

Activity Session 1 – The Lunar Society

Aim

To encourage exploration and understanding of the inventions, life and people of the Lunar Society, emphasising the links to the Industrial Revolution and the reputation of the characters made.

Suitable for

Key Stage 2 pupils

Curriculum Links

See table

Timing & Structure of Session

The group will be welcomed by Erasmus Darwin, and following a brief introduction to the House, and the Lunar Society, each class is divided into 3 or 4 groups of 7 or 8. Each group is assigned to an activity, and the first part of the morning is spent working on that activity, led by a facilitator from the House. For the second part, each group works together to produce a presentation about what they have discovered, to be given to the rest of the class, facilitated by the group leader. For the final part of the morning the class assembles together as a 'Lunar Society' to discuss and exchange their findings that morning. The morning is concluded by Erasmus Darwin himself, who thanks and comments upon each group's contribution. Finally there is time available to use the shop before leaving.

09.00 – 09.25 Arrival and introduction

09.30 – 10.30 Group Activities

10.30 – 10.55 Groups prepare presentations

11.00 – 11.40 Class reassembles for group presentations

11.40 – 11.45 Thanks and Concluding remarks

11.45 – 12.00 Use of shop and departure

Choice of Activities

- *Magnets*
Children investigate the properties of magnets, and are challenged to recreate Erasmus Darwin's light-hearted invention of an artificial spider which appears to move by itself, under the influence of magnets.
- *Fossils*
The group will 'excavate' a series of fossils, and will be asked to identify them, and place them in evolutionary order, with the help of resource material.
- *Optics* (Microscopes or kaleidoscopes)
The group will investigate the properties of mirrors, and will look at constructing different kinds of microscopes from component parts, in order to determine which is the most effective.
- *Anatomical Dissection*
In the 18th century, anatomical dissection of a human being could only legally be carried out on hanged murderers. While at the House Erasmus Darwin advertised that he would be carrying out a public dissection on the body of a hanged criminal he had acquired. This session which takes place in the cellars of the House, uses a mock body to create the event and look at human anatomy. Children will be fully involved in removing various organs from the body (not for the squeamish!).