



*Home and Away:  
Girls of the British  
Empire*

**Educational Guide**

by  
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*Home and Away:  
Girls of the British Empire*

*Home and Away: Girls of the British Empire* explores a selection of historical photographs and postcards, featuring girls and women from countries across the globe, to provide a 'girls eye view' of what life was like during the rule of the British Empire. The aim of the exhibition is to discover how girls participated and were viewed within 'the family of the Empire.'

This educational guide is designed for classroom use with students in primary/elementary school, secondary school and university settings. All the activities are designed for ease of copy and distribution to your students. Also noted are links to both the UK National Curriculum (pg. 4) and the US Common Core (pg. 5).



## Discussion Questions

*Students can answer the following questions on their own or discuss in groups.*

The following questions can be focused on one image, a selection of images, or all of the images from the *Home and Away: Girls of the British Empire* exhibition.

1. What does this photograph tell you about the experiences of girls during the British Empire?
2. What do you believe to be the purpose of this photograph? Why was it taken?
3. Does the photograph show a negative, positive, or balanced representation of how girls lived during the British Empire?
4. What similarities and differences can you identify between yourself and those in the photograph?
5. How might you feel if you were one of the girls in the photograph and you were living under the rule of the British Empire?

## Analysis: Images

Analyze the three images on this page.

Using details from the images, and the exhibit, discuss what these images tell us about the attitudes and views of the British Empire about the world.

You could consider listening to Girl Museum’s podcast “Incredible Queens” (September 2015) to help you. It explores the life of Queen Victoria along with other English queens.



*Image 1 (top right): GB British Empire Exhibition Postage Stamp, 1924, WikiCommons.*

*Image 2: Portrait of Queen Victoria of England, Empress Victoria of India, 1887, WikiCommons.*

*Image 3: Imperial Federation, map of the world showing the extent of the British Empire, 1886, WikiCommons.*

## Activities

### **Activity #1: Postcards from Home**

Postcards were very popular in Victorian times at the height of the British Empire.

Choose a photograph from the exhibition and use it as the front of a postcard.

Write to your friends or family as if you were living in that country and tell them about your life and experiences under British Empire rule.

### **Activity #2: Colonial Stories**

Choose one of the photographs from the exhibition that you like or feel a connection with.

Write a first person story or diary entry from the perspective of the girl or girls in your chosen photograph.

Consider how they would feel about their life under British Empire rule.

### **Activity #3: Fabulous Flags**

Flags are an important part of a country's identity, and lots of different design elements are used to represent each nation.

Research the flags of the countries that made up the British Empire. What elements make up their designs?

Design a flag that incorporates design elements that represent the entire British Empire.

Share your designs with your classmates in a tabletop gallery. Compare and contrast them in class discussion.



### *UK National Curriculum Links:*

#### History KS1 & KS2:

- Know & understand significant aspects of history of the wider world
- Know & understand how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- Understand historical concepts such as continuity & change
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry
- Gain historical perspective by placing knowledge into different contexts
- The lives of significant individuals in the past

#### Art & Design: KS1 & KS2:

- Produce creative work
- Evaluate & analyse creative works

#### English KS1 & KS2:

- Use discussion in order to learn
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding & knowledge
- Articulate & justify answers, arguments & opinions

#### Geography KS1 & KS2:

- Use maps to locate countries



### US Common Core Links:

#### History/Social Studies:

- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions

#### Speaking & Listening:

- Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion
- Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study

#### Writing:

- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate

## Activities continued

### Activity #4: Travel Agents

Take a look at the ‘Wouldn’t you like to see Samoa’ postcard in the exhibit.

Thinking about how they have used this image to advertise Samoa as a holiday destination, design a postcard or poster to entice holiday travelers to come and visit the country.

You could get together with friends or classmates and take your own photograph, or you could try to find an image online or in a book, to use in your postcard.

### Activity #5: In Depth

Use the exhibition, along with your own research, to write an essay on one of the following titles:

- What impact did Queen Victoria have on girls and girlhood during her reign?
- What was life like during the British Empire for a girl living in [*choose a country*]?
- How have girls today been affected by the legacy of the British Empire Consider themes such as conflicts, famine, civil wars etc.

Ask your teacher for advice on word count.

These websites could help you with your research:

- Wikimedia Commons ([www.wikimedia.org](http://www.wikimedia.org))
- Queensland State Archives ([archives.qld.gov.au](http://archives.qld.gov.au))
- The British Library's Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections ([www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk))
- BBC History ([www.bbc.co.uk/history](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history))

# Girl Museum

We are the first and only online museum about girlhood.

We exhibit, educate, and raise awareness about the unique experience of being born and growing up female around the world in the past and present.

As a community of passionate and creative individuals, we acknowledge and advocate for girls as forces for collective responsibility and change in the global context, not as victims and consumers.

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization.

Learn more and get involved at [www.GirlMuseum.org](http://www.GirlMuseum.org)



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## Activity #6: Clothes & Culture



Take a look at the photograph of the Grenadian schoolgirls and also the Little Miss Betty postcard. Reflect on how the girls' clothes have been influenced by the British Empire.

Now take a look at your own clothes and think about how they are influenced by other cultures. Consider the patterns, designs, and also where they were made.

You could organize a day at your school where everyone comes dressed in traditional clothes from another country.

Ask everyone to pay a small fee and then donate the profits to a charity that supports girls in countries that were former Empire colonies!