

Preparing Your Group for a Victorian Lesson

To help your class get the best out of their lesson we strongly advise that you discuss with them before their visit what things might be happening in the session. The experience is authentically Victorian - the teacher will be strict, stern and distant. Complete silence and instant obedience will be expected and children must never think for themselves or anticipate their instructions. Please remind them it is only role play and it will definitely end after an hour, but to get the most out of the session they should take it seriously.

It is inevitable that one pupil will have to wear the dunce's cap and another will be 'caned', others may have to wear or demonstrate the back straightener and left handers will be expected to write with their right hand – after all 'the right hand is the right hand for writing'. Participation in the lesson in this manner will be a reward for good behaviour/acting not for misbehaving.

Please bring a register (with surnames and first initials or whole first names and an indication as to whether the child is male or female if it may not be apparent from their name) for each class to give to the Victorian schoolteacher. This allows us to call a proper register at the start of each classroom experience. The register can also be used to indicate to the Victorian teacher any pupils with learning difficulties, or are who especially sensitive, so they are not put under too much pressure. If you wish you can also indicate which pupils should get the dunce's cap and cane.

Visiting adults also have a role to play in setting the scene in the classroom and should behave in a similar manner to the Victorian teacher as far as is possible and appropriate for your group. Photography is permitted but please try to be as unobtrusive as possible. In the 1880 Gallery lesson visiting adults will be referred to and treated as pupil teachers. If you are accompanying younger groups in the 1840 Monitorial lesson you may be taking on the role of monitors. Please listen for and follow your cues.

Preparing Your Group for a World War Two Evacuee Lesson

To help your class get the best out of their lesson we strongly advise that you discuss with them before their visit what things might be happening in the session. The experience is authentically wartime - the teacher will be strict, stern and distant. Complete silence and instant obedience will be expected and children must never think for themselves or anticipate their instructions. References will be made to the war and evacuation throughout, including the fact that they will not be going home at the end of the schoolday but to a new family who will be looking after them. Please remind them it is only role play, it will definitely end after an hour and they will be going home to their families at the end of the visit. However, to get the most out of the session they should take it seriously.

Please bring a register (with surnames and first initials or whole first names and an indication as to whether the child is male or female if it may not be apparent from their name) for each class to give to the teacher. This allows us to call a proper register at the start of each classroom experience. The register can also be used to indicate to the teacher any pupils with learning difficulties, or are who especially sensitive, so they are not put under too much pressure.

A gas mask drill will be held during the lesson. Instructions will be given that assume that all children will wear them but should a child choose not to after the entire class is encouraged to it will be 'overlooked' without fuss – no one will be forced to wear a gas mask.