



THE
CULTURE
TRUST

Luton Hat Industry

KS2

Venue: Wardown House Museum & Gallery

(75 minutes)

Session summary:

In this session the children explore the manufacture of the straw boaters for which Luton was famous. They will consider the processes involved in making the hats by investigating some of the tools used. Finally each child will be able to trim a borrowed hat and pose for a class photo. This session uses real and replica objects to illustrate the subject.



Learning objectives:

- To investigate the different processes and tools used in hat making
- To arrange these processes in order
- To compare the roles men and women played in the process
- To understand how important the hat making industry was to Luton

Curriculum links-

English - Spoken language-

- Listen and respond
- Ask relevant questions
- Develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- Speak audibly and fluently
- Participate in discussions and presentations

History-

- Local history study

SMCS-

- Understanding & appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage

Skills-

- Working as part of a team

Learning outcomes:

At the end of this session children will be able to use their understanding of the hat making process to correctly arrange the processes in order briefly describing what happens at each stage and who was likely to carry out this part of the process. They will also be able to describe and explain why the hat industry was so important to the growth of Luton.



To plan a visit, book a session, or for more information please get in touch:

Email: culture4schools@culturetrust.com
Website: www.culturetrust.com/take-part/learning
Twitter: @Culture4Schools





Additional information: It is useful to know if any members of your class have learning, physical or sensory difficulties or illnesses that may affect their enjoyment of the session.

Suggested activities:

Before the visit

- Discuss with the class what Luton is famous for; there will be lots of different suggestions. They may think of hats by themselves or they may need some assistance - 'why is Luton Football club called the Hatters?'.
- Think about all the things in the town that have any connection with the hat industry: road names, buildings, shops, factories.



During the visit

- Visit the hats and headwear collection in the first floor gallery. Look at the huge variety and start thinking about how the different hats might have been made.
- Handle original items used in the process of making a straw boater in the height of the Victorian Hat Industry.
- Split straw, Trim a hat and have a go at plaiting.

After the visit

- The children could design and make their own hat.
- You could take your class on a walking trail around Luton to discover that there is still evidence of the hat making industry in the town. Please visit our website to download this trail; link below.
- Write an account of the tasks and conditions of working either in a strawplait school OR in a Hat Factory based on what they have seen and experienced at the museum.

Useful resources

- Information booklets: *Luton Straw Hat Boom Town 1850-1910* and *Luton Hat Industry 1750-2000*. Useful for teachers and includes some resources that could be used with the whole class
- Hat Trail self-guided notes and risk assessment guidance
- Images of Ladies and Gents hats