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Beyond the Battle

Programme information pack

ART EXPLORA

English Heritage

Welcome to Beyond the Battle!

Created in collaboration with award-winning textiles artist Jessica Grady, the Beyond the Battle learning resources will provide you with information, instructional videos, lesson plans, worksheets and top tips to guide you and your learners through the Beyond the Battle process.

From exploring the Bayeux Tapestry, to creating the artwork and ultimately submitting your class' competition entry, the materials are designed to provide a framework for:

- Supporting learners to understand more about the Bayeux Tapestry, including its historical context, purpose, creators, and the techniques used in its construction.
- Using the challenge as a jumping off point for conversations around active citizenship and positive changemaking.
- Supporting learners to explore a range of creative, expressive and accessible textiles techniques, which can be used to communicate their ideas in an imaginative and engaging way.
- Increasing learners' awareness of textiles as a craft and an artistic medium that can be used for storytelling, communication, and creative expression.

The resources are intended as a toolkit for you to draw on as you need, and we encourage you to find an approach that fits your students and your setting.

We hope you and your learners love discovering more about the world of the Bayeux Tapestry, learning and experimenting with new design and craft skills, and envisioning optimistic and exciting futures.

We can't wait to see what you create!

Meet Jessica Grady

Jessica Grady (Jess) is an embroidery artist and educator based in West Yorkshire. Her work is a bold and tactile exploration of colour and pattern, combining traditional hand embroidery, hand dyeing and printing with embellishments made from unconventional and recycled materials. Grady was awarded the Embroiderers' Guild under-30s Scholarship in 2018 and became a permanent member of Art Textiles Made in Britain in 2019, representing the group as an ambassador at the Tokyo International Great Quilt Festival in 2020. She writes books and online guides, leads workshops, and delivers community textile projects.



Hear from Jess:

"I am thrilled to be part of the Beyond the Battle project. I am very passionate about the accessibility of textiles as an artistic medium and the flexibility to use different materials, very much with a "you can't do it wrong" approach - it's all about play and imagination! I can't wait to see what everyone creates!"



Beyond the Battle
Resource pack materials

Programme overview

In the following pages, you'll find the information you need to start to plan how you'll deliver the project in your classroom. This includes essential information about the competition and selection criteria, ideas around how to structure and manage the making process, and guidance on how to submit your entry at the end.

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Lesson planning and activities Toolkit
CLICK HERE

This contains curriculum-linked lesson plans, presentation slides and student worksheets for each of the three stages of the Beyond the Battle process:

1 EXPLORE & DISCUSS
2 IMAGINE & PLAY
3 DESIGN & MAKE

In the Toolkit, you'll also find links to exclusive instructional videos (for students and teachers) created by artist educator Jessica Grady, introducing a range of textiles techniques for your students to try.

Techniques manual and materials guide
CLICK HERE

This contains materials and equipment lists to get you started on your making journey, written and photographic step-by-step instructions on the textiles techniques covered in the online videos (which are also linked to), and useful suggestions for sourcing materials and exploring the world of textiles further.



Introducing the Challenge

The Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of one of the most famous events in British history – the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Through embroidered images, it records conflict, conquest and the people whose actions shaped the future.

But the final panel is missing...

Beyond the Battle asks pupils in Years 3–6 to imagine a new ending and finally complete this monumental artwork. Rather than depicting conflict, this panel should tell a different story – one of hope and possibility.

Your pupils are set the challenge of designing and creating a textile panel inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry, which answers the question:

"What kind of future would you like to see?"

The artwork should celebrate the values, people and actions that can build a better future. This might include caring for one another, protecting the natural world, celebrating diversity, working together, making new discoveries, or showing kindness in everyday life.

Selection criteria

Winning entries will be selected by a panel of experts from the worlds of textiles, arts and heritage. The judges will be looking for:

Creative use of materials & techniques

Imaginative use of techniques, materials, patterns, textures and colour to bring students' ideas to life.

Engagement with the theme

How students have explored and responded to the theme of 'Imagining the future we would like to see' through the creation of their artwork.

Storytelling & communication

How clearly the artwork communicates the class' ideas and tells the story of the future they have imagined.

Visual impact & craftsmanship

The finished piece as a whole, including its overall composition, and the inclusion of different craft skills and techniques that students have learnt during the process.

Sustainability

Thoughtful choices about materials, including reusing, recycling or selecting sustainable options where possible.

Essential info

- The competition is open to pupils aged 7-11 attending a UK state-funded primary school during the competition period.
- We welcome schools, classes or groups outside these criteria registering to attend the online CPD session and receive the Beyond the Battle resources, but only Key Stage 2 learners in state-funded primaries are eligible to enter the competition and be considered for prizes.
- Submissions are **per class** – if more than one class wishes to enter from your school, you will need to submit multiple entries. Please note that prizes will be awarded to individual classes, and there will be one first place and two runner-up prizes per year group.
- Where classes have fewer than 30 students, schools may combine pupils from multiple classes to form an entry, provided the total number of pupils involved does not exceed 30.
- If a class is made up of multiple year groups, their entry will be entered into the higher year group category for the competition.
- Artworks should measure 50cm in height (to match the height of the original Tapestry) and should measure no less than 1 metre and no more than 2 metres in length.
- Entries should include 1 image of the whole artwork, up to 5 detailed view images, and a written description of the work and the process of creating it – guidelines for this are included on page 11 of this resource.
- The deadline for submissions is the **24th March 2027**, and winners and runners-up will be notified by the **12th April 2027**
- Full terms and conditions for the competition can be found here.

The prizes

Winning schools will receive a fully funded overnight trip to London, to see the Bayeux Tapestry on display in the British Museum, combined with an opportunity to visit 1066 Battle of Hastings Abbey and Battlefield.

Winning classes must be available to visit London on the date below which corresponds with their Year Group.

- Year 3 winner: 14th June (returning 15th June)
- Year 4 winner: 28th June (returning 29th June)
- Year 5 winner: 21st June (returning 22nd June)
- Year 6 winner: 5th July (returning 6th July)

Winning entries will be displayed in a special exhibition in London, and all winning schools will receive a bespoke textiles piece made by artist Jessica Grady, to celebrate their achievement.

The Process

We have divided Beyond the Battle into a three stage process. Each part of the process comes with supporting written and video content that can easily be adapted to suit your classroom environment and students, as well as printable activity sheets to support learning and skills, with embedded curriculum links.

Stage 1: EXPLORE & DISCUSS

This initial starting point is **rooted in the historical context and story of the Bayeux Tapestry**, looking at its imagery and supporting historical information.

It is a great way to get students exploring details within the Tapestry, thinking about **the stories of people captured in thread**, discussing artistic expression, textures, and the scale of this fully embroidered piece of artwork. It also introduces the concept of **visual storytelling**, and asks students to begin considering possible approaches to this in their own work.

Stage 2: IMAGINE & PLAY

This middle stage is about **embracing the idea of creative play, imagination and experimentation**, looking at traditional and contemporary textile techniques and ideas, as well as experimenting with new materials and sustainable approaches.

The featured embroidery techniques link back to the Bayeux Tapestry to give students a hands-on connection to history, but sit alongside contemporary approaches. The importance of this stage is for students to have a go, **try something new and see the creative possibilities** that textiles can offer. Accessibility is a key focus, and we have included **flexible and adaptable techniques** to ensure that engagement with textiles is open to all.

Students can watch the **step-by-step videos** of different techniques in the classroom, with **supporting worksheets** to capture and re-enforce their understanding.

The Process



Stage 3: DESIGN & MAKE

The final stage of the process is about pulling together everything from Stage 1 and 2, in order to design the final panel for the Tapestry. Students can draw on knowledge developed through **EXPLORE & DISCUSS** and pair this with the ideas generated and textile skills developed in **IMAGINE & PLAY**, to start creating their panel design.

Planning can be done in written or drawn forms depending on what works best for your classroom and students, but **the finished panel that is submitted to the competition must include textile techniques in its creation**. The practicalities around creating whole class collaborative pieces is addressed within the following pages and the lesson plan content.

Textile techniques may be new to some learners, so we encourage them to experiment, think creatively and explore different ways to bring their ideas to life. If an idea is challenging to represent, can they find another way to communicate it?

As in the Bayeux Tapestry, learners can use symbols, words or short phrases to strengthen their message. A heart might represent love, friendship or community, a tree could suggest a healthy planet or hope, and words such as “together” or “everyone belongs” could reinforce an idea. The aim is for learners to think imaginatively and find their own creative ways to visualise the future they would like to see.

Managing making in your classroom

There are a number of different ways that you could organise the making process in your classroom.
We have provided three options below, but encourage you to choose an approach that works for your class, and that allows all students to make a meaningful contribution to the finished piece.

Approach	How it works	Benefits	Things to consider
One section per pupil	Here, each student creates their own section of the tapestry (an entry which is 2m long x 50cm high could be divided into 30 sections of roughly A5 size). The class should start by agreeing the overall vision and message they want to represent, and creating some shared visual ideas. You could then divide this into 30 actions, symbols, objects, locations or people for pupils to craft individually. Once the sections are finished, these can be brought together to create the final piece.	This approach is relatively easy to organise and gives every student a clear piece of the artwork to work on. Students can make their own creative decisions while still contributing to a shared class idea. It also makes it straightforward to make sure everyone has a visible contribution and feels included.	Because pupils are working individually, sections may look quite different. Agreeing a shared colour palette, recurring symbols, characters or patterns can help the finished piece feel connected.

Approach	How it works	Benefits	Things to consider
Small group making	The class is divided into small groups, with each group responsible for one or several connected sections or scenes. Groups could each develop a different part of the vision or explore a particular theme that has emerged from class discussions. Students should discuss in their group what their sections will show and how they will make them before they begin.	This approach encourages discussion, collaboration and shared decision-making. Students can bring different ideas and practical skills to the same piece of work, and groups can take on more ambitious or detailed sections than they might individually.	Groups will need some support to make sure everyone has a meaningful role, and that all voices are heard within the design process.
Whole class collaboration	This is a scaled up version of the small group option - here the class works together to plan the complete piece in detail before making begins. They will decide what the final panel will show, with the design then divided into different elements for students to create. Individual students could focus on people, buildings, objects, symbols or sections of the background, which are then assembled into one artwork.	This approach can create a strong sense of one collaborative artwork, while still allowing pupils to contribute in different ways. It could work particularly well if pupils have different interests, strengths or levels of confidence, as there can be a wide range of creative and practical roles.	This approach needs a little more planning before the making starts. It could help to create a simple class sketch first, showing where the different elements will go and how they will fit together. It is worth noting that students might feel restricted if they are required to focus only on certain elements.



Preparing and submitting your entry

Once your class has completed their piece, the final stage is to write the accompanying statement (350 words max). This should provide further insight into the work, and the process gone through to create it, to help us to understand how it connects with the brief and the selection criteria.

Below is a list of prompts you could talk through with your students to help put together their statement.

1 Give it a title!

This should communicate the overall vision and message of their piece.

2 Creative use of materials & techniques

Example questions:

- *How were fabrics, textures, patterns or colours combined to create different effects?*
- *Were there any key stitching, mark-making, embellishment or construction techniques that were used?*
- *What makes these choices imaginative or unusual?*
- *How did these choices help bring the artwork to life?*

3 Engagement with the theme

Example questions:

- *What future did students imagine?*
- *Why does this future matter to them?*

4 Storytelling & communication

Example questions:

- *How did students decide which pictures, symbols or words to use to communicate their vision?*
- *What did they do to make their message stand out in their artwork?*

5 Visual impact & craftsmanship

Example questions:

- *How did students plan the composition?*
- *What skills did students learn or develop?*
- *How did they make sure the final piece was well crafted and eye-catching?*

6 Sustainability

Example questions:

- *Was there any use of recycled, reused or repurposed materials in the artwork?*
- *If so, why did students choose sustainable materials?*
- *If and how sustainability connects to their vision of the future?*

Preparing and submitting your entry

The written accompaniment should be submitted as a PDF or Word doc, alongside one high-resolution photograph of the whole piece, and up to 5 additional detail photographs.

Please upload your class' submission here

Get in touch

If you have any questions about the project, please get in touch with the Art Explora Learning and Schools Team, via learninguk@artexplora.org

All Bayeux Tapestry images courtesy City of Bayeux, DRAC Normandie, University of Caen Normandie, CNRS, Ensicaen, Photos: 2017 – La Fabrique de patrimoines en Normandie

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