every object tells a story

Learning resources pack
Every Object Tells a Story

- How are objects in the home and objects in museums connected?
- How can you use objects to develop family learning?
- How are stories linked to objects in the home?
- How can family stories be used to develop literacy and language?
- How can this way of working engage diverse communities and cultures?

Every Object Tells a Story is a partnership project between MLA Yorkshire and the School of Education, University of Sheffield, with Sheffield Family Learning and the Burngreave Community Learning Campaign, which has been exploring some of these questions.

Taking existing research into family objects and stories as a starting point, this resource pack offers a variety of practical activities, ideas and resources for working with family learners.

- The activities can be used by family learning practitioners or by museum staff.
- Some of the activities take place in the classroom, some involve a visit to the museum.
- The activities assume that adults and children are learning together in the same classroom, although they can be adapted for adults only.
- The activities are most suitable for Key Stage 2 age children, however, they can be adapted for working with older or younger children.
- The activities have been piloted with a group of learners from Burngreave Community Learning Campaign.
- You are free to use, adapt and share these materials, and reproduce them for educational purposes.

It is our intention that these materials form a starting point for tutors and museum learning staff to explore and develop their own ideas around how objects, stories and museums can be used to enhance family learning opportunities.
The resources in this pack are divided into three themes:

1) **Every object tells a story**
2) **Interests and passions**
3) **Sharing family memories**

Each section has suggested activities, with accompanying handouts and activity sheets if needed, and tutor’s tips.

The activities take a web site [www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk](http://www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk) as a starting point. Although most of the activities can be carried out without a computer, you can use the web site to provide an introduction to the themes.

### Every object tells a story
- Aims and objectives: 8
- Introductory activities: 9
- What objects are special to you?: 15
- The value of objects: 19
- Special objects resource box: 21
- Mystery objects: 23
- Special objects at the museum – visiting a museum: 26
- Choosing and grouping objects: 29
- A museum for my community: 30
- A display of special objects: 32

### Interests and Passions
- Aims and objectives: 34
- Introductory activities: 35
- Food: 36
- Textiles and clothes making: 39
- Poetry: 41

### Sharing family memories
- Aims and objectives: 42
- Introductory activities: 43
- ‘Then and now’ card game: 45
- Photographs tell stories too: 55
- How did other families live?: 56
- Visit to a museum: 57
- Celebrating our family: 57
The suggestions and activities in this pack are intended to be used on a pick and mix basis, and tutors are invited to tailor, adapt and develop activities to suit the needs and interests of their group.

The materials are available to download from www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk in either pdf or word format, to make this easier.

Some of the ideas and materials in this pack are suitable for use when developing schemes of work for the following OCN units in particular:
- Supporting your Children in Family Learning (HFI/1/QQ/010)
- Exploring Computers to Support Family Learning (HFI/1/QQ/007)

The materials have been piloted and commented on by tutors and museum staff. Thanks go to the following for their input:
- Jacqui Lindsay, Sheffield Family Learning
- Parven Akhter, Burngreave Community Learning Campaign
- Rachel Reynolds, Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham

Throughout the pack, we have included specific tips from both the tutors and museum staff on how to run these activities.

Activities can be selected for a one-off event, or be delivered as a once-a week course that runs over a half term. To deliver all the activities in this pack would probably take several months.

The following lesson plan gives an example of how Jacqui and Parven have used some of the activities from the resource pack with their learners. The following scheme of work shows how Rachel would use the activities from the resource pack to run a longer project. All the activities mentioned in these plans can be found in this resource pack.

We would encourage family learning tutors and museum staff to work in partnership with each other to deliver these activities.
Every Object Tells a Story
Introductory lesson plan by
Jacqui Lindsay and Parven Akhter

This lesson plan was piloted with a group set up by Burngreave Community Learning Campaign in partnership with Applegrove organisation. Learners came from various countries such as the Yemen, Somalia, and Iraq. The group members were the parents of primary school children, had mixed ability literacy skills and were attending a course ‘Helping your child in Family Learning’ OCN Level 1 organised by Parven Akhter at Burngreave Surestart.

The session involved 7 adults plus 6 children of pre-school age. The tutors had already met the group informally to discuss the purpose of the session. Some members of the group had brought in special objects to a previous session, others brought in objects to this session to share with the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Introduction and Health and Safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 15   | Use discussion topics to develop conversation amongst the group.  
  ➢ Which three objects would you save from your home if there were a fire? Why? Are these objects different from what other members of your family would choose?  
  ➢ Where do you keep the objects you value the most? At home? In a certain room? On display or locked away? |
| 5    | Look at objects and pictures of objects brought in by learners. Would other members of the family have chosen different objects? |
| 5    | Do their children have favourite toys / possessions? What would their children have chosen to bring? |
| 10   | Tutor introduces their own special object and asks the group to guess the meaning of object and why you brought it in. Use three cards with different reasons for learners to vote on why the object is special. |
Split into 2 / 3 groups. Each group has a set of photos / objects and discusses why these might be special. Use vocabulary cards to find adjectives that can be used to describe objects. (Tutor demonstrates using their own object).

Feedback from groups

If possible, show learners pages from the Every Object Tells a Story website. Discuss as a group what you think of the objects chosen. Which objects would you choose to highlight in your bedroom / house and why?

Feedback from the learners

Members of the group said they enjoyed the session. Learners invited Jacqui and Parven (the tutors) to attend their cultural events, such as musical class, wedding party and to visit their house. Some of them offered to show their marriage video. Some of the learners came wearing traditional jewellery & a belt with a Yemeni knife with a case.

Parven explained, “The group shared their traditional culture with us and explained the purpose of the use for every object, for example the belt with a knife holder which is worn on the waist. This is worn when dancing at a cultural event. One of the ladies brought in a dress and she said that she could bring a picture of her daughter wearing the dress. This shows everyone’s enthusiasm for sharing their views on objects they value from their homes.”
A suggested 8-week programme to introduce activities around special objects, working towards a display by learners hosted in the museum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Every Object Tells a Story - introductory activities from the resource pack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What objects are special to you? Ask everyone to bring in their special objects. I would record everyone talking individually about their objects with a view to transcribing this to create labels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Special objects in the community - visiting a museum. As well as learners visiting the museum, I would incorporate the Mystery Objects activities into this session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Introduce idea of objects/ issues that are important to communities (using handout provided). Talk about similar previous museum projects. I would also incorporate aspects from ‘A museum for my community’ into this session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Practical session - writing labels/ making memory boxes/ making mounts etc for the exhibition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Practical session - writing labels/ making memory boxes/ making mounts etc for the exhibition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Practical session - mounting displays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Opening of exhibition and celebration event with learners and invited guests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aim of the theme:

The aim of this theme is to encourage families to think about objects – both their own and other people’s, everyday and special. What special meanings do some objects have? Which objects are special to your family members?

Objectives of the theme:

Learners will:
- Consider the different meanings that objects can have, and why some objects have a special value and meaning to individuals
- Discuss as a family which objects in their home mean the most, and compare this with the responses from other families
- Identify and celebrate the special things in their home, and explore how these objects relate to family memories and stories
- Think about the special meaning objects have over time, and find out about how museums take care of and display some of these objects
- Consider the secret stories which objects can hold, and the different meanings they have for different people
- Develop literacy and IT skills

Tutor notes

This theme could be explored over the course of one session, or a whole term. The following activities are presented as a mix and match of different resources and discussion points for you to adapt for your learners.
Aim of the activity: to introduce ideas about objects having special meaning, and to encourage learners to think of examples of their own.

Begin by talking to learners about their own objects. Which are most special? Which do they use the most? Which improve their lives the most? Compare and contrast answers given.

Discussion topics:
- Which three objects would you save from your home if there were a fire? Why? Are these objects different from what other members of your family would choose?
- Do your children have favourite toys / possessions? (Or did they used to when they were younger)? What were they, and why did they become so favoured?
- Where do you keep the objects you value the most? At home? In a certain room? On display or locked away?
- What is on your mantelpiece at home? Why?

Tutor tip: You may need to ensure that learners understand the word ‘mantelpiece’. Our learners were also unable to relate to the idea of displaying objects in their homes on a mantelpiece or display cabinet. We realised later that the local housing probably does not have mantelpieces and learners did not understand this terminology. Also as these parents had young children in the home precious objects were put away in boxes in cupboards for safety.

Tutor’s special object

Bringing in an object from your own home is a good way to introduce this topic and illustrate your point. Choose an interesting object with a story behind it (for example a photograph, ornament, memento from a holiday or a family event such as a wedding, something which has been passed down through your family).

Explain to the group that this is a special object to you, and has a special meaning behind it. Pass the object around the group if possible (if bringing in a photo, make copies of it using a scanner and printer, and pass around the copies). Ask the group to guess the meaning of your object, then explain the meaning to the group.
Ask the group is they can think of any special objects in their home, with similar interesting stories.

Variations:
- Before telling the group the reason why the object is special, ask them to make up possible answers. Encourage them to be as creative as possible!
- Bring in a small selection of 4 – 6 objects ranging from special to everyday, and ask learners to have the discussion about why they might be special in small groups
- Make up three cards with three different reasons on them for why this object is special to you (including one true reason and two imaginary reasons). Learners must vote for which reason they think is correct

*Tutor Tip: This activity worked really well when I piloted it with my learners. I brought in a pen produced as a wedding favour for my daughter’s wedding. I gave the learners three options for why it was special, and asked them to guess the correct answer:

- Reminds me of a special day
- It belonged to someone important to me.
- I wrote an important letter with it.

Using my own object brought from home was a good focus for the learners. They were interested in what it was and using the cards gave learners the opportunity to make an informed decision on why it was important to me. If taking this session again I would use this at the beginning of the session as an introductory activity.
**Special objects in everyone’s homes**

As a group, look at the ‘Khan children’s’ section of the Every Object Tells a Story website. Explain that the children each have several special objects in their room. Encourage the learners to explore the pages and click on the objects to find out what they are and why they value them.

Discuss as a group what you think of the objects chosen by the Khan children. Which objects would you choose to highlight in your bedroom / house and why? Which objects are on your mantelpiece and why?

Working in family groups, and using the templates of the bedroom, mantelpiece and house provided, ask learners to draw special objects from their home in the correct places, and add comments about why they like these objects.
Mantelpiece
House
**Aim of the activity:** to explore what significance objects have for different people

In advance of the session: ask learners (both adults and children) to bring in one object that has a special significance to them. You may need to discuss this with the group further to give them guidance e.g. different reasons that an object might be special, examples of the types of objects they could bring. However, try to avoid the learners saying specifically what they will be bringing in – the idea is to keep this a secret.

As learners arrive for the session, collect their objects from them, and keep the identity of the owner of each object a secret.

*Tutor Tip: During this activity, you may need to allow for the fact that not all learners will remember to bring in an object. The suggestions below can be adapted to accommodate this.*

Depending on the size of the group and how many people have remembered to bring an object, either

1) Divide the learners into small groups, each of which includes at least one person who has brought in an object. Learners to talk about their objects in small groups, and share why they have brought in that object with others.

OR

2) Put all the objects out together on one table, which the whole group can sit around.

One person around the table starts – they choose one of the objects, and guess whose object it is and why it is special to them.

The true owner of the object then stands up, claims their object, and explains the real reason it is special to them. Repeat until everyone around the table has claimed their object.

OR

3) Divide the objects into groups of 6-8, and put them on separate small tables around the room. Ask learners to go and sit on the table that their object is on, without letting on which object is theirs'. Repeat the activity as for 2 above.
Tutor tip: Learners can use the ‘Special Objects’ handout to record their discussions, and also to introduce a literacy element to this activity.

Discussion points:
- Did any of the reasons people gave for why their objects are special surprise you? Sometimes it is easy to guess the significance of an object, but sometimes it is more difficult.
- Different objects can have different meanings for different people.
- Objects can tell you something about their owner – what do these objects tell us about the group of people that we are?
- Do children and adults relate to the same objects differently?

Ask the adults and children to work together to draw / photograph / write about their object.

Tutor Tip: The learners who brought objects were very enthusiastic about describing them and proud to contribute to the session.

Literacy activity

Working in family groups, give learners copies of the ‘Adjective Cards’, and ask them to choose which ones relate to their object.

Ask learners to feedback to everyone else which cards they chose for their object. Discuss with learners what we mean by an adjective.

Tutor Tip: The adjective cards were successful, giving the learners a practical activity to focus on.

IT activity

Learners could use a digital camera to record the items they have each chosen to bring in.

Museum staff tip: You could also use a minidisk or cassette recorder to record ‘sound bites’ from each adult and child talking about their objects and why they brought them in to show the group.
## Special objects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Participant</th>
<th>Title of the object by the participants</th>
<th>Description of the object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Delicate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuable</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>Solid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative</td>
<td>Ornamental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Aim of the activity:** to discuss different reasons why objects might have a special value or meaning to individuals, families and communities.

Discuss as a group the different reasons why people might care about a certain object. Begin with the objects the learners chose to bring in to show the class – why were these objects special? What other reasons can the group think of? Answers could include:

- It’s worth a lot of money
- It reminds you of happy times
- It belonged to someone else in your family
- It makes your life easier
- It is connected with a particular hobby or interest
- You’ve had it a long time

Create a spider gram of all these different reasons you can think of.

**Tutor Tip:**
*I think that if I were taking this session I would introduce the activity with photographs of meaningful objects, places and buildings, and ask learners to match the pictures to a choice of descriptions. The groups could then feedback their comments before looking at why objects have a meaning to a community.*

**Discussion questions:**

- Can objects you use everyday also have a special meaning? Can learners think of any examples of these?
- Gold and jewellery have a special meaning to many societies. What does gold mean in your community? What does it mean in other communities? Does anyone have a piece of gold or jewellery that means something special to them? Why is jewellery such a popular ‘special object’?

Some objects are important because they have a story or a meaning for a family or an individual. Some objects have a story or meaning for many more people, such as a whole community, or for everyone living in a certain area. Brainstorm reasons why an object might be considered important to a community, a town or a country. For example:

- It has been in the community a long time
- It represents an important event in the community (good or bad)
- It reminds people of where they live
➢ It holds memories for people
➢ It costs a lot of money
➢ It is something people use everyday
➢ It is very rare / the only example
➢ It tells us about the present of the future
➢ It introduces us to another culture / celebrates diversity

Can the group think of any objects that are important to their whole community? What about buildings, statues, or places that are important in the community?

Are these reasons given the same as the reasons why objects are important to individuals? Which reasons are different?
Aim of the activity: to create an active learning experience by putting together a box of objects with special stories, for use by the group.

Begin by looking at the Every Object Tells a Story website, and discussing the objects which are mentioned by different members of the Khan family. Ask learners to list the different objects they can find.

Before the session, the tutor prepares the beginnings of the ‘special objects resource box’ by collecting a variety of objects to bring into class that represent the sort of things people generally value. For example:

- Photographs
- Jewellery
- Ornaments
- Religious items
- Clothing
- Wedding memento

You will also need a large cardboard or plastic box to keep the items in.

Tutor Tip: As an interesting discussion point, you could also include some everyday, household objects in the box. Discuss with the learners why these objects might have been included in the box. Are they special too? Can learners think of any everyday items of their own which they consider special?

Museum Staff Tip: You could also talk to your local museum about borrowing objects with particularly hidden or interesting stories from their collection to discuss and include in this activity.

These items can form the starting point for a variety of activities around objects, their properties and their meanings. For example:

- Creative activities discussing the objects and what they might mean to different people. For example, the group could be asked to make a list of as many reasons as possible why a certain object would be special enough to be included in the box, or begin to imagine who could own these objects
- Examining the properties of the objects included in the box. How could you sort them according to colour, material, shape, size?
- What do the objects have in common, and what is different about them?
- Are any these objects similar to things you have at home, or things you value? Choose a favourite object and draw it, or write a short story or poem about the object and what it means to you.

Begin to discuss with the group what is missing from the box, or what they might add themselves. Ask both adults and children in the group to think of one special thing they would like to add to the box and ask everyone to draw a picture or write about their object, and put these into the box.
**Aim of the activity:** To explore some ‘mystery objects’ from the past, and discuss ways that the meaning of objects changes, or can get lost over time.

For this activity you will need access to some ‘mystery objects’ from the past. Local museums often offer loans services, where such objects can be borrowed, either for free or for a small charge, so contact your local museum for details. Alternatively, if you have a budget, you may be able to find suitable objects in local second hand shops, car boot sale or antique shops.

Possible items to use in this activity include:
- Crimping iron
- Candle wick scissors
- Old fashioned iron
- Curling tongs
- Jelly mould
- Feather duster
- Carpet beater
- Shaving brush
- Pie funnel
- Food covers
- Honey dipper

Everyday items that are no longer seen in homes (or look different from the modern day versions) work well for this activity.

Try to have enough items for learners to work in small groups of 4-6, with one object per group.

Divide learners into small groups, and present each group with an object, which is hidden inside a bag (pillow cases work well for this). No one is allowed to look inside the bag yet.

One member of each group is allowed to put their hand in the bag and describe what they can feel. The other members of the group should ask questions and try to guess what the object is.
Invite the groups to remove their object from the bag and have a look at it.

Questions to ask:
- What is it made of?
- What does it do?
- Does it have any moving parts?
- Was it cheap or expensive, special occasion or everyday?
- How old do you think it is?
- Does it remind you of any modern day objects?

Encourage learners to explore the object using all their senses. Learners can use the ‘What is this object?’ worksheet to help them think about using sight, smell, touch and sound.

Each group should try to work out what their object is.

After a few minutes, ask each group to feed back to the others on what they found, and reveal the true purpose of each object.

Discussion questions:
- Are there objects that do a similar job in modern homes today?
- What clues did you use to try to work out what your object was?
- Who do you think owned this object?
- What was life like at the time this object was in use?
- Does this object tell us anything about life in the past?
- Does this object have a story to tell?
- What questions do you have about this object?
- Do you think it is important that this object is looked after for future generations? Why?
What is this object?

What does the object feel like?
Is it smooth or rough?
Is it heavy or light?

What does the object look like?
What colour is it?
Is it shiny or dull?

What does the object smell like?
Do you think it smelt differently when it wasn’t so old?

What does the object sound like?
Does it make a noise?
What if you rattle it, or tap it?
Aim of the activity: to visit a museum and find out about how museums look after objects and tell stories about the objects.

Introduce this session by referring back to the list the group made earlier when discussing ‘The Value of Objects’. Where are these types of objects kept? It is likely that many will be kept in museums.

Discuss with the group what we mean by a museum

The Museums Association definition of the museum is: “Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.”

You could find out more by visiting some of the following websites:
http://www.museumsassociation.org/faq
http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/
http://www.show.me.uk/

Discussion topics in the classroom
- What museums are local to us?
- What types of objects do the museums have in them?
- Are the museums near you collecting objects that are special nationally, for the local community, or around a specific theme (for example, the National Railway Museum)?

At the museum

A group visit to a local museum will enable learners to find out more about objects from the community, what stories belong to these objects, and how those stories are told.

All museums are different, and a pre visit will enable you to plan activities that fit with the theme of ‘objects and their stories’ in more detail. For example, it may be a good idea to choose one gallery to visit, rather than trying to see the whole museum.
However, the following suggested activities should work well at most museums.

**Discussion topics at the museum:**
- What objects in this museum are connected to your community or local area?
  What objects are missing? What would you add?
- Do you see objects that you identify with or have yourself at home?
- Can you find the oldest object in the museum? Can you find the newest object?
- Which of the following senses are you able to use in the museum to explore objects? Touch, sight, sound, smell. Why do you think this is? Which do you prefer?

*Tutor Tip: Many museums have a ‘family trail’, which you can use with your learners when you visit the museum. You could also give learners a disposable or digital camera to record the experience of their visit – this adds an IT element, and can also form the basis of discussions back in class.*

**Why are objects important?**

As a group, in class, make a list of reasons why objects might be special for a community (using the activities and discussion points in ‘The Value of Objects’).

At the museum, each family should work together to find one object that fits each of the reasons given in the list. You can use the handout ‘Why are objects important’ or create your own handout using this as a template. Ask families to draw a picture of the object or write the name of the object in the space provided.
Find one object at the museum that fits each of the following reasons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is an object important to a community?</th>
<th>Object found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It tells us about an important event in the past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is beautiful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It tells us about everyday life in the past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is worth a lot of money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is rare - not many of them exist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It tells us about life in the present or future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It celebrates cultural diversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Add your own idea)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Aim of the activity:** To reflect on the visit to the museum, and discuss how museums choose and group objects. This activity also forms a good introduction to “A museum for my community” activity.

Begin the session by discussing your visit to the museum as a group.
- What sorts of objects were in the museum?
- What were the titles of themes of the different galleries and cases?
- What did the learners enjoy the most, and find most interesting?

Discuss as a group how museums choose to group objects into different categories. They might use different types of criteria to decide which objects go into which cases.

As a group, think of as many different examples as possible of the ways that museums group objects together, such as:
- By time period (e.g. all Roman)
- By material (e.g. all metal)
- By type of object (e.g. all toys)
- By event (e.g. all objects related to 2nd World War)
- By subject (e.g. war, sea travel)

**My Culture Quest**

Learners can also explore these ideas further by playing ‘My Culture Quest’ online at [www.mylearning.org](http://www.mylearning.org). The game involves answering questions to collect museum objects for an exhibition. You score extra points for collecting objects with a common theme.

Go to [www.mylearning.org](http://www.mylearning.org), click on subjects, citizenship, interactives, then ‘My Culture Quest’, or just follow this link; [http://www.mylearning.org/jpage.asp?journeyid=238&jpageid=931](http://www.mylearning.org/jpage.asp?journeyid=238&jpageid=931)
Aim of the activity: To plan a museum that represents your local community, including selecting the most important objects and stories, and deciding how to group them.

This is a classroom activity, which takes place after a visit to a museum. Summarise as a group some of the things you have already discussed over the past weeks:

- Why families value special objects
- How objects can have different meanings
- Why objects are important to a community
- How objects can be divided into different categories
- How museums collect and preserve objects

1) In small groups (one or two families working together), learners are going to now design their own museum for their community.

2) Give each group a ‘museum layout’ worksheet. This shows four display cases in your museum. You are going to decide what will go in each of these cases.

3) First decide on your definition of ‘local community’. Will your museum be about your town, your local area, your high street, your road?

4) Think about categories for your cases. Remember, you could divide the objects into categories based on time period, material, type of object, event, subject, or anything else you can think of.

5) Label each of the four cases with the category you have chosen for that case.

6) Now choose some objects for each case. What are the most important objects to tell people about each of your categories? What objects will have a special meaning for local people? Work as a team to draw your objects, or photograph them, or cut images out of magazines and laminate them.

7) What are the stories each object has to tell? What are the most important things you need to say about each object? Work as a team to write labels for each object, giving more information.

8) Finally – what else could you put in each case? For example, pictures, photographs, sound. Use your memories or images of cases at the museum to inspire you.
Museum plan
Aim of the activity: to celebrate the special objects people have in their homes, and create a visual display related to this theme.

If you have been working through these activities for a couple of weeks, you will have a collection of objects, ideas and drawings related to personal objects and their stories. This activity brings together these items by creating a display of special objects in the classroom.

Begin by discussing with the group which objects could go in the display. If you have already created an object resource box, or asked learners to bring in objects from home, this could form the starting point of the discussion. The display should include contributions from every adult and child. Items for the display could include:

- Original special objects, as long as the owners don’t mind and they aren’t going to get damaged
- Digital or Polaroid photos of objects
- Drawings or models of objects
- Written descriptions and labels for the objects, explaining whose they are and why they are special

From this discussion, you can agree different roles for different members of the group, according to ability and interest, for example:

- Taking photographs of objects for the display
- Drawing objects or making model copies of objects to go in the display
- Interviewing each person to find about what they want to say about their object, and then writing labels for the objects
- Designing a background for the display – this could be artwork about the project, or a background of a bedroom or house.

The display could be a large one created by the whole group, or small groups of learners could work together to make smaller displays inside shoe boxes, which could also have illustrated backgrounds.

Museum staff tip: The idea for this exhibition could be introduced at the beginning of the project, so that learners gradually layer up information such as drawings, photographs and sound bites as the weeks go by, and knowing that it is all leading to an end product could be a good motivator.
Talk to your local museum about working in partnership on this – they may be able to mount final displays in their venues.

Learners would also enjoy the basic preparations for an exhibition, such as whitewashing plinths and printing / laminating labels.

Discussions around family histories and community histories could come as part of the process of creating displays, in that individual presentations could be prepared and then groups could organise the materials into themes, ultimately grouping things under headings and narrative statements (e.g. What our home means to us, Bringing up children).
Aim of the theme:

Learners will discuss the different interests and passions of themselves and others. What do our interests say about us? Where do we get our interests and hobbies from?

Objectives of the theme:

Learners will:

- Visit the www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk website to find out more about the different things the families were interested in and passionate about
- Discuss their own interests and passions, and how these interests make us who we are
- Take part in a variety of hands-on activities related to the themes of some of the families’ interests: food, textiles and clothes making and poetry

Tutor notes:

This theme focuses on developing IT, literacy and self-awareness skills by using the website to find out about different people’s hobbies and interests, and telling people about your own. The topics and extracts from the website given below are for guidance only – you might want to select particular topics to focus on based on the interests of the group.

This is an ideal opportunity to develop group rapport and confidence by encouraging learners to talk about what they are passionate about. If anyone has a specific hobby or skill, you might want to give him or her some time to demonstrate it to the other members of the group.

There is a book about literacy practices in the community called: Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community (1998: Routledge) by David Barton and Mary Hamilton, in which they describe how people’s ‘ruling passions’ became an important way in which they talked about literacy.
**Aim of the activity:** to encourage learners to think about their interests and passions, and share these with the group.

Begin by talking to the group about their interests and hobbies. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? Is it something done together or alone? Do families have any shared interests?

**Discussion topics:**
- Tell us about your interests and hobbies. Can you remember how you first became interested in this hobby?

**Bringing in your hobby**

Ask everyone in the group (adults and children) to bring in an example of or an object related to their hobby next week. Each person should show everyone what they have brought in, and explain why.

Alternatively, you could mix objects up on the table and ask people to guess whose object or hobby belongs to whom.

**60 second platform**

Everyone (who wants to) has 60 seconds to talk to the group about their hobby. Like the game ‘Just a Minute’ they can’t repeat, deviate or hesitate. The aim of the time is to ‘sell’ your hobby to the rest of the group, explain what is so great about it, and encourage others to give it a try.

**IT activity**

Learners can use a search engine to find web sites related to their own interests, or to find out specific information related to hobbies, such as opening times for the local library.
Aim of the activity: To discuss what sort of food people like, and why, where food comes from, and to take part in some fun related activities.

Read this extract from www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk website.

Mr Hakim Khan
The Asian culture was completely alien to people in 1950’s England and Mr Khan told stories about this naivety. On one occasion he wanted to find somewhere he could obtain chilli powder for cooking. He asked around but nobody could help until one enlightened chap directed Mr Khan to the local chemist. Mr Khan found this a strange suggestion, but under the circumstances followed the advice. Upon asking the man at the local chemist for some chilli powder, he responded by asking if Mr Khan owned a racehorse, this naturally confused Mr Khan and he sought clarity from the chap serving him. The man responded by commenting that what on earth would anybody want with so much chilli powder unless they owned a racehorse, it was the only practicable use for it. Mr Khan informed the man that he intended to use it for cooking and the man simply looked at Mr Khan dumfounded!

Things to discuss:
- What is your favourite food and why?
- What sort of food did the adults eat when they were growing up? Do you have especially fond memories of that food? Or is there something you would never eat again now?
- Where in the world do the popular dishes in UK today originate from?

What’s that ingredient?

Bring in a variety of unusual ingredients, and encourage the group to guess what they are, using sight, touch and smell. Ingredients could include exotic fruit and vegetables, spices and herbs, or dried lentils and beans.

If you have working with a group of families from diverse backgrounds, you could ask them to each bring one interesting ingredient or recipe in themselves.
**Where in the world?**

Discuss as a group, where in the world does the food we eat today come from? Make a list of everything each person has eaten so far that day, and discuss where it is likely to be imported from.

Tutors can bring in a selection of food packaging, and learners can pretend to be detectives by using the information on the packets to work out where it originates from.

**Healthy eating activities**

There is an opportunity to link this theme to discussions about healthy eating. Discussion topics could include:

- What kinds of foods are good for us
- What kind of foods should we eat only a little of?
- What kind of food do you eat on special occasions?
- What are the ingredients you use a lot in your every day cooked foods?
- What kind of food contains the five main food groups that someone should eat every day? The groups are: carbohydrates - bread, rice, pasta, breakfast cereals and potatoes, fruit and vegetables, milk and dairy products, meat, fish, and alternatives, foods containing fat and sugar.

Adults and children could work together to decorate a food chart poster, showing the right food for a healthy lifestyle.

The following website contains more information and resources: [www.thefoodchart.com](http://www.thefoodchart.com)

**Cooking as a group**

If you have the facilities, cooking some international food would be a good way to expand on this topic. The following website has some international recipes for children, along with facts about each country: [http://www.kids-cooking-activities.com/international-gourmet-recipes.html](http://www.kids-cooking-activities.com/international-gourmet-recipes.html)
Food and diet in World War II

You can look at more information about what people ate during World War II by visiting the My Learning website, where information and pictures are available online. Visit www.mylearning.org and then click subjects, science, food and diet in World War II, or follow this link: http://www.mylearning.org/jpage.asp?jpageid=653&journeyid=175
**Aim of the activity:** To discuss clothes making, where people get their clothes from today, and to take part in some fun related activities.

Read this extract from [www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk](http://www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk) website.

**Mrs Khan**

Mrs. Khan, like most Asian women, used to make clothes. She had a sewing machine, which she would use to make clothes for herself and her family, because at the time Asian clothes were not widely available in the shops. She was very skilled in needlework, crochet and knitting, which she learned before she got married. There were none of the light fabrics she was used to in Pakistan, so often she would use material that were usually used to make curtains. This meant that the clothes were very heavy and thick, which turned out to be a good thing during the cold British winters.

Things to discuss:
- Where do you get your clothes from today?
- Why don’t you think many people make their own clothes any more?
- Can you think of anything in your house that is handmade, using needlework, crochet or knitting? Do you know who made it?

**Finding material and describing colours**

The tutor brings in a range of fabrics – light, filmy, heavy, woven, glittery and so on. Discuss with the learners words and adjectives used for the colour, texture and shape of the different fabrics.

Children could talk or write about which is their favourite piece of material and why, using colour, texture and feel. Encourage children and adults to discuss the chosen fabrics in terms of touch, sight and sound.

**Self-portraits using fabric**

Before the session, the tutor should collect together assorted fabric, tracing paper, pens, paper, scissors, needles and thread.

Working in family groups, ask learners to draw an outline of a face – the more basic the better! Transfer this onto tracing paper. Pin the tracing paper to some material and transfer the outline on to the material using marker pen.
Using a selection of different fabrics, cut out the eyes, nose, mouth and hair, and stitch these onto the face.

**Material and what it represents**

Discuss as a group:
- What do different colours mean to you?
- Look at Ghazala’s story on the Every Object Tells a Story website. Her wedding dress was red and gold. Can you describe your ideal wedding dress?
- How do marriage customs vary in different countries?

As a group, look through a copy of an Asian brides magazine and create a collage using the wedding dress images.

You can also use the images in the magazines to make a matching snap game. Take two copies of the same magazine and cut out images that appeal. Match them with the same image, glue them onto card, and then make a snap game to play with the children.

**Embroider the World**

For older children and adults, you can find out more about embroidery and try some of the stitches by visiting the My Learning website. Go to [www.mylearning.org](http://www.mylearning.org) and click on subjects, art and design, Embroider the World, or follow the link below; [http://www.mylearning.org/jpage.asp?jpageid=427&journeyid=145](http://www.mylearning.org/jpage.asp?jpageid=427&journeyid=145)
Aim of the activity: To find out about poetry and creative writing, and to try it out for ourselves.

Read this extract from [www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk](http://www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk) website.

**Ghazala**

In my Grandfather’s poetry as well, if you read through it there is a lot of heart rending stories about people that suffered in the war and the book is about people’s emotions at the time of partition because my grandma was reading some to me last night and I think to see my granddad he was a very strong character, but I think his inner feelings were very, very…he was very sensitive.

Things to discuss:
- Has anyone in the group got a favourite poem? What about song lyrics?
- Has anyone in the group ever had a go at writing poetry?
- What sorts of subjects can poetry be written about?

The following website has some useful resources for this topic, including poetry, images and audio: [http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/)

**Body Name game**

To check the learner’s understanding of rhyme, play the 'Body Name Game'. Point to a part of your body and think of a word that rhymes with it e.g. hair/bear, nose/rose.

**Acrostic poems**

Write an acrostic poem using the letters from your first name e.g. for Samuel

- Someone you can rely on.
- Always makes me laugh.
- Makes a mess wherever he goes.
- Uses all the towels.
- Easy to love.
- Light of my life.

When doing this activity, learners should try and use only positive adjectives or phrases.
Aim of the theme:

The aim of this theme is for adults and children to share their memories of the past, find out about the lives of older relatives, and to compare life then and now.

Objectives of the theme:

Learners will:
- Talk to family members (including each other) to find out what memories they have of the past
- Develop communication and interviewing skills in order to be able to gather information about the past
- Compare the lives of people today and in the past, and give examples of things that have changed and have stayed the same
- Identify important stories and memories associated with their family, and celebrate these stories

Tutor notes

This theme involves thinking about family members and family memories.
- It is important to be sensitive to the different make-ups of modern families. Keep the definition of ‘family’ flexible to include whoever the learners consider appropriate as members of the family.
- It is important to be sensitive to the needs of your learners as individuals. Not everyone will be comfortable discussing family background, family members and memories of the past. Do not run the activities in this theme if learners in the group are not comfortable discussing these topics.
Aim of the activity: to encourage learners to reflect in family groups on what they remember about their past, and what they know about their family history.

Begin by talking to the group about how life has changed in our lifetime. Can the group suggest things that are different now to twenty years ago? Are the changes good or bad? This theme is all about talking to older relatives to find out about life in the past and how things have changed.

Working in family groups, encourage families to ask each other some of the following questions:
- Where do / did you go to school? What was it like?
- What was / are your favourite games to play?
- Who were / are your best friends as a child?
- What were / are your favourite toys? Can you describe them?

OR encourage the adults to tell the children about the following:
- A funny story they remember from growing up
- Their memories of school
- A favourite game they played as a child
- Things they used to do in their spare time as a child / teenager

Ask learners to feedback to the whole group – what did the other people you were having a discussion with say? What differences and similarities have you noticed about life now and in the past?

IT activity

You can also introduce the idea of memories of the past by looking at the Every Object Tells a Story website. Each of the members of the Khan family were interviewed about their memories of the past, and the information they gave is on the website.

Use the handout “Memories of Rotherham in the past” to look at some of the things different people remembered about life in the past. Visit these web pages as a group, to find out more. Ask learners to work in small groups to look at one family member each, and report back on the sort of things they remembered from the past.
Mr Akram Khan

When Akram came to England as a boy, he remembered the weather was dreadful; there was two feet of snow at Heathrow Airport. Akram initially lived in Wincobank, Sheffield for a short time and he was enrolled in Wincobank Primary School and naturally had a lot of catching up to do. His first objective was to learn English.

Mrs Khan

It would be true to say that England was a shock for Mrs Khan. She was used to the large open houses in Pakistan, green fields, mild weather and the easy pace of rural village life. What she walked into was small tight houses, cold weather, industrial towns and a constrained life.

When Mrs. Khan came to Rotherham, there were only a few other Asian women living here. Mr. Khan would take her for walks in the park, and whenever they met another Asian woman, it was such a rare event that they would be so happy and go up to her and start talking, even though she might be a complete stranger. To begin with Mrs. Khan wasn’t very happy with life in England. Her husband would be away at work and her children were at school, so she was left alone in the house a lot of the time. She found the terraced houses in Rotherham to be very cramped. In Pakistan families had very large houses with big courtyards, even if they were poor. Also she wasn’t terribly fond of the English weather – but then who is? Mr. Khan would make up for this by taking his wife and family on outings and on holidays. Eventually Mrs. Khan grew to love her new home, because she realised that home is not a place, it is family.

Ravina Khan

As a girl, Ravina remembers going shopping with her mother in a shop at the top of Kimberworth Road. In those days they used to be able to buy a whole week’s worth of shopping for just £5. Ravina knew all the children in her neighbourhood, and has fond memories of playing out in the street until 10 o’clock at night in the long light of the summer evenings.
**Aim of the activity:** To use the card game as a starting point for discussing which objects have and have not changed over time, and what this tells us about what life was like.

Using the packs of picture cards and working as a family group, divide the cards into three categories:
1) Things that the adults had when they were young
2) Things children have today
3) Things that both of you had

Discuss the results as a group.
- Were there any surprises (either for the children or the adults)?
- Were there any differences depending on the ages of the adults (for example, if there are younger parents or grandparents in the group)?
Sharing Family Memories
Then and now card game

- MP3 player
- Camera
- Phone
- Tape recorder
- Teddy bear
- Watch
**Aim of the activity:** learners will develop interview skills in order to find out from members of their family what life was like in the past

Explain to the group that they are going to learn some oral history interviewing techniques, in order to find out about life in the past.

Oral history is the recording of spoken memories, which can tell us about history and life in the past.

Discuss with the group the meaning of oral history, and whom they could interview. Interviewees could be older family members, family friends, older people in the community, aunties or uncles or parents.

Once everyone has thought of someone they could interview, explain to the group that we are going to practice interviewing on each other, using ‘Sample questions for oral history’ sheets provided.

Working in family groups, adult and children take it in turns to ask and answer the questions on the sheets. If the group are comfortable, you can also practice recording the interviews using a cassette recorder or minidisk player. This is the way professional oral history interviews are recorded.

Encourage learners to try interviewing someone before the next lesson. They should either make some notes during the interview, or record the interview to help them remember what was said.

Discuss with the group how they found this activity – what was difficult and what was enjoyable? Did you find out anything new out about each other?
Use the handouts ‘Top Tips for Interviews’ or ‘Quick Quiz’ to discuss interviewing techniques with the group.

Discussion questions (can be used both at the end of this session, and the following week, after learners have had a go at interviewing family members)
- What interesting things did you find out during your interview? Tell us the three most interesting things you found out.
- Did you enjoy interviewing or being interviewed more? Why?
What are the main differences between life now and in the past?
What surprised you most during the interview?
Do you think this is a good way to find out about life in the past? Why?
Did the person you interviewed have any photographs or objects to show you from their past?

Tips for helping parents to think of things to tell their children:
- Try basing the discussion around a photograph or photograph album
- Try visiting [www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk](http://www.everyobjecttellsastory.org.uk) web pages and look at some of the stories the Khan family tell about the past.
Tell me something about your early childhood.

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

What did your father do for a living?

What about your mother?

Thank you very much
When did you first see television?

What was on?

What was your favourite program when you were younger and why?

What is your favourite program today?

Thank you
What kind of house were you brought up in?

How many rooms were there?

What was the layout of the house like?

How were the rooms lit?

Tell me about the toilet facilities?

Do you prefer where you live today? Why?

Thank you
Where did you like to go to play?

Tell me about your friends?

Did you have a best friend?

What was your favourite game?

Do you have one clear memory of growing up that stands out for you?

Thank you
Top tips for interviews

Avoid asking questions with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer

Ask open questions, for example ‘what was it like…?’, ‘how did you feel…?’ ‘tell me…?’

Actively listen carefully, and show you are interested in what the person is saying

Making eye contact and smiling will encourage the other person to talk

Try not to get drawn into a discussion, and talk as little as possible except to ask questions. Remember, you want to find out about the other person

Sit in a relaxed way, not wriggling or fidgeting

Always remember to thank the interviewee for their time
Quick quiz
How did you do?

Score one point for every tick. Did you…..

Listen carefully

Show interest in what the interviewee was saying

Thank the interviewee for their help

Ask the interviewee to explain anything you did not understand

Lose one point for every tick. Did you?

Interrupt the interviewee

Make comments that were not to do with the interview

Fidget or look bored

Talk for a long time yourself
**Aim of the activity:** learners will look at photographs and use them as a prompt for their own memories, as well as a source of evidence about the past.

Basing a conversation around a photograph or photo album can be a good way to help parents become more comfortable with talking to their children about the past and early memories, and help them think of things to say.

You could introduce this activity by creating a mix and match game with some of the Khan family’s photos and captions from the Every Object Tells a Story website. Ask learners to match the captions with the photos, and ask them:

- What clues does the photo give you?
- Who is in it?
- What do the think is the relationship between the different people in the photos? Why?
- Where do you think they are?
- What clues does the photo give you about how long ago it was taken?

You could also ask everyone in the group (adults and children) to bring in a photo of themselves when younger. Mix the photos up on the table, and ask the group to guess whose photo belongs to whom.
**Aim of the activity:** to visit a museum and look at the displays to find out more about how life has changed over our lifetime.

Introduce the session by discussing as a group what everyone has found out so far about life in the past. Are the experiences and memories of the adults in the group similar or different? Why? Are there different ages or backgrounds represented in the group? What about when the group interviewed other family members at home?

**At the museum**

A group visit to a local museum will enable learners to find out more life in the local area in the past, and to see objects and hear stories from others.

All museums are different, and a pre visit will enable you to plan activities that fit with the theme of ‘sharing family memories’ in more detail. Try to choose a museum which has a social history collection, and it is likely that there will be one particular exhibition or gallery that focuses on life in the past, rather than trying to see the whole museum.

The following suggested activities should work well at most museums.

**Discussion topics at the museum:**

- How long ago are the objects and displays in the museum referred to? How long ago since the adults in the group were children? Try to discuss placing people and event on a time line, to give an idea of the recent past.
- What sorts of evidence is there of the recent past? There may be objects and photos. There may also be oral history recordings – like the ones of the group have been working on in class.
- Do you think it is important that we remember about everyday life and ordinary household objects from the past? Why?
- Was life better in the past or now?

**Objects from your own memories**

As a family, look for objects in the museum displays that were used by parents or grandparents.

- Can the children guess what they are?
- Do the adults have any memories of these types of objects?
- Draw a picture of one of these objects, and then a picture of a modern equivalent.
Aim of the activity: to bring together and celebrate all the memories and stories that each family has gathered, by creating a family memory book.

This activity would be a good way to bring together various different activities and discussion points from the resource pack as a whole.

Discuss as a group:
- What have you found out about members of your family?
- What have you found out about the objects your family owns?
- What are the interests and passions of your family?
- What have you found out about the wider community in which you live?

Families can construct a ‘family memory book’ from loose pages joined together, or by adding items to a bought scrap book. Items to add / things to do could include:
- A family tree
- Photographs or drawings of family members. Learners could use IT to scan, edit and print copies of photos to add to the book.
- Hand prints / foot prints
- Drawing and photographs of the objects that are important to your family
- Drawings or other items which reflect family members' interests or passions
- Notes from oral history interviews
- Photographs of the family’s trip to the museum
- A design for the front cover of the book
This pack has been written by Abi Hackett with help from Jacqui Lindsay, Rachel Reynolds and Parven Akhter.

The project team include:

Kate Pahl – project director and researcher
Zahir Rafiq – designer
Abi Hackett – author of pack
Parven Akhter – family learning advisor
Jacqui Lindsay – family learning adviser
Karen Kitchen – project secretary

The project team would also like to thank Rachel Reynolds, Rotherham Museums and Galleries, Karen Hanson, Sheffield Family Learning, Ahmed Gurnah, Burngreave Community Learning Campaign and Justine Reilly, MLA Yorkshire, for their support and help with this project.

Kate Pahl would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Knowledge Transfer Opportunities Fund, University of Sheffield and in particular the support of the Office of Corporate Partnerships.

The original project, Ferham Families, from which the interviews with the families were generated, was funded by a small grant from the AHRC’s Diasporas, Migration, and Identities Research Fund with additional funding from Creative Partnerships for the website.

We would also like to once again thank the Khan family for being so supportive to the project, and Ghazala Tanveer for all her help with the project.
The every object tells a story project was supported by