



Cadw Creators: Comic Art Core Learning Resource

A guide for teachers and educators using
built heritage and comic art for learning
#cadwcreators

Cadw Creators is a series of resources to help teachers and educators deliver a creative learning curriculum and Arts Award programmes with school age children. Activities are designed to be used for project-based work and suggest ways of using local heritage resources and the built environment as inspiration. This supports the Welsh Curriculum's Four Purposes, and is appropriate for Foundation Phase all the way to Key Stage 4, as well as for those working towards Arts Awards qualifications.

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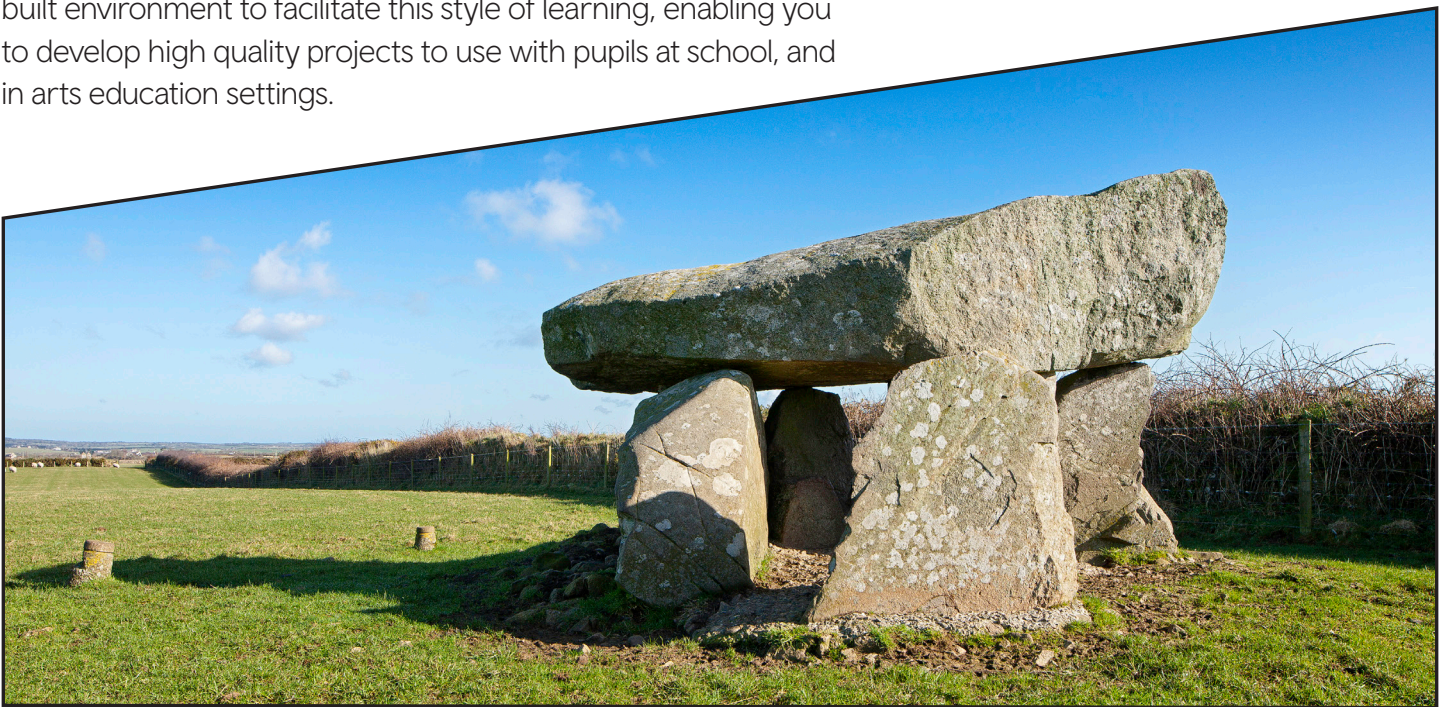
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1. Why use built heritage?

Built heritage refers to any building, monument, structure, installation, architecture or remains created by humans. This covers contemporary and historical sites. It could include castles, burial grounds, standing stones, pathways or roads, bridges, artworks, the urban environment and even industrial works such as mines, reservoirs, harbours and waterways. Such places often have interesting stories attached that are relevant to the way we live today, or that have influenced or been influenced by the human condition.

All built heritage was once new, and has been created by a person, or group of people. There is a lot to learn from such sites, particularly by exploring associated stories, people and materials. Built heritage can be a great starting point to explore history, conflict and resolution, politics, craft and human development. Using it as a project theme can help people learn about their local heritage and develop appreciation and value for their surroundings, resulting in a greater sense of citizenship.

The new curriculum for Wales advocates the use of local cultural resources for learning. Exploring the built environment for project work is an excellent way of achieving this objective, and clearly facilitates the curriculum's *Four Purposes*. This guide aims to help teachers and educators feel more confident in using the built environment to facilitate this style of learning, enabling you to develop high quality projects to use with pupils at school, and in arts education settings.

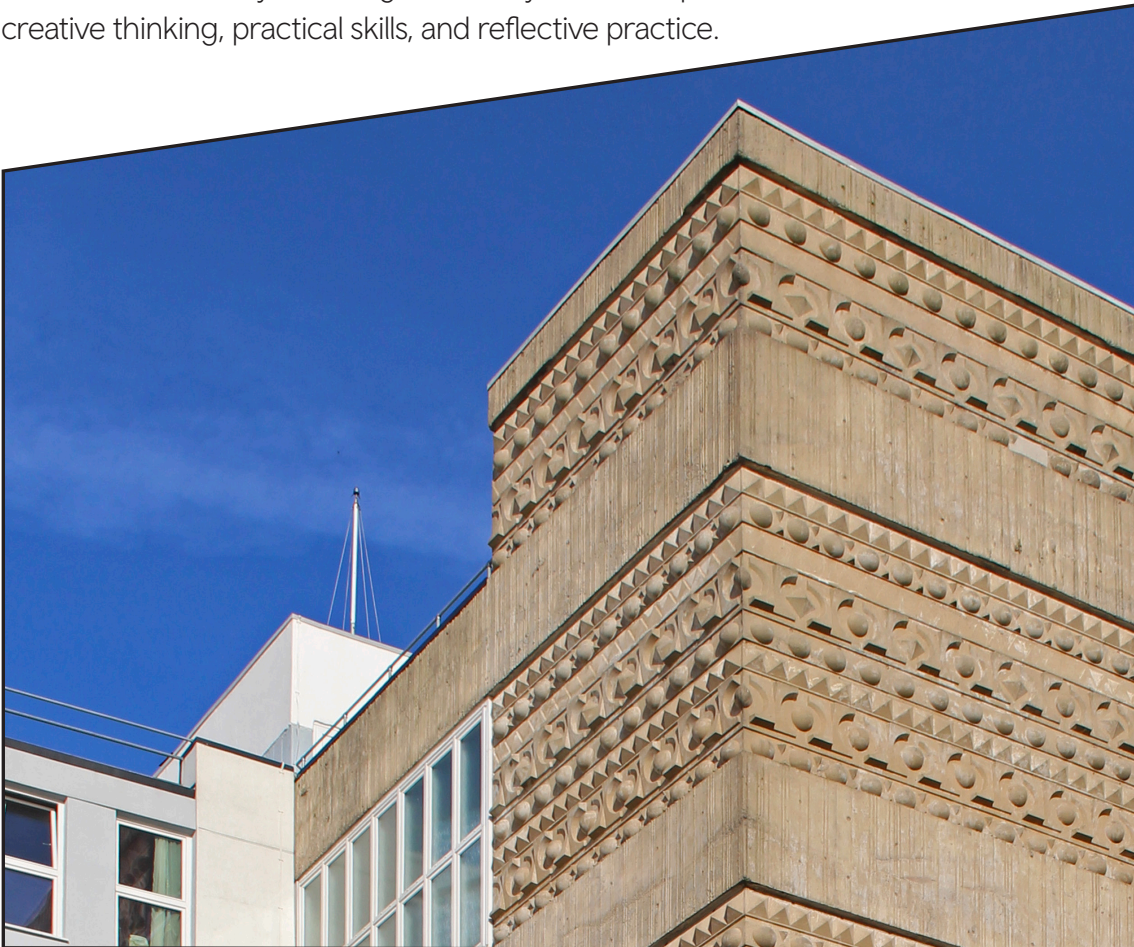


2. Using this resource

This guide provides a framework for teachers, artist educators and pupils to explore local heritage sites and the built environment for inspiration, and to use this as a springboard for immersive, creative, comic art activities.

The activities in this resource are designed to generate good quality source material, which can then be used with the further Cadw Creators: Comic Art activities that accompany this guide (all available on the Cadw website). Used together as a project, these resources support the design of classroom or studio activities to enable learning within literacy, wellbeing, humanities and the expressive arts while embedding the Welsh Curriculum's Digital Competence Framework.

Use this resource as a project planning guide to facilitate best practice learning experiences. It includes suggestions for identifying heritage sites and buildings to provide hours of high-quality learning, and best practice advice for thinking about these sites creatively. Working in this way will develop learners' creative thinking, practical skills, and reflective practice.



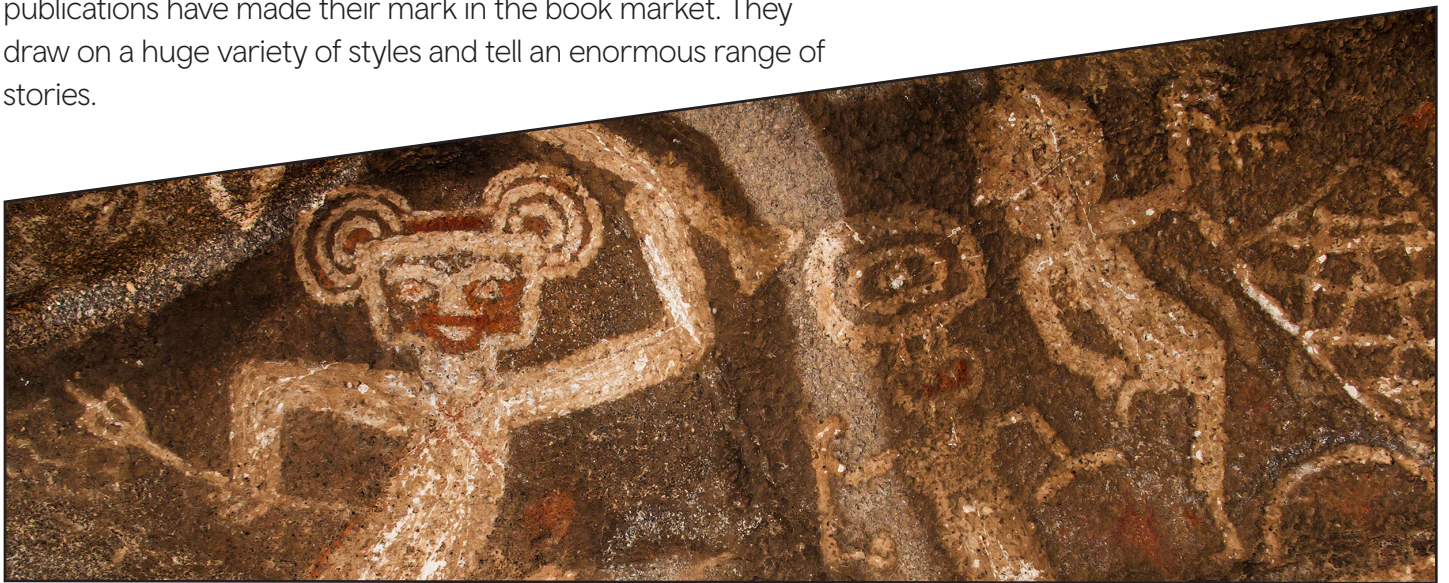
3. Comic art, graphic novels and cartoons

Comic art is a creative discipline that uses a **sequence** of drawn or digital images, possibly with text, to depict a story. This style of creative practice is often referred to as **sequential art** and has been used as a form of communication for thousands of years.

Before humans used reading and writing, images were used to communicate stories or record activity. Cave paintings are considered the earliest form of sequential art, depicting animals and humans participating in hunting. Later examples include Egyptian illustrated artworks, Chinese illustrated manuscripts, Persian sculpted architecture and European religious paintings. Specific examples in Europe include the Michelangelo paintings on the interior of the Sistine Chapel, the carvings on Trajan's Column in Rome, the Bayeux Tapestry and the Raphael Cartoons.

In more recent history, following the print revolution, **cartoons** and comic art became a form of mass communication in newsprint and magazines, particularly used to poke fun. As print became more widely accessible, **comics** have been created specifically for children and young people as well as adults, with an explosion of publications in the 1950's.

Since the 1960's stories told through comic art have developed into longer publications, and so the **graphic novel** emerged. Hugely popular internationally, these fiction and non-fiction publications have made their mark in the book market. They draw on a huge variety of styles and tell an enormous range of stories.



4. Where to find comic art, graphic novels and comic artists

There is a wealth of comic art available to find online and in museum collections. Here are a few places you could explore:

- ⇒ The Cartoon Museum, London
www.cartoonmuseum.org
- ⇒ The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
www.library.wales
- ⇒ National Art Library, London
www.vam.ac.uk
- ⇒ University of Dundee
www.dundee.ac.uk/museum
- ⇒ Cartoon Art Museum, San Francisco
www.cartoonart.org
- ⇒ Comics Art Museum, Brussels
www.comicscentre.net
- ⇒ Kyoto International Manga Museum, Japan
www.kyotomm.jp

Here are some comic artists whose work you could explore:

- ⇒ Carol Swain, Wales
- ⇒ Mumf (Mal Humphreys), Wales
- ⇒ Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, Wales
- ⇒ Hirohiko Araki, Japan
- ⇒ Hiromu Arakawa, Japan
- ⇒ Nilah Magruder, USA
- ⇒ Brian Stelfreeze, USA
- ⇒ Ashley A Woods, USA
- ⇒ John Cassidy, USA
- ⇒ Sara Pichelli, USA
- ⇒ Jill Thompson, USA



5. Why use comic art for learning?

Comic art is an incredibly accessible and versatile way of engaging learners and works with a range of different learning styles, including those with special educational needs. As an artform, it crosses many disciplines, using both visual imagery and language to tell stories and explore a wide range of subjects. This makes it ideal for cross-curricular work. For example, in this context, local history and geography can be explored through a combination of storytelling, story writing, visual arts and digital design.

Using comics within a learning setting presents opportunities for quick comprehension and language exploration. With the stories largely led by visuals, and words used cleverly but sparingly, comic art provides many opportunities to develop good language skills and effective written communication in learners, as well as creative writing and artistic flare.

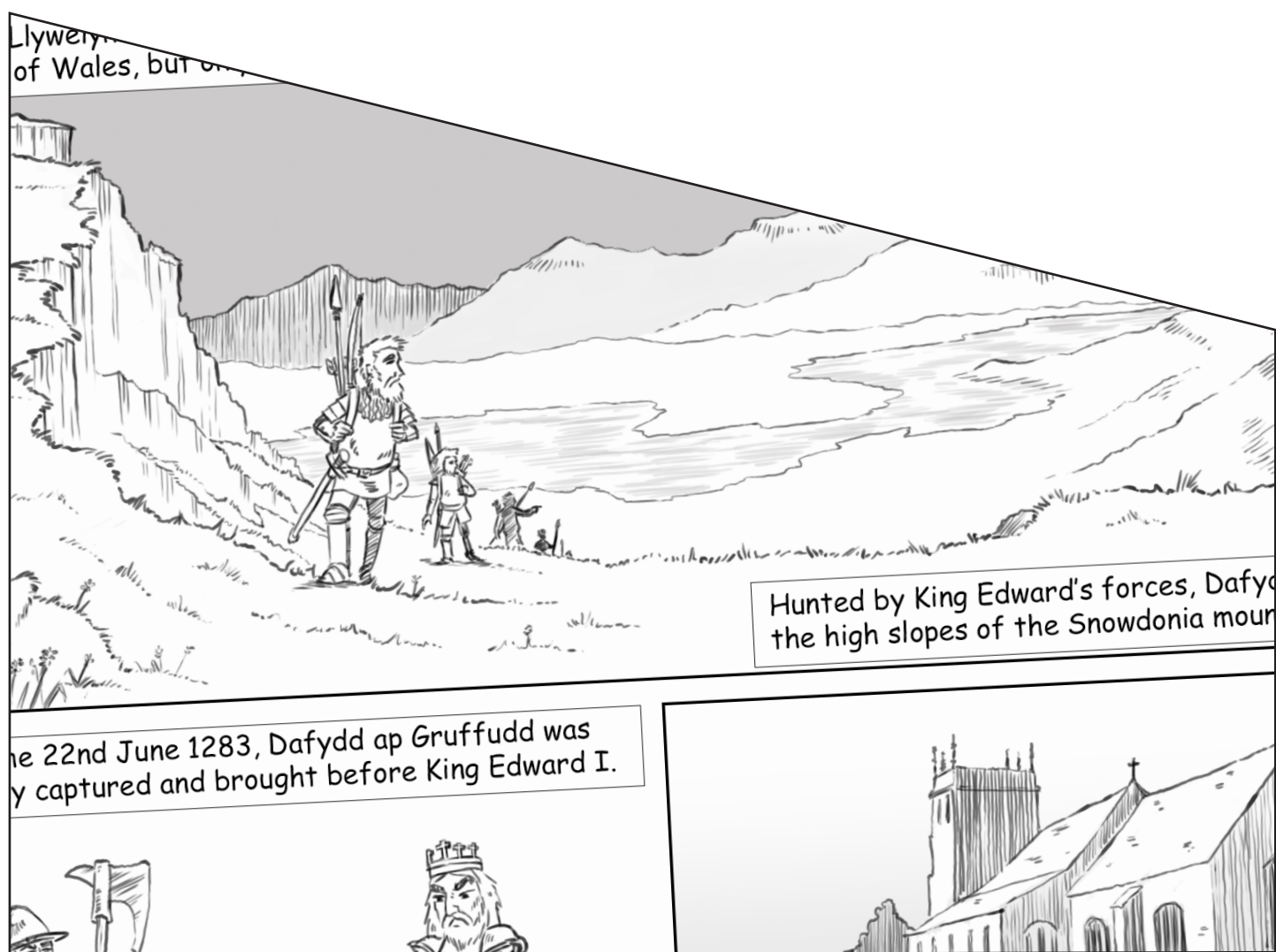
While comic art is visual, the majority of comic books are well structured into classic narratives, and use simple but effective language. Many comic narratives include a resolution towards the end which is an excellent tool for reflection on content.

Because they are so accessible to early readers, comic books and graphic novels can also provide a useful bridge for students moving from illustrated children's books to books without imagery. Of course, comic books and graphic novels also hold their own within the published literature world. Introducing young people to this style of writing can ignite a passion for reading alongside visual representation, and what's not to be encouraged about that?

Why use comic art for learning?

Drawing is a core part of the Expressive Arts area of learning and experience (AoLE) in the new Welsh Curriculum, and creating comic art will of course support this. The curriculum advocates cross-disciplinary learning, and the use of local resources for learning purposes, and the framework used within this resource supports this, and suggests using the local built environment to inspire new creative work.

Both the Arts Awards and Welsh Curriculum teaching methods promote the exploration of creative process, meaning that the research and development phase of a project is as important as any finished product. This resource supports this way of learning.



6. Project planning

This framework is designed to take students on an authentic journey, and to draw out the learning from the process, rather than focus on the end product. To help achieve good learning from the creative journey, it's good practice to plan the steps. This is an outline of a project that will facilitate many opportunities for learning from experience.

Step 1 – Explore comic art (both historical and contemporary) as a creative discipline. Use digital platforms to look at artists and their work, as well as sequential drawing from the past. Use the Cadw Creators Comics to help learners consider how stories about people and places can be told through comic art. Learners should keep a project sketchbook to track their journeys.

Step 2 – Select a piece of built heritage that is appropriate to your locality, community and project theme. Research and explore this site online prior to the visit.

Step 3 – Visit the site with the learners or take part in a digital tour. Use the activities in this resource to enable learners to explore and make their own meaning from the site. When planning, think about what materials to take on the visit, for example, sketchbooks, pencils, crayons, collage materials clipboards, pastels, chalk and so on. (Be aware that felt tips and marker pens are often not allowed at heritage sites.)

Use the *Cadw Creators: Arts Award Explore and Arts Award Discover* resources on the visit if it suits your project.

Step 4 – Use the activities in this guide and accompanying *Cadw Creators: Comic Art* resources to lead sessions that draw out imagination and core skills in the learners.

Step 5 – Share the project digitally, in a display or exhibition.

Step 6 – Reflect on the learning with your students.

7. What to consider when selecting a built heritage site

Wales has endless heritage sites and interesting buildings that are excellent starting points for stories. Consider castles, bronze age sites, monuments, industrial sites, mines, places of worship, shop fronts, civic buildings, sites of protest, roman remains, paths, byways or battle grounds. It's likely that there is something of local interest within walking distance to your school or workshop.

This section helps educators to select a site that will provide good source material for a project with young learners.

Things to consider:

- ⇒ **Story potential:** When selecting a site, it's helpful to think about the stories that might inspire your learners. Try to think about how you could broaden people's knowledge of a particular site. Often local sites are well known for a specific point in history, but think about other stories, perspectives or interpretations that could really bring out the creativity of the learner.
- ⇒ **Accessibility:** It may be necessary to think about sites that are in easy walking distance, and that will be physically accessible to all of your group. Can the site be accessed easily for blended learning purposes, independently, with parents and families, or viewed online? There may be links to the site at the local museum, gallery or archive.
- ⇒ **Locality:** There are very few places in Wales that don't have a significant piece of built heritage in walking distance from home or school. Some school catchment areas will include a number of sites, for example castles, hillforts, standing stones, monuments, modernist buildings or public art works. It's helpful to select a site that can become a focus for a physical visit at some point within the project.

Use the activity worksheets and suggested questions on the following pages to think about a site of interest. Blank templates of these are available for use in the classroom or studio, or indeed on a site visit.



8. Activity: Fun with comics

Cadw has worked with a range of Welsh comic artists to create a series of comics that tell the stories of key figures in Welsh history. These are available on the Cadw website to view online, or to print.

Use these comics to introduce the idea of comic art and to show how other artists have sought inspiration from heritage. The stories are easy to read, and the artwork embraces a range of artistic styles and can be coloured in.

If using these with learners, try developing an understanding of **built heritage**, **characters**, and **stories** with the learners. Here are some suggestions for leading discussions:



- ⇒ Who are the characters in the story?
- ⇒ What kind of people are they?
- ⇒ Where do they live?
- ⇒ What do they wear?
- ⇒ What do their clothes represent?
- ⇒ Do they have a flag?
- ⇒ How do they travel?
- ⇒ What weapons do they use?
- ⇒ Are they wealthy or poor?
- ⇒ What buildings are in the comic?
- ⇒ What is the natural environment like?
- ⇒ Who wrote the story?
- ⇒ What happens in the story?

Try plotting the sites mentioned in the comics on a map of Wales. Maybe some of the sites are in the learner's local environment.

Read a selection of the comics and draw a timeline of which characters are present when.

Try creating a diagram of how the characters in the comics are linked to each other.

Printable map templates of Wales are available at cadw.gov.wales/learn

9. Activity: Mapping the local built environment before your visit

In groups, or in the class setting, talk to the learners about the built environment and what they understand this to mean. Ask them to think about what can be learnt from buildings and structures, and how they are important. There may be an opportunity to take a lead from the learners as to what areas of the built environment they are interested in exploring in more depth.

Internet research is valuable, even with Foundation Phase learners. Spend some time looking at the local built environment, for example, castles, hill-forts, monuments, shop fronts, street art, standing stones, historical trade routes or industrial sites.

Mapping helps to visually understand the geography of a local area and is useful for all age groups. Provide learners with a blank map of the local area. This could be the school catchment area, or the local county. Ask students to populate the map with current sites of relevance and include the built heritage that will form part of the project, for example, castles and hill-forts. Use a graphic key for specific features, and label the sites, for example, current towns and villages, rivers, roads, and the built heritage sites.

Printable map templates of Wales are available at cadw.gov/learn

Adapt this task further:

⇒ Digital Competency Framework:

Set an internet research task into local historic buildings or sites activity, to progress at home. Depending on what kind of map template is provided, populating places could be a digital task.

⇒ **Key Stage 3 & 4:** The ecology and geography of an area is going to be linked to its heritage. Discuss how heritage and landscape influence each other.

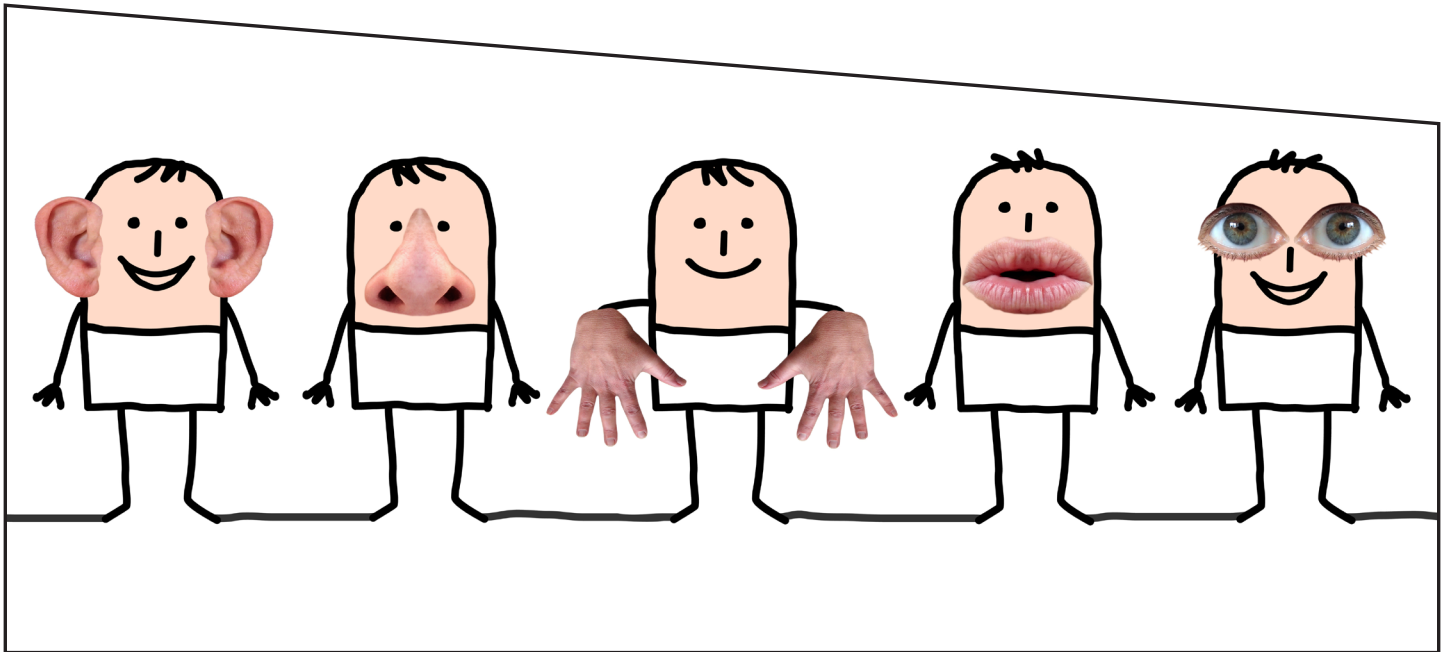
⇒ Homework or blended learning:

Ask learners to interview family or friends about the local area sites being explored through the project. This develops communication skills, and provides experience in collecting original data.

10. Activity: Developing a sense of place during your visit

Start with a mind map activity to explore the meaning of a site. This activity is designed for learners to have a multi-sensory experience during their visit, thinking about seeing, hearing, smelling and touching.

On the next page are some questions to ask the learners. Invite them to respond as if they were answering on behalf of the building or site:



Activity: Developing a sense of place during your visit

Key Stage 1&2

Question to the building or site	Response
What am I?	
Where am I?	
Who built me?	
Why was I built here?	
Who lived/worked here?	
Who visited me?	
When and how was I built?	
What materials am I made from?	
What is around me?	
How have I changed over time?	
Has the landscape changed over time?	
Who still comes here?	
What grows on me?	
How do I smell?	
What sound do I make?	
What have I seen or heard?	
What is my value?	
Am I beautiful?	

Activity: Developing a sense of place during your visit

Adapted for Key Stage 3&4

Question to the building or site	Response
What is my purpose?	
What evidence is there of human interaction here?	
Was there an event and why did the event happen?	
What is my design or architectural style?	
Why am I built here?	
What was I like when I was new?	
What materials am I made from and where were they from?	
Why were those materials used?	
Have I been fixed?	
Who made me and what were their skills?	
What artists or crafts people worked here?	
Was there a disagreement related to this place?	
Was the disagreement resolved?	
How were people treated here?	
What have I witnessed?	
What politics (now and in the past) am I associated with?	
Has the weather changed me?	
Am I associated with a struggle or wrong-doing?	
Who comes here now?	
Why am I important now?	
Will I be important in the future?	
What will you tell people in the future about me?	

11. Activity: Drawing as research

While at the site or building, set a drawing task. Here are some suggestions:

- ⇒ Draw the surrounding countryside, taking into account the mountains, rivers, woodlands, nearby buildings and so on.
- ⇒ Draw the shapes of the architectural features such as windows, doorways and decorative features.
- ⇒ Take a piece of paper and cut a hole to create a window. Hold the paper window up to frame a section of the building or site. Draw what's inside the frame.
- ⇒ Draw the materials: stone, brick, wood, glass and so on.
- ⇒ Create a colour chart of the colours that are present in the building.
- ⇒ Do a paper rubbing of any textures.
- ⇒ Collect natural materials to draw.
- ⇒ Look for markings on the building, such as engravings, or lettering – now draw these. Try to capture the typographic style of the letter forms.

Why not use the *Cadw Creator: Arts Award Explore* and *Arts Award Discover* sketchbooks to inspire how the group of learners respond to the site artistically.



12. Further resources in the *Cadw Creators: Comic Art* series

A range of resources exist in this series which can be used separately or together as a basis from which to create a comic. These cover a range of activities, from story writing and character development, to exploring sound in comic art.

Templates for the activities in this resource along with comic strips, speech bubble and map templates are also available. All resources can be downloaded from the Cadw website:

[Cadw.gov.wales/learn](https://cadw.gov.wales/learn)

13. Aligning work with the Digital Competence Framework

Here are some additional ideas for how to align work with the Welsh Curriculum's Digital Competence Framework for learners:

- ⇒ Try using some of the Cadw apps, or apps that are designed for your site or building of choice, to build digital confidence and enhance a visit.
- ⇒ Use a digital device to take photographs of the site – both views and close ups. Printed images of architectural details could be used as collage materials back at school/the workshop.
- ⇒ Make sound recordings at the site.
- ⇒ Use a comic maker app to take images and create a record of the visit.
- ⇒ Use a comic portrait filter app to create a selfie character.
- ⇒ Use the internet for research.
- ⇒ Tweet famous comic artists with ideas and designs. Remember to use the hashtag #cadwcreators.
- ⇒ Learners can upload their work to People's Collection Wales (www.peoplescollection.wales)

14. Adapting for blended learning

Teachers, pupils and arts educators have become used to a blended learning approach in both formal and informal learning settings. Blended learning supports learning digitally within the home environment as well as in the classroom or workshop, but also presents opportunities for setting work outdoors that is positive for improving wellbeing.

Cadw Creators activities are designed to be adaptable for blended learning with some parts of activities suitable for the classroom or workshop, and others for learning at home. Activities are also designed so they can be used with the local built environment, giving learners the opportunity for creative time away from the screen, and improving wellbeing by getting outdoors.

Cadw's range of comics are downloadable, so they can be shared digitally, printed, or viewed on the screen as desired. Other templates are also available that can be emailed to learners and used electronically. Our printable resources are low on ink to be accessible for school or home learning and as environmentally friendly as possible.

15. Celebrating the project

Developing projects that are authentic is considered best practice for learning, not least because they tend to inspire pupils to be focused and provide an opportunity to present and celebrate any creative or research outcomes to a real-life community.

Celebrating project work provides accessible opportunities to engage parents, families and the wider community in the learning of each individual pupil.

A celebration or presentation is a good tool to enable learners to reflect or critique their own work, and that of their fellow learners. This can be done online, but ideally in a community setting.

Here are some ideas for ways to present and celebrate the work. Learners could:

- ⇒ Design and mount a display in a local museum, gallery or empty shop window to share the research process and any creative outcomes. Empty shops windows are brilliant, especially if galleries and libraries have limited opening hours.
- ⇒ Print the comic strips or even create a little book to share with friends and families.
- ⇒ Present their work to a local arts, heritage or history group, and invite families to join in.
- ⇒ Design a simple website in order to share the whole research process and showcase their completed artwork.
- ⇒ Tweet about the project, tagging well known comic artists, heritage and arts organisations. See who responds and what it leads to. (Remember to use the hashtag #cadwcreators.)
- ⇒ Learners can upload their work to People's Collection Wales (www.peoplescollection.wales)

16. Reflecting and learning

A key aspect of the new Welsh Curriculum and Arts Award frameworks is to reflect with students on their journey and what they have learnt from the process. Here are some ideas for activities to help facilitate this:

- ⇒ Draw a collective timeline of the journey to find out what the highlights of the project have been for the learners.
- ⇒ Play games to draw out what the learners enjoyed, what they would do differently if they did the project again, and what they would like more of.
- ⇒ Facilitate a discussion, with game activities, to invite the learners to comment on what they like about each other's work.
- ⇒ Lead a mind map exercise, inviting the learners to tell the stories, or facts that they have learnt.
- ⇒ Interview the learners on camera about their projects: ask them to introduce their comic, what they have learnt about the local site, and what they have discovered about comic art.

17. Further learning for everyone

Further educational resources, digital tours, 15 minute heritage films and ideas for learning projects, including a whole host of comics and comic art activities, are available on our website:
[Cadw.gov.wales/learn](https://cadw.gov.wales/learn)

Find a place to visit

[Cadw.gov.wales/visit](https://cadw.gov.wales/visit)

Cof Cymru

National Historic Assets of Wales.

cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical
Monuments of Wales

List of historic place names in Wales

rcahmw.gov.uk/discover/list-of-historic-place-names

Coflein - The online catalogue of archaeology, buildings,
industrial and maritime heritage in Wales

[Coflein.gov.uk](https://coflein.gov.uk)

Archwilio

The Historic Environment Records of Wales

[Archwilio.org.uk](https://archwilio.org.uk)

Find learning resources from Cadw and many other arts,
heritage and cultural organisations on Hwb

[Hwb.cymru](https://hwb.cymru)

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