

Famous Black Britons: Francis Barber

(c. 1735 – 13 January 1801)

Aims

- These learning questions and classroom activities support subject specific or cross curricular learning about the life and times of Francis Barber.
- Depending on the school planning process and learning approaches, use some of the questions or develop your own starting points for classroom work.
- The image bank supports some of the activities and you may also want to use the accompanying information sheets or undertake your own research.
- The suggestions are light touch to enable you to develop activities which specifically support your primary or secondary Key Stage and/or curriculum.

Learning questions and activities

What do I want to learn about Francis Barber?

- Consider the life and times of Francis Barber as a history topic. What will this topic help us to learn and what skills might we use/develop?
- Ask students to write a list of questions they have about Francis Barber.
- At the start of the learning create a class mindmap of what the class know already about Francis Barber and what they would like to find out. Review the mindmap at the end of the learning.

What did Francis Barber look like?

- What evidence is there to help us understand what Francis looked like?
- Apply Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to the portrait of Francis Barber using observational skills, creative thinking and descriptive language. Spend some time just looking at the portrait, then discuss what can you see including what is happening and all the little details that you spot the longer you study it.
- Print out the portrait of Francis Barber and create an annotated diagram noting what information you think the portrait provides.
- Research portraits before photography. Find examples of other Georgian portraits. Create a portrait of yourself as a Georgian.

Who did Francis Barber know?

- Who else was part of Francis's life – family, friends, employers, community?
- Draw a family tree for Francis, his wife and their children.
- Find out about Samuel Johnson, what sort of friendship did Samuel and Francis have? Create an imaginary conversation between the two men as they discuss why they are friends.
- Write a short first-person monologue for Francis Barber, a member of his family or someone he knew talking about themselves and their life.
- Find out about the African diaspora community in Georgian London. How large was the community? Where did they live and work? Do we know any of their individual names and life stories?

What did Francis Barber eat and drink?

- Research the different food and drink available to Francis and his family.
- Research old cookbooks to find recipes for dishes Francis might have eaten.
- Use the tea pot as a starting point to find out about Georgian drinks.
- Write instructions for making a cup of tea using the teapot as part of the process (no teabags!).
- The teapot holds nearly three litres of liquid. Measure out three liquids and see how many teacups it will fill. What about larger mugs?
- Write a menu for a Georgian breakfast, lunch or supper.
- Create a Georgian meal for Francis by drawing foodstuffs available at the time on a paper plate.
- Find out where different foodstuffs came from and mark the areas they were grown/processed on a world map.
- Imagine Francis is at the restaurant, what can he order to eat? Create a short dramatic conversation between Francis and the restaurant staff (no crisps!).

Where did Francis Barber live?

- Find out where Francis lived during his life. Where was Francis born, where did he live as a child/adult, where did he die?
- Mark the places where Francis Barber lived on a map. Draw arrows to show the order in which Francis moved between different places.

What jobs did Francis Barber have?

- Find out what different types of work and jobs Francis had in his life.
- Write a CV for Francis. What is his education and work experience? What skills can he offer? What would he say were his achievements and strengths.
- A day in the life of Francis Barber. Create a written piece or dramatic presentation detailing what Francis did during one day of his life. Different groups could do a day from different stages of his life.

How can I share my learning with others?

- How do I draw together what I have learnt to support other people in learning about Francis Barber? How do I present my findings in person or for others to look at independently?
- Create a mini biography - a written piece, a cartoon or a poster presentation.
- Create a timeline for the life and times of Francis Barber.
- Create a short spoken presentation, working in pairs or as a small group, about what you have discovered to share at an assembly.
- Collect information gathered during the topic, add it to a class book and put the book in the school library for other people to read.
- Create a short film with images and spoken information.

Notes on classroom activities

These questions and activity suggestions have been co-created by primary and secondary school teachers from the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and the Schools and Young Audiences Team at the British Museum.

We read all responses to our resources and view this document as open to review and change. Email: learning@britishmuseum.org