

Shoes | Around the World

Overview

This resource has been designed by the SHAPE in Schools initiative. There are three core objectives of SHAPE:

1. Increase the visibility of SHAPE subjects.
2. Demonstrate the global relevance of SHAPE subjects.
3. Enable people to consider themselves as students of SHAPE.

This resource uses shoes as a vehicle to discuss the connectedness of SHAPE subjects and some of the most pressing topics of the modern day. This resource is designed to be delivered by any SHAPE teacher to enthuse learners about all SHAPE subjects.

Object-based Learning

A focus on a singular object as a means to explore and learn is part of object-based learning (OBL) methodologies. Though traditionally used in museums and cultural centres, OBL is being used by SHAPE to help explore one object from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. You can find out more about the principles of OBL under Practitioner Training on the SHAPE website.

Modes, Methods & Mindsets

Each resource is built around different modes, methods and mindsets apparent in the activities. You can find out more about the principles of modes, methods and mindsets under Practitioner Training on the SHAPE website.

- **Mode:** images, text, quiz and discussion
- **Method:** generating ideas; inference; intercultural competence; linking and lateral thinking; considering evidence; logic and pattern seeking
- **Mindset:** shoes are not defined by a single shape, design, aesthetic or purpose. Shoes are representative of a culture and have evolved over time as the way that people live their lives has changed, and as global markets provide a plethora of inspiration for shoe designers.

Subject Connections

The subjects explored in this resource include, but are not limited to: History, Culture, Geography, Religion, Textiles, Language, Art & Design, Citizenship

Shoes of the World

Shoes look different around the world depending on culture and geography. In this way, they become part of our identity and allow us to express ourselves as individual people and as a collective culture.

This activity links very closely to the slow looking activity which is also available for the object Shoes. It asks learners to consider a variety of shoes from across the world. It aims to develop learners' understanding of how culture and geography affect design and purpose.

Possible questions:

- How does climate/geography affect the design?
- How does culture affect the style?

The activity sheet linked to this resource allows learners to explore each shoe and match it to the relevant country. You could also ask learners to place them on the map, testing further their geographical knowledge.

The following shoes are explored as part of this activity.

Moccasin [from the USA]

Moccasin is a general word meaning a variety of shoe styles from the Native American and First Nation peoples of modern-day Canada and the USA. The word moccasin comes from the Algonquian language, Powhatan, which is the language spoken by Pocahontas: www.nytimes.com/2006/03/07/science/linguists-find-the-words-and-pocahontas-speaks-again.html

They were made from animal hide and decorated in styles distinctive to different tribes and bands. Moccasins were designed for their specific environment. Hard-sole moccasins were used in rocky areas and deserts to protect the feet from uneven terrain and cacti. Soft-sole moccasins required fewer materials and so simply protected the wearer from the cold.

Extension Ideas

- For more information about moccasins: www.nativetech.org/clothing/moccasin/moctext.html
- For a map of moccasin designs across North America: www.nativetech.org/clothing/moccasin/mocmap.html



Alpargatas [from Argentina]

Alpargatas, or espadrilles, originate from Spain but were popularised in Argentina. The word alpargata either comes Basque or Arabic, it's not 100% clear:

www.bridgetospain.com/alpargatas/

They are made from natural fibres like jute and cotton. These natural materials are not designed for wet climates because of the type of material and are also not overly decorative or elaborate.

These shoes tend to have a glove-like fit and are breathable to suit the hotter climates of Argentina. Originally they were designed for the working classes as they were simple and cheap to make as well as environmentally friendly.

Extension Ideas

- Consider how this shoe has been commercialised in the western world and how they have become a fashion symbol.
- For more information about the alpargata: www.aandas.com/pages/our-story

Babouche Slippers [from Morocco]

Babouche are open back, decorative, pointed-toed shoes and generally soft to wear and to the touch. The tradition of wearing this type of footwear, first adopted by women and then later on by men, crossed over from the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world. Their use was not exclusive to any social class in particular.


During the 17th century, the European elite, especially in France, fell in love with the exotic charm of Moroccan slippers and brought the style to Europe. Moroccan slippers have remained a leading shoe design for comfortable footwear right up to today. In some ways, they have been appropriated by the West.

Extension Ideas

- The word babouche is a French spelling of the Arabic word 'babush' or Persian 'papush' which means slipper. The word 'slipper' was first recorded in English in 1478; however, it seems the slipper has been around for much longer: www.dictionary.com/browse/slipper
- For more information about the history of the babouche slipper: www.mahabis.com/blogs/journal/the-history-of-the-slipper
- Consider that if you enter babouche slippers into Google, you are bombarded with sites selling them. How much is this an appropriation of an item/culture?

Clogs [from the Netherlands]

Clogs are wooden shoes with a distinctive shape and often decorative detail. Worn by farmers, fisherman, factory workers, artisans and others to protect their feet. They are often worn on boats and docks and in muddy fields to keep feet dry. Cleverly, due to the sturdy nature of wood, nails, fishing hooks and sharp implements that might pierce a regular boot will not go through a wooden shoe so they were considered practical for the industries they were designed for.



Extension Ideas

- Linked with times gone by, a traditional lifestyle, and so now connected with tourism: www.hollandvsnetherlands.wordpress.com/2012/11/21/why-walk-on-wooden-shoes/
- For more information about clogs in the UK: www.mylearning.org/stories/clogs-and-the-people-who-made-them-and-wore-them/1146
- For more information about clog dancing: www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Clog-Dancing/

Al'Qabqāb [from Morocco]

Al'Qabqāb (pronounced karb-karrb) come from Syria but were made famous in Damascus where they are synonymous with bath houses, otherwise known as hammam.

Similar to Geta shoes, they are made from wood and designed to keep water away from the feet.

The origin of Al'Qabqāb dates back to the Fatimid Empire and was popularised during the Ottoman Empire. Today it is considered a traditional shoe.

Extension Ideas

- The comedian Duraid Lahham famously used Al'Qabqāb as the inspiration for a song in one of his films. Al'Qabqāb are knocked together to make the music and inform the comedic lyrics to the song: <https://youtu.be/si0N6wJb7rM>



Birch Bark Shoes [from Sweden]

Worn in Scandinavia, birch bark shoes were designed to be used in saunas or over leather shoes to keep them dry and clean. They originate from Sweden. Birch bark is strong, flexible and water resistant making it an ideal medium.

Extension Ideas

- For more information about birch bark shoes in Russia where they are called lapti: www.rbth.com/lifestyle/329839-why-lapti-is-most-russian-shoes

Jutti [from India]

Jutti are highly decorated shoes from the Punjab region of India. They are made from leather and then embroidered to create intricate designs. Paper stencils are used to sketch out the design.

Interestingly, the shoes have neither a left or right side and so are flat-soled.

Extension Ideas

- Jutti shoes continue to be used today, with some designs modernised such as by the brand Needlelust: www.needledust.com/
- For more information about Jutti shoes: www.gaatha.com/the-sole-of-punjab/

Geta Shoes [from Japan]

Geta shoes are wooden and platformed with a visual similarity to a flip flop. They were designed to raise the sole of the shoe off the ground to protect the foot from water or dirt. They were also designed to allow for free circulation of air around the foot which is important because of the humidity experienced in Japan.

Extension Ideas


- Whilst Geta shoes are now mostly used as traditional footwear, most Japanese homes have a shoe cupboard called a getabako (geta box) in the genkan (entrance hallway). The tradition of removing one's shoes when entering the home and separating spaces - public and private - is retained in the continued use of the word.
- For more information about the Geta shoe: www.japan-zone.com/culture/footwear.shtml



Quiz Answers

The map and match-up activity is followed by a short quiz to encourage learners to engage with the content more interactively and to provide stimulus for conversation.

The answers to the questions are as follows:

1. Jutti shoes come from India.
 2. Bark shoes are made from birch.
 3. Clogs were first used in the 1200s.
 4. Babouche slippers are made of leather.
 5. Geta shoes were designed to protect the wearer from the rain.
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Gap Fill

This activity is intended to act as a reflection to summarise the section on Shoes of the World. Each missing word is provided with its function within the paragraph (adjective, noun, verb and preposition). Learners can use this, along with the meaning of the word, to work out the answers. Encourage learners to think through the process and use their literacy skills.

Extension Ideas

- This activity could be translated into another language (such as Welsh, Irish, Gaelic or an international language) to increase the difficulty.

Discussion

This slide focuses on encouraging discussion about the section on Shoes of the World.

The questions that are asked are:

- Why do shoes get adapted by different cultures?
- How might your favourite shoes look different in another culture or in the future?

Use the links and guidance throughout this section to stimulate ideas for this discussion.

