Discovery session: How We Used to Dress

A gallery based session led by V&A museum educators

Mantua Court Dress, unknown, 1740-50 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Key Stage:
KS1 & KS2

Galleries Visited:
• Britain, Rooms 52 – 54, Level 1
• Britain, Rooms 122 – 125, Level 3

Topics and themes:
• Change and development in British fashion & lifestyle
• History and links to Design & Technology

Summary:
Find out first hand what people would have worn through history and explore how clothes have changed from what we wear today and why. Starting with James II’s wedding suit, which dates from 1673, students will see and try on examples of fashion from the 18th and 19th centuries including a Mantua court dress, a Victorian corset and crinoline. And an imitation 18th century gentleman’s outfit

National Curriculum Links: This talk will contribute towards the following learning:

• Changes within living memory. Where appropriate, these should be used to reveal aspects of change in national life.
• The lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements. Some should be used to compare aspects of life in different periods
• a study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils’ chronological knowledge beyond 1066

Follow up activities:
At the museum you will have looked at clothes that would have been worn mostly by wealthy people. Now do some research into what people from poorer backgrounds would have worn at the same time as the objects explored in the galleries.

www.vam.ac.uk/schools