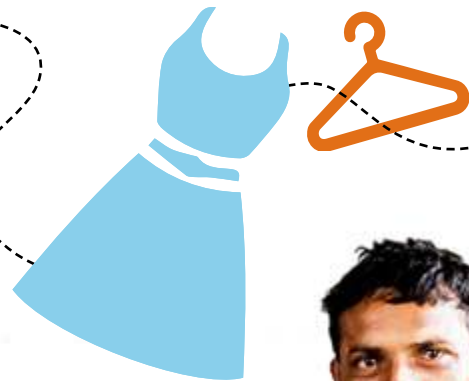
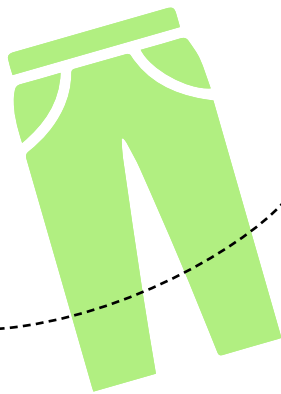


### Activity 3: The price of consumerism

**Discuss with learners** ways in which they can make the fashion industry a fairer place by being conscious consumers. Ideas include finding out about the circumstances under which their clothes were made, supporting retailers who are fair employers and reducing consumption through recycling.

**Now ask learners to create** a badge or poster which helps them to promote their ideas on the fashion industry to their peers. If your museum contains posters and other objects relating to historic human rights campaigns, these can be used for inspiration too.

● To explore further, visit: [www.fashionrevolution.org](http://www.fashionrevolution.org)





# Genocide

## Talking about the unspeakable

When teaching haunting topics such as the Holocaust, learners should always have the chance to ask questions or voice their emotions and thoughts in order to feel supported. It is also important to point out that the murder of 6 million of Jews was sadly not the only occasion in history when genocide has taken place. The commonality between the Holocaust and subsequent genocides can be explored by linking personal stories arising from objects and artwork.

### 10 stages of genocide:

1. Classification
2. Symbolisation
3. Discrimination
4. Dehumanisation
5. Organisation
6. Polarisation
7. Preparation
8. Persecution
9. Extermination
10. Denial

### Activity 1: Definition of 'genocide'

**Genocide never just happens.** It always starts with seemingly subtle restrictions and ideas that build up to create an environment which can make unimaginable terror happen. Introduce the word 'genocide' and ask participants in groups to come up with a definition.

Now provide pupils with the headings for the **10 stages of genocide** (listed top right of this page). Can they put the stages in order? Discuss what the different stages mean and look up an in-depth explanation [here](#).

### Activity 2: Aftermath

**The remaining personal belongings of victims of Genocide**, rendered useless after the death of their owner, are a shocking and emotional symbol of the atrocities committed, without showing graphic detail. They are therefore a powerful tool for exploring the personal stories of victims and honouring their memory.

**The painting on the right** shows a forensic assistant hanging up the cleaned-up clothes of some of the victims from the massacre in Srebrenica in order to be identified by their relatives. It can be a starting point to talk about perpetrators being brought to justice.



Robert McNeil, 'The Srebrenica Line' (Reproduced with kind permission of the artist)

### Example questions could include:

- What can we see in the painting?
- Who is the woman and why is she wearing scrubs?
- Why is she hanging up the clothes?
- What colours are being used in the painting?
- Why is the background black?
- How does the painting make you feel?

### Activity 3: Life Goes on?

**It is important to point out** that life after genocide continues in the affected communities and countries. A contemporary object from your collection, for example, a Jewish recipe, a Muslim prayer carpet, Rwandan textiles or a musical instrument, can be a hopeful reminder of life going on after terrible violence without ever forgetting the victims.

### Further resources

- [Holocaust Memorial Day Trust](#)
- [Remembering Srebrenica](#)

