

Curriculum Links

YEAR 7 History

The different methods and sources of evidence used by historians and archaeologists to investigate early societies, and the importance of archaeology and conserving the remains, material culture and heritage of the past (AC9HH7K08)

Key beliefs, values and practices of an ancient society, with particular emphasis on one of the following: everyday life, warfare, or death and funerary customs (AC9HH7K11)

Identify and describe the accuracy and usefulness of primary and secondary sources as evidence (AC9HH7S04)

Activities

1. Eat like a Roman

Excavations at Pompeii have revealed much about the Roman diet and dining rituals. You saw a partial loaf of bread in the exhibition and learnt about the *triclinium* (dining room). Why not host your own Roman feast at school? Research the likely location, guest list, menu, dress code and entertainment.

BONUS: Learn how to tie a toga for the event. Or try following the recipe for *panis quadratus* (the loaf of bread you saw in the exhibition) from your Learning Guide.

In summer, wealthy Romans ate overlooking their gardens, often listening to the sound of running water from fountains, such as the *nymphaeum* in the exhibition. Hold your feast outdoors near water or play the sound of running water. After, ask students to reflect on how this affected their experience and what it might tell us about life in ancient Pompeii.

Read: Farrell Monaco, 'The Pompeian pantry', Diana Streak, 'Breaking bread' and Luana Toniolo, 'Picturing daily life in a Roman city' in *The Museum* magazine.

2. Fancy frescoes

The people of Pompeii decorated their homes and shops with frescoes depicting a range of subjects from Greek and Roman mythology to tranquil gardens. Demonstrate your understanding of Roman values and beliefs by drawing or painting a scene that might once have adorned a Roman home. When your picture is complete, cut it into fragments. Put the pieces in an envelope and swap it with a partner, who has to reassemble the pieces and reveal the design. Share your artworks with the Education team at the National Museum education@nma.gov.au. We'd love to see what you come up with!

BONUS: Try mixing your own pigment paints, like the ones you saw in the exhibition.

Invite your students to become archaeologists and reconstruct a fresco found in Pompeii. The fresco depicted in the exhibition interactive was on the vaulted ceiling in a *cubiculum* (bedroom) in the House of Leda and the Swan, which collapsed under the weight of the lapilli during the eruption of 79 CE. Fragments of the ceiling were recovered and restored and are part of an interactive in the exhibition. Reconstruct the fresco online at puzzlepompei.grandpalais.fr

3. Pop-culture Pompeii

Compare and contrast two representations of Pompeii from music, literature, art or film. Consider elements such as historical accuracy, empathetic understanding and contemporary relevance. How do these interpretations compare to the exhibition? What are the similarities and differences?

Read: Craig Barker, 'Pop Pompeii: The city's afterlife in popular culture' in *The Museum* magazine.

Resources

Paper, writing/typing materials, scissors, envelopes, computers.

The Museum magazine is a special issue dedicated to Pompeii and has a range of articles that provide useful information for your students. Buy it in the Museum Shop or online at shop.nma.gov.au

In the classroom

Teacher Resource

Years 7–12

POMPEII

INSIDE A LOST CITY

Curriculum Links

YEAR 11 & 12

Ancient History

The key archaeological and written sources for the period, for example public and private buildings, mosaics, statues, villas, baths, shops, tombs, human and animal remains, official inscriptions and the writings of Pliny, Seneca and Martial (ACHAH368)

The difficulties involved in the protection and management of Pompeii and Herculaneum, including exposure to the elements, impact of tourism, the arguments for and against carrying out further excavation at these sites, and the concern about the scientific study of human remains and display of body casts (ACHAH370)

The important features of the economy, including commerce, industries and occupations (ACHAH374)

The key features of everyday life, for example leisure activities, food and dining, water supply, sanitation and health (ACHAH377)

Activity

4. Debate – To dig or not to dig

Excavations are a primary focus of the exhibition. Debate the issue of whether we should continue to excavate the Pompeii site. Research the challenges associated with excavation such as tourism, deterioration, security and emerging technologies. Weigh this up against the value of the historical knowledge it may yield.

This activity can also be done as a Gallery Walk where students record their arguments and pin them to walls on opposite sides of the room, reflecting the different sides of the debate.

Read: Annamaria Perrotta and Claudio Scarpati, 'The catastrophe' and Estelle Lazer, 'Lives and legacies: New perspectives on the Pompeii plaster casts' in *The Museum* magazine.

5. The Roman Record

The exhibition is designed to make you feel as if you have stepped into ancient Pompeii. Demonstrate your understanding of the rhythms of daily life by creating a newspaper for the week prior to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. What news might have been reported? Possible topics include politics, sport, travel, theatre, business, building projects and restaurant reviews.

Read: Luana Toniolo, 'Picturing daily life in a Roman city' in *The Museum* magazine.

6. Creative response

Pliny the Younger's letter to Tacitus is famous for being the only surviving eyewitness account of the eruption. As a result, it is often quoted when the subject of Pompeii is raised – we included a quote in our exhibition too! The letter is very detailed and unemotional – which is surprising given how catastrophic the eruption was. Historians believe that Pliny wrote the letter about 25 years after the event, which might explain his tone but makes the level of remembered detail even more impressive.

Read a translation of the original letter then demonstrate your historical understanding and powers of analysis by crafting a journal entry written by Pliny in the days after the eruption. How might the tone be different? What details might he have included or excluded? Annotate the final copy to explain your choices.

Resources

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