

The Extraordinary Life of Francis Barber

Dr Johnson's House workshop outline

Subject: History/English	Key Stage: 2	No. pupils: 8-30	Staff:Pupil ratio: 1:10	Duration: 90 minutes	Teacher's pack available
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Overview of workshop:

Francis Barber was born in Jamaica in c.1742, and spent his early years as a slave on a sugar plantation. He was brought to London, aged 8, and two years later was placed in Dr Johnson's household at 17 Gough Square. Johnson hated slavery and educated Barber, treating him more as a friend and companion. Barber was at Johnson's bedside when he died 32 years later and was the main beneficiary in Johnson's will, going on to set up and run his own school.

During this workshop, the children will take on the role of researchers preparing an exhibition about Barber. Small groups are given a research brief and a set of sources about Barber, including manuscripts, images and modern accounts. They select the most important information and the objects to exhibit, write captions and design display boards. This workshop can be incorporated in Black History month and Citizenship activities.

This activity can be expanded or differentiated in the following ways. Please let us know when booking if you are interested in the following options.

- The source materials can be adapted to enhance research skills. For example, groups could be given different packs showing different biases, or 'new' information could be 'discovered' in the middle of the research process.
- If you wish to use Francis Barber as the basis for a longer-term or cross-curricular project, we can offer a series of workshops at Dr Johnson's House and in school, culminating in an exhibition of pupils' work. This can be their exhibition, or even artwork or a performance.

Availability for these projects is limited and must be booked at least 1 full term in advance. Contact us for more information.

National Curriculum Links: HISTORY: Chronological understanding,(1) Knowledge and Understanding (2a and 2b), Historical Interpretation (3) and Historical Enquiry (4). ENGLISH: Group Discussion (En3, 3), Reading for information (En2, 3) and Writing composition (En3, 1).	Suggested preparatory work: The children do not need to know anything at all about Francis Barber. A working knowledge of the 18th-century slave trade and plantation life, knowing the difference between a slave and a servant, and a little background on life in 18th-century London will help pupils engage more easily and quickly with the source material.	Suggested follow-up work (included in teacher's pack) It is likely that the pupils will only complete drafts of their written work, so this could be continued at school. Groups could develop a full exhibition to be put on display.
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Dr Johnson's House, 17 Gough Square, London, EC4A 3DE

Contact: 020 7353 3745 or education@drjohnsonshouse.org