

Small group activities using the dolls houses of 1660, 1780, 1890 and 1980 at the London Museum of Steam and Water

The optimum size of a group is around eight, any larger and some pupils will not be able to see the details of the houses.



Activity One Gather pupils around the oldest house (In Fleet Lane, Ludgate, 1660).

In a very limited amount of time, ask pairs to spot as many different features of water supply and sewage disposal in the display as possible (this wealthy household has no running water, an outdoor privy and a leaky cesspit). Lead discussion, taking suggestions from pairs about any threats to the health of the household or other people that they have spotted (for

example the leaking cesspit could contaminate surrounding ground, the man taking the sewage away could become ill from bacteria in the human waste etc). Ask pairs to award a mark out of 10 for public health for this house and challenge pairs to justify the mark they have given.

Activity Two Gather pupils around the next house (New River Close, Islington, 1780)



Again ask pairs to spot the different features of water supply and sewage disposal in the display but this time taking into account what has changed from 1660 (this wealthy household has occasional running water from a tap). Lead discussion, taking suggestions from pairs about possible threats to public health they have spotted and the extent to which things have improved compared to 1660. As before ask pairs to award a mark out of 10 for public health and challenge pupils to justify the mark they have given.

Activity Three Gather pupils around the third house (Westhouse Terrace, South Kensington, 1890) Repeat the previous activity spotting features of water supply and sewage disposal, taking into account changes from 1780 and 1660 (this wealthy household has the luxury of running water and good sewage disposal). Lead discussion as before taking suggestions from pairs about how this house compares to the previous two. Again ask pairs to award a mark out of 10 for public health and justify that mark.

Activity Four Gather pupils around the fourth house (Beverley Brook Close, Barnes, 1980). Repeat the previous activity spotting features of water supply, water use and sewage disposal, taking into account changes from 1890, 1780 and 1660. Again lead discussion and ask pupils to award a mark and justify the award.

Final activities Lead discussion around the following questions;

- Which house would pupils most prefer to live in? Why?
- Would all London families have lived in this kind of house in those years? (no-these are wealthy households)
- Which year saw the greatest change in water supply and sewage disposal?
- How similar is the 1980 house to the one that pupils live in today?
- Will houses of the future be able to use water so freely? (Probably not-water companies have recently warned that climate change will cause water shortages in England from about 25 years from now)

