

## THEME 3: EXPLORING THE PAST IN OUR PRESENT: DRAMA

### AIM

In AD 122 Hadrian gave orders for a wall to be built from the River Tyne in the east to the Solway in the west, today the remains of the Wall form a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS). Although the Wall is mainly a ruin, it has an impact on the identity of the north of England and is a great place to visit.

The aim of this theme is to develop student awareness and understanding of how our individual identities are shaped by the places and communities we live in. It raises the question 'Why is Hadrian's Wall relevant to us here and now, and in the future?' and shows how the communities along the Wall have evolved from a mix of cultures and races brought together because of the forts and sites along Hadrian's Wall.

Although it is possible to deliver this theme in one session greater value is to be had in exploring the issues in more depth. Students could move one from a general exploration of the ideas to greater research into a specific example and some suggestions are included on the teacher disc.

The activities could be linked to the themes explored through storytelling and the discussions arising from the Tribes and Romans sessions.

### KEY WORDS/SKILLS

Explore the terms:

**Self** – how do we reveal who we are - through our name, interests, friends etc?

**Identity** – what makes us who we are?  
Family history, family geography, environment, friends, influences such as celebrity.

### SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Posters/images of Hadrian's Wall

Newspaper cuttings etc showing people in particular situations to suit theme e.g. receiving sporting awards, in grief, political triumph/disappointment

Large mat for use as gathering space

### INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Introduce yourself –where do you come from? Does your name give clues to your identity?

#### Name game: Who am I?

**Aim:** to find out a bit more about ourselves.

**How to play:** stand in a circle. Roll a tennis ball across the circle to another person. That person says their name and something about themselves.



Bridge over the River Tyne with swimming salmon

**Skills:** cooperation, finding out about people, making eye contact, physical control.

### **'Walking to balance the floor on a sphere' combined with 'Body parts' game**

**Aim:** to gain space between participants and learn about spatial boundaries between people.

**How to play:** without touching and arms outstretched move around the space with rocking foot movements as if balancing on a gym ball.

Stop in space. Leader call out the number of people in a 'set' then the body parts that need to be joined, e.g. two people with knees joined to elbows, hips to shoulders.

**Skills:** body movement, working together, creating interesting shapes as a group, listening, taking part, having fun, cooperation.

### **MOVE TO MAT OR OTHER DESIGNATED GROUP SPACE**

## **MAIN ACTIVITY**

### **Introduction**

Give a brief history of Hadrian's Wall illustrated with posters etc

### **Freeze Frame and tableaux**

**Aim:** to depict modern people in attitudes that reflect actions that people may have made 2000 years ago.

**Introduction:** introduce the concept that when there isn't time to create 'a play in a day' this is a good way to get key messages across i.e. short cut drama.

Talk about the etiquette of theatre, of sharing, of being 'a good audience'; of trying to look the part on the 'stage' and try not to 'corpse' i.e. laugh at your own effort on stage as that breaks the spell of theatre.

**Activity 1:** divide class into small groups. Using newspaper cuttings depicting victorious sporting shots/ political parades/ activity shots etc as stimuli, each group must do 3 freeze frames, link them together and be prepared to show them to the class. Give each group a short amount of time to present to the group; freeze-frame.

**Activity 2:** nominate feature along the Wall e.g. fort gateway, bridge over the river for each group to produce as a tableau. Freeze-frame

### **Final exercise**

In groups of 4 – do a freeze frame of doing an X Factor Song or dance.

## **PLENARY/ONGOING LINKS ETC**

### **Points to discuss highlight/discuss further:**

- The Roman/ British story is not all sealed and delivered, there is still lots to learn
- That the school and students may be part of the World Heritage Site (WHS)
- That the WHS is part of their environment and plays a part in shaping their identity
- That their environment/locale gives students certain opportunities in leisure, employment, creativity
- Students may actually be related to some of the people who lived/ worked back in Roman era.



## THEME 3: EXPLORING THE PAST IN OUR PRESENT – STORY TELLING

### BACKGROUND NOTES

Story telling is the foundation of the modern world; it is the story tellers that extend the tradition of literature back into the pre Roman Past. It is the story teller who creates the very myths and stories upon which modern literature is based. It is the story tellers that have shaped human understanding of the world in which we live and, in the guise of journalists, continue to do so. It is the rumours spread by the story tellers that are confirmed or denied by the propaganda on the reverse of Roman coins. It is the story teller as praise singer that has bolstered political power throughout history and at times has even been that power.



**Shamus and a rapt audience**

Image © Tyne Team/Deja Crew

This session relies on the strength of its leader and the creation of controlled but relaxed atmosphere;

this person has to become 'the storyteller'. Story telling is very different from reading a story, both require skills but the teller has greater freedom to embellish and dramatise. We are all storytellers, as we recount our day, describe a recipe or a delicious meal and discuss the things that matter to us.

Shamus has contributed two stories of his own but there is rich variety of myths, legends and sacred texts from all cultures and traditions that could be used to explore the themes of image and identity, power and resistance.

### AIMS

Using an historical context inform, entertain, stimulate and arouse interest in personal relationships, aspirations, fears and issues of self identity.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

Students will gain a greater sense of individual worth and begin to understand

- the criteria unconsciously adopted by individuals to achieve self awareness
- the consequence of one's own actions
- the fragility of the social fabric

### SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Choose the space for this activity carefully. Students need to be able to gather round the story teller but also to move around and follow him/her on a journey. Subdued light might be appropriate and props to suggest a campfire. A school hall would be too large but a smaller space such as a drama practice room might be good.

Ideally there should be two staff members in the room, one to lead the session and the other to care of class management.

Shamus' stories or other story of choice reflecting the themes of individual and group identity\*

Small mats, cushions (squares from carpet sample books are good for this, easily stored, portable and quick to set out

\* See Resources section

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since humankind first exploited the voice as a primary means of communication there have always been storytellers. Before the advent of writing and for long after that all learning was oral, studying meant sitting and listening to the teacher, the wise woman, the priest and then taking that knowledge and recounting it to others. Skills were learnt by observation and practice.

Much storytelling took place around the campfire in the evening rest time, so we shall now travel to our campsite....

## **MAIN ACTIVITY**

Lead the group into the space in character as story teller, talking to create a sense of anticipation and to gather everyone into the activity.

When everyone is settled start the story telling. It is important to keep in character and deal with interruptions in character from whatever source they come so that the audience remains engaged. 'Spell binding' is what you are trying to achieve.

At the end of the story 'break the spell' in some way e.g. turn up the lighting, stand up and reverse the journey back to the seats.

## **PLENARY/ONGOING LINKS ETC**

- Discuss the points that the story teller is making
- Who are the modern story tellers? (Stand up comedians etc)
- In small groups discuss and note down the qualities that make a story teller. Share with the class. What is the difference between a story teller and a reader?
- In pairs recount to each other an anecdote or short story bearing in mind the qualities noted above.
- There are two sisters in the Shamus' story but not much is said about them. Create a story for each of them.