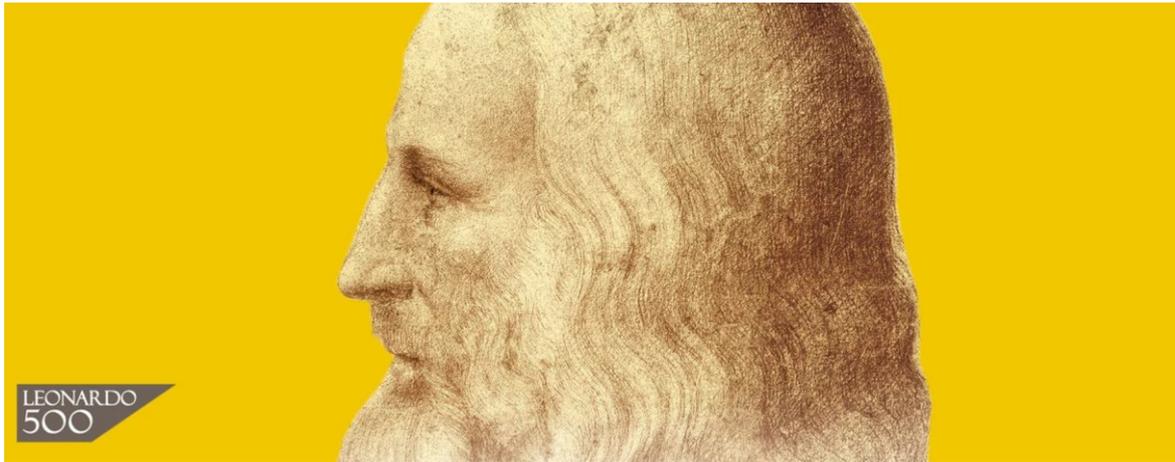


THE QUEEN'S GALLERY BUCKINGHAM PALACE

TEACHER INFORMATION NOTES

A Mind on the Move: A Creative Writing Workshop



‘Where the spirit does not work with the hand, there is no art’ Leonardo da Vinci

And that goes for writing too.

During this workshop session, students will be encouraged and enabled to use hand and spirit to engage with the extraordinary world of Leonardo da Vinci through his drawings, designs, maps and inventions. They will follow him on his travels and understand how his mind was on a constant journey as well. From a simple beginning his mind would range over intellectual and creative mountains to reach the wealth of discoveries and innovations your students will see in the incomparable drawings on the walls of the Gallery.

Students will take away with them a ‘Writer’s Notebook’ of ideas and reminders of the two hours spent in the Gallery. These and the follow-up suggestions at the end of the teachers’ notes for their session in the Gallery can be developed into longer, finished pieces of writing or other creative projects back at school or at home.

Discover images from our exhibition online

All of the images featured in your taught session can be sourced as digital versions for use on classroom whiteboards via www.rct.uk. Use the RCIN number (example highlighted in yellow below) typed in to the 'Search the Collection' feature on our *Explore the Collection* page (www.rct.uk/collection/search) to simply locate the chosen image. Images can be downloaded as files to print.

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EXPLORE THE COLLECTION

Explore the Royal Collection online, one of the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact.

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WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN MORE

Search the Collection (e.g. for people, categories, items)

Filter objects by the people who created, commissioned, acquired or appear in them

Type a name

DELUGES - France:

THE ORIGINAL OF THE REPRODUCTION IN THE GALLERY - RCIN 912380

THE OTHERS – FROM RCIN 912378 TO RCIN 912386

A cataclysmic storm overwhelming the earth was one of Leonardo's favourite subjects during the last years of his life, in both drawings and writings. He was analytical and often laid out his writing like a scientific treatise with marginal illustrations, using his coded script. Here are some of his words and phrases:

Precipices, ruinous, a boisterous course, trees throwing their roots upwards, mountains scoured bare, deep fissures, swollen waters, rivers burst their banks - rush on in monstrous waves. Ruined buildings throw up a great dust rising like smoke or wreathed clouds against the falling rain. Eddying whirlpools leap into the air as muddy foam. Whirling waves. The rain falls the same colour as the clouds. Vast pools of water flung into air – And demonstrating his scientific curiosity: ...'movement will be in a contrary direction to that of the object which struck the water; that is to say, the angle of reflection will be equal to the angle of incident'.

MAPS –Florence and Rome:

RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL ITALY - RCIN 912277

THE VALDICHIANA - RCIN 912278

BIRDS EYE VIEW OF THE VALDICHIANA - RCIN 912682

WESTERN TUSCANY - RCIN 912683

THE PONTINE MARSHES - RCIN 912684

The maps are mostly of areas in northern Italy, near Florence. There were plans to build a canal to bypass the non-navigable 10 mile stretch of the Arno west of Florence, but they were never acted upon. There were other plans to drain the Pontine marshes. Attempts to drain these malarial marshes had been made since Roman times, but it wasn't until the twentieth century that they were fully drained and they still need continuous pumping. We don't know if Leonardo actually visited the marshes, but it's clear he was involved in the project in some way and from the colouring and detail on the maps that they were meant to be shown to others involved, probably the Florentine governors.

BOTANICAL STUDIES – Milan and Rome:

BLACKBERRY - RCIN 912419

BLACKBERRY & BIRD'S FOOT TREFOIL - RCIN 912420

GUELDER ROSE - RCIN 912421

DYER'S GREENWOOD AND OAK - RCIN 912422

STAR OF BETHLEHEM - RCIN 912424

SEDGES - RCIN 912427

JOB'S TEARS - RCIN 912429

BUR-REED AND BULLRUSH - RCIN 912430

Leonardo drew plants and flowers throughout his life following the naturalistic detail of fifteenth-century Italian painters. Many of his finest drawings(including some of those in the exhibition) were connected with his composition of Leda and the Swan which was apparently never painted. These drawings contain such detail that it's clear that Leonardo had an interest in the plants far beyond what was necessary for a painting. The guelder rose show berries and curling leaves, which suggest he was interested not just in their appearance, but their living form when subject to gravity and the passage of time.

COSTUMES - France:

DESIGN FOR A DRAGON COSTUME - 912369

BUST OF A MASQUERADER IN PROFILE – RCIN508

COSTUME STUDY OF A PRISONER – RCIN 912573

MASQUERADER ON HORSEBACK – RCIN912574

MASQUERADER AS A LANSQUENET – RCIN 912575 (Any class of German mercenary of the 15th and 16th centuries, mostly pikemen and foot soldiers)

STANDING MASQUERADERS – RCIN 912576 AND RCIN 912577

The only costume studies we have are from the end of Leonardo's life, which he spent in France at the court of Francis I. Francis loved lavish entertainments and letters exist with detailed descriptions of various festivities held in 1518. The richness and layering of textiles they describe are exactly what Leonardo was aiming at in his designs. The costume for the prisoner was probably to show off the luxury of the costumes for the Standing Masquerader and the woman shown in the bust. The dragon would have held two men in the manner of a pantomime horse.

MORTARS FIRING INTO A FORTRESS – Florence: RCIN 912275

This formal drawing shows how a fortress wall may be reached and the bailey within subdued. Leonardo spent months surveying fortifications for Cesare Borgia. The introduction of gunpowder led military architects to develop low, thick ramparts instead of the now vulnerable high medieval curtain wall, with an elaborate system of outworks. Projections (bastions) allowed defensive fire in all directions.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL OR AT HOME

- Take the piece of writing you did at the Gallery and take to a finished state with illustrations if you like.
- Leonardo was accomplished in painting, sculpture, architecture, music, anatomy, engineering, cartography, geology and botany. Make sure you know what all these things are. Choose one and write a letter to Leonardo asking to be his apprentice telling him why you want to take up your chosen subject, what makes you think you could do well at it and why you would like to study with him.
- Make a collage of a deluge – not necessarily of a natural storm, but some other kind of onslaught if you wish. Use pictures, photographs, texts, your own words (perhaps in backwards writing), and create an atmospheric background. Perhaps make a display so your classroom looks as if it's in the middle of a deluge.
- Look at Leonardo's list of words describing a deluge and add your own. In groups make 'on the spot' radio broadcasts and add sound effects and music to your recordings.
- Find out what a 'masque' was like. Write and perform a class masque with Leonardo's characters and more you can invent. Make up songs and dances and either compose the music to accompany them or choose some already written that fits in well. Design the costumes and make a display of them alongside Leonardo's.
- Collect some flowers – garden flowers perhaps, but wild flowers, and weeds would be best. Sprigs from trees and shrubs would work as well. Give them names (even if you know them already) and if you need to, find out their real names and a little bit about them – are they symbols, herbal medicines, good to eat. Press them so you can make a scientific and historical treatise like Leonardo's about them and write some poems to put in the book as well.
- Make a class map, bird's eye view, of an imaginary place. In pairs decide on what kind of terrain you want put in – a plateau, a river, a cave, steps, a space station even. Put in some landmarks. In your pairs, make a story about crossing the place – to rescue someone, to find treasure, to hide something or from someone, or simply to discover what or who is there. Write your story, but each of you write a different ending.
- Write a description for Leonardo (with a sketch plan if you like) of an invention of today – a game boy, a mobile phone, a drone, a food mixer maybe – what it's for and how it works.

Vocabulary

Apart from Leonardo's own words on deluges and the plant names, your students will meet some of the following words that may be unfamiliar to them:

Bailey

Bird's eye view

Canal

Channel

Curtain wall

Debris

Grotesque

Lansquenet

Malaria

Masque

Mortars

Peninsula

Siege

Survey

Texture

Treatise

Tributary

