

TEACHERS' ACTIVITY IDEAS

Osborne – Durbar Wing

This resource pack will help teachers plan a visit to the Durbar Wing at Osborne House, which demonstrates Queen Victoria's love of Indian culture.

Use these activities at Osborne or in the classroom to help students get the most out of their learning.



Get in touch with our Education Booking Team

 0370 333 0606

 bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk

 <https://bookings.english-heritage.org.uk/education>

Don't forget to download our **Hazard Information Sheets** and **Discovery Visit Risk Assessments** to help with planning:

- **The Adventures of a Victorian Explorer (KS2)**
- **Waiting on Hand and Foot (KS2)**
- **Story Mat (KS1)**

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Step into England's story

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES

INDIAN SNAKES AND LADDERS

IN THE
CLASSROOM

ACTIVITY 1

Recommended For

- KS2 and KS3 (History, Geography, Art)

Learning Objectives

- Understand the role of Queen Victoria as Empress of India.
- Demonstrate understanding of the Durbar Room as a reflection of Indian culture.

Time to Complete

- 1–2 lessons



Pupils' Snake and Ladders game question cards.

Summary

The game of Snakes and Ladders originated as 'Moksha Patam' in India in the 2nd century BC. It was designed to teach children about morality according to Hindu philosophy. Snakes represented desires or vices such as lust, anger, murder and theft. Ladders represented virtues such as generosity, faith and humility. Players who landed at the base of a ladder quickened their rise to Moksha – spiritual liberation.

The British colonial community in India adopted the game and it was introduced in Victorian England in 1892 as 'Snakes and Ladders'. The Victorians adapted it to reflect Victorian ideas of morality.

After visiting the Durbar Wing at Osborne House, pupils could demonstrate their understanding about Queen Victoria and her links with India through creating a 'Durbar Room' version of the snakes and ladders game. They could change some design elements, using symbols that they find in the Durbar Room such as elephants, lizards or peacocks.

Pupils could include landing spaces on the board that require them to pick up a 'quiz card'. These could be fact cards, or true or false questions.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Once your class have completed their game, have a competition in the classroom with small groups playing each other's games. Find out at the end who has learnt the most information about Osborne House, Queen Victoria and the Durbar Room.

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES

DURBAR DETECTIVES

IN THE
HOUSE

ACTIVITY 2

Recommended For

- KS2 and KS3 (History, English)

Learning Objectives

- Identify the decoration of the Durbar Room inspired by India.
- Look carefully at the Jubilee gifts to learn about craftsmanship and materials.

Time to Complete

- 15–20 mins



Pupils' work inspired by
the Durbar Room.

Summary

The Durbar Room was decorated to reflect the decorative style of Mogul India from the 16th and 17th centuries. Queen Victoria wanted the room to reflect her respect and admiration for Indian culture, especially since she had become Empress of India in 1876. The room would have received important visiting foreign dignitaries, and would have made a clear impression on visitors about Queen Victoria's powerful position as the head of an empire. At her Golden and Diamond Jubilees, gifts were sent to her from all over India as a demonstration of loyalty to their empress. Many of the gifts are made from rare materials and show exquisite craftsmanship.

STUDENT CHALLENGE

Younger pupils can try to spot animals in the room. If they look carefully around the room and at some of the gifts, they should be able to find the following:

- Elephant
- Peacock
- Lizard
- Bird
- Fish

Why do the pupils think Indian craftsmen have included these animals?

STUDENT CHALLENGE

The table on the next page encourages older pupils to look closely at the Jubilee gifts. Pupils can find an object, sketch it and note what it is made from.

DURBAR DETECTIVES

Item	Make a sketch	What is it used for? Who gifted it?
Embroidered mat 		
Ivory backscratcher 		
Elephant address casket 		
Fish-shaped address casket 		
Iron dagger 		

Look below the cabinets to discover what's in the drawers!

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Using the information that they have gathered for each object, the pupils can discuss as a group which gift they think Victoria would have found most impressive and why. This will require them to think carefully about what each object looked like, how well it was made and what it was made from.

Why did they think the gifts were given to Queen Victoria?

ACTIVITY 3

Recommended For

- KS2 (History, Art and Design)

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate understanding of the symbolic meaning of the peacock as a symbol of India and royal power.
- Understand the value of Victorian craftsmanship.

Time to Complete

- 1 lesson

Summary

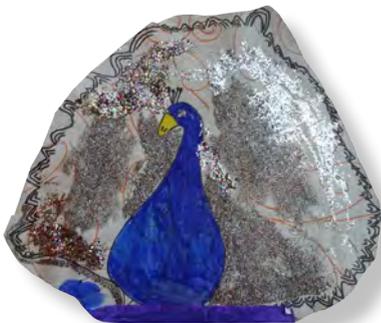
When you visit the Durbar Room with your class, point out the peacock over the chimney. The chimney piece in the Durbar Room was created by 26 craftsmen and the peacock took more than 500 hours to make from plaster. That is equal to each man working every day for 10 weeks! As well as being a beautiful work of art, this level of detail and the time spent on decoration demonstrated to guests that the queen had sufficient wealth to pay for a very high level of craftsmanship.

Explain to pupils that the peacock is an ancient symbol in Indian culture. It has been used in art, architecture, poetry, religious stories and song to represent beauty, pride and wisdom; and peacocks are thought by some to be protectors of royalty. It can be interpreted as a symbol of both imperial power and association with India. Ask the pupils why they think Victoria wanted to display the emblem of the peacock in the Durbar Room – what could it symbolise to her important royal guests?



MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Using their understanding of animals as symbols, students can create their own animal symbol that represents their personality. What qualities about the animal would they like to associate with themselves and why? They should create a 2D, 3D or digital representation of their animal, label its qualities, and explain to the rest of their class what it means to them and why.



Pupils' work inspired by the Durbar Room.

ACTIVITY 4

Recommended For

- KS3 (History, English, Human Geography, Drama)

Learning Objectives

- Research and understand what life was like for different people in 19th-century India.
- Understand the purpose of the Durbar Corridor portraits.

Time to Complete

- 15–20 mins



A portrait of Ramlal, a nine-year-old boy carpet-weaver from Gambur.

Summary

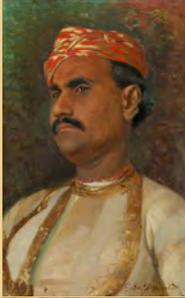
The Durbar Corridor contains portraits of people from India, commissioned by Queen Victoria from the artist Rudolph Swoboda in 1886. She wanted the paintings to give her an impression of what people in India looked like and what they did for a living. The corridor also contains portraits of Indian people who were important to her, such as the maharajah Duleep Singh, who Queen Victoria treated kindly when, at 15 years old, he was deposed and exiled to England. There is also a portrait of Abdul Karim, her faithful 'munshi' (tutor).

Students can work in pairs or small groups to discover the identity of the people in the portraits, based on some questions on the next page. They could note down their impressions about what they see, for example: what the Indians wear, how old they are and what type of jobs they do.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, students should use what they have learnt about the Indian portraits to create a dramatic monologue or write a creative story about life in 19th-century India. They should choose one person and think about what type of life they might have had. Were they well paid? Did they have a family? Did they enjoy their work? Where in India did they live? Pupils could research the locations in India to discover how place names have changed since Indian independence.

PEOPLE IN THE PORTRAITS

Name		How old were they?	What did they do?
Bakshiram (RUXSHIR AM)			
Raqha Bullabh (RADHABULLUB MISTRY)			
Sha'ban			
Ramlal			
Risaldar-Major Baha-Ud-Din Khan (R M BAHA-UD-DIN KHAN)			

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ACTIVITY 5

Recommended For

- KS2 and KS3 (History)

Learning Objectives

- Understand the associations between Queen Victoria as Empress of India and the Durbar Room.
- Explore the different ways that people learn, i.e. multi-sensory.



Images of pupils' own versions of a Durbar Discovery Chest.

Summary

As Empress of India, Queen Victoria wanted to make sure that the population of British-controlled India stayed loyal to her. The Durbar Wing at Osborne House was designed to show her foreign guests how much she respected Indian culture.

Students can create their own 'Durbar Discovery Chest' that contains items that will help other people understand this important relationship between India and Great Britain. They could discuss the different ways that people learn – do they like learning through music/pictures/movement/words/smells?

Some ideas of what to include are below:

- A picture booklet that shows **how to wear a sari** – Indian princesses visiting the house wore beautiful Saris
- **Tea from India** – tea was one of the most important items that Britain traded with India
- **Spices** – another important trade item; Queen Victoria's Indian servants cooked curries for her, which she loved
- **Fabrics** – fabrics of bright colours and gold were made in India; Queen Victoria especially liked Indian shawls
- **Jewels** – Queen Victoria loved jewels and was fascinated by the ones that Indian prince and princesses wore when they visited
- A **map of the British Empire** – this shows how much land Great Britain ruled over and how far India was from Great Britain
- copies of **Indian coins** from the 19th century that show Victoria as their empress

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Pupils could think about how Britain's relationship with India has changed since the Victorian era. India became independent from Great Britain in 1947. Pupils could carry out some research and make a collage, song or poem that teaches others about the links between modern India and Britain.

Our thanks to the schools who took part in Colour and Chaos, an Indian Mardi Gras, a Heritage Lottery Fund and The New Carnival Company project:

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Oakvale Carnival Group

Equals Friendship Group

St Helens Primary School

VIVA Carnival Group

Ryde Carnival Association

Newchurch Primary

Nettlestone Primary

