

Lesson Plan: Looking at definitions of heritage and types of significance

Fiona J. L. Handley
Archaeology
University of Southampton

This 55 minute session would encourage the students to become more confident in using heritage language, to understand the concept of significance and highlight the complicated issues of assigning value based on e.g. designation, economics and audiences. It could easily be extended into a double session with the presentation of more background information on the concepts and sites. The goal of the lesson is for each group of students to work together to put together a written 5 minute presentation that would 'sell' their site as Hampshire's Heritage Site of the Year. It is envisaged that there will be 5-10 students, more sites can be added to the case studies if the group is larger, however the session will then become longer.

Learning outcomes

to understand definitions of heritage in contrast to other descriptions of heritage resources
to extract information from a range of sources
to critically investigate the different types of significance associated with heritage sites
to work as a group to synthesis information quickly to a brief

Materials

The sites (e.g.)

1. Winchester Cathedral
 - Short (500 word) description of the history of the cathedral
 - List of its statutory protection
 - External photograph of the Cathedral
 - Shot of the inside of the Cathedral
 - List of its key historic resources

2. Hampshire Water Meadows
 - Short (500 word) description of history of watermeadows
 - Photographs of the Hampshire Water Meadows
 - Map from Hampshire HER showing distribution of water meadows
 - Extract from Hampshire Historic Landscape Characterisation
 - Extract from Hampshire County Council's policy on watermeadows

All of this information, apart from the HER data which can be got from Hampshire County Council, is available over the internet.

Lesson Plan

The session will begin with group discussion of how the sites would be described by an ordinary member of the public, and contrast this with the heritage language used in the materials. (5 minutes)

Explanation of what happens next, discussing the four points that the students will consider to build up their case (10 minutes)

1. Describe the various types of heritage in the resource
2. Who manages and protects the resource?
3. Who uses the resource and for what purposes?
4. Why is the resource significant?

The students will be broken into two groups and each given the pack of information relating to either Winchester Cathedral or Hampshire Water Meadows. The lecturer will move between the groups, encouraging discussion and leading the students through the questions, helping target their thinking to their 5 minute presentation. It is envisaged that question 4 will need most work, however, it should develop from the first 3 questions. (20 minutes)

Based on these discussions the groups then present their pitch for their site being made Hampshire Heritage Site of 2009. (5 minutes each)

The final 10 minutes will be a group discussion on the complexities that these two cases studies highlight. It will finish with a hands-up vote for Hampshire Heritage Site of the Year.