

Toys and games from the past

Links to QCA schemes of work

History: Unit 1. How are our toys different from those in the past?

Science: Unit 1C. Sorting and using materials

Science: Unit 2D. Grouping and changing materials

RE: Unit RC. Who was Noah?

Art and design: Unit 9 (gen). Visiting a museum, gallery or site

Background notes

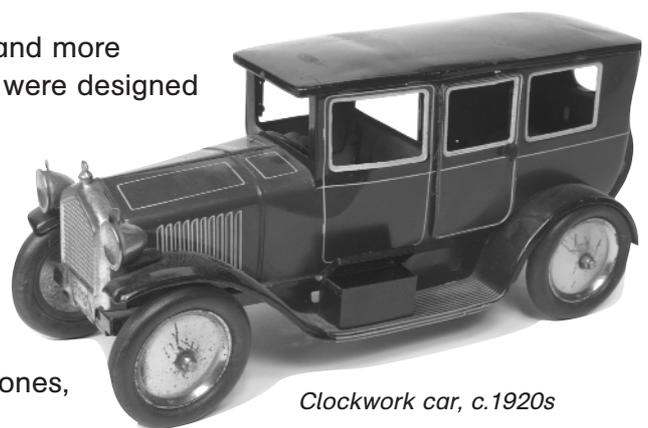
The Museum has one of the best collections of children's toys and games in the country. Some of these date from the 17th century, with the 19th and 20th centuries being strongly represented. It is obviously impossible to cover the whole collection in notes such as these, but the following suggests some of the themes and objects you may wish to focus on with your pupils.

Role play

Many toys made for children in the past were intended to have a dual purpose – to educate as well as entertain. 19th century building bricks often have letters of the alphabet painted on them, although children undoubtedly used them for a variety of purposes other than learning their letters!

Some old toys are intended to encourage children to think about what they will be when they grow up, and to role play adult jobs. In the past, women traditionally ran households, so girls were taught domestic skills. These skills might also help them to get work in domestic service. The Museum has many examples of model kitchens, toy stoves, tea sets, washtubs, washboards, mangles and early toy sewing machines. It can be useful for children to compare the different materials, as well as the design, of the old toys with the modern plastic examples, such as toy microwave ovens.

For boys, there were different skills to be learned and more choices to be made in adult life. Construction kits were designed to encourage interest in engineering. They also played with tool kits, trains, cars, trucks, garages and fire stations. Military toys, such as toy forts and lead soldiers, were very popular in the 19th century, but there is evidence that parents were less keen to buy them for their children after the First World War (1914-1918). Again, children can compare the old toys in the collection with newer ones, such as the Action Man dolls.



Clockwork car, c.1920s

Some toys were intended to teach children about Christian religion; Noah's Arks were particularly popular with Victorian parents for this reason. They were one of the few toys that children were allowed to play with on Sundays; personal accounts suggest that many children looked forward to this as something of a treat and invented games and stories that had little connection with the biblical original!

Games

Games have been played for centuries in many different countries, including Pachisi in India (from which the board game Ludo is derived), chess in China and Japan, and Mancala in Africa. The earliest board game invented in western Europe is believed to be "The Game of the Goose", a race game known to have existed in Italy in the 16th century.

In the 19th century, there was a demand for indoor games that could be played on wet days. Again, many of these were designed to be both entertaining and educational, teaching a geographical, historical or moral lesson. Examples in the Museum include a wooden jigsaw puzzle showing the Kings and Queens of England (1850), a card game based on the counties of England (1870), and a Snakes and Ladders game (1900) designed to teach the rewards of virtues such as "kindness" and "obedience".

Children also played in the streets, using their imagination and whatever props were available. Skipping, swinging, chasing and clapping games are still played in school playgrounds today. The Museum has an area devoted to playing outside, including a hopscotch grid and displays of hobby horses, tops, racquets and balls. Children can compare the old tricycles, for instance, with modern skateboards and scooters.

Dolls

Dolls can be particularly useful for teaching children about different materials.

Dolls of **clay** and **wood** have been made for centuries. Stump dolls were very common toys for children in the 16th and 17th centuries, carved from blocks of wood, or turned on a lathe. They consist of heads and bodies, but no legs, and represent women in long dresses. They were followed by poupards which often represent babies in swaddling bands.

During the 18th century, elaborately dressed wooden dolls were very popular with adults. Other examples of wooden dolls are the jointed Dutch dolls, or Peg Woodens. These were developed in the 18th century in Germany and Austria and could be bought very cheaply in the 19th century.

In the 19th century, dolls with **composition** heads and shoulders (shoulder heads) began to appear. "Composition" is a generic term referring to a variety of materials based on wood or paper pulp, developed as a cheaper substitute for wood. These include **papier mache** which could be moulded under pressure and was ideal for painting.

Wax was also used for making dolls from the 18th century until the beginning of the 20th century, when its use declined. Up until 1850 the heads were formed by hand, but later the molten wax was tinted and poured into moulds which led to more detailed, lifelike features. Although the wax might melt if subjected to very high temperatures, it was actually more susceptible to cold, which could cause cracks.

The manufacture of **porcelain** dolls and shoulder heads started in Germany in the 1830s. Porcelain is a term that refers to both **glazed china** and **bisque** (unglazed china). Glazed china has a high gloss finish; the dolls have an artificial appearance with very white skin, pink cheeks and sculpted hairstyles.



wooden doll, c.1700

From the 1850s, French and German makers were producing bisque shoulder heads that had more life-like colouring. They often have wigs and are very fashionably and elaborately dressed, either by the maker or their owners. Some of them were intended more for display than for children to play with.

In the 1850s and 1860s, rubber dolls also became popular. This was due to the development of the vulcanisation process that made rubber stronger and more resistant to heat and cold.

Plastics (man-made, chemically produced materials) were not developed until the late 19th century. Early celluloid dolls were dangerous as they could catch fire if placed too close to a flame. By the 1940s, manufacturers were using new, safer plastics such as vinyl. By the 1960s, the use of soft plastics meant that hair could be rooted into the dolls' heads; early hard plastic dolls have moulded hair or wigs. Children will be familiar with Barbie and Sindy (first produced 1959 and 1963 respectively) and may be interested to see how their faces and figures have changed over the years.

Teddies

The teddy bear as we know it – a soft toy with moving joints – did not appear until 1902. It was designed by Richard Steiff, a nephew of Margarete Steiff, founder of the Steiff soft toy making company. The first recorded sale of the bears was in 1903 at the Leipzig Fair in Germany. In the USA it became known as Teddy's Bear, after the president, Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt.

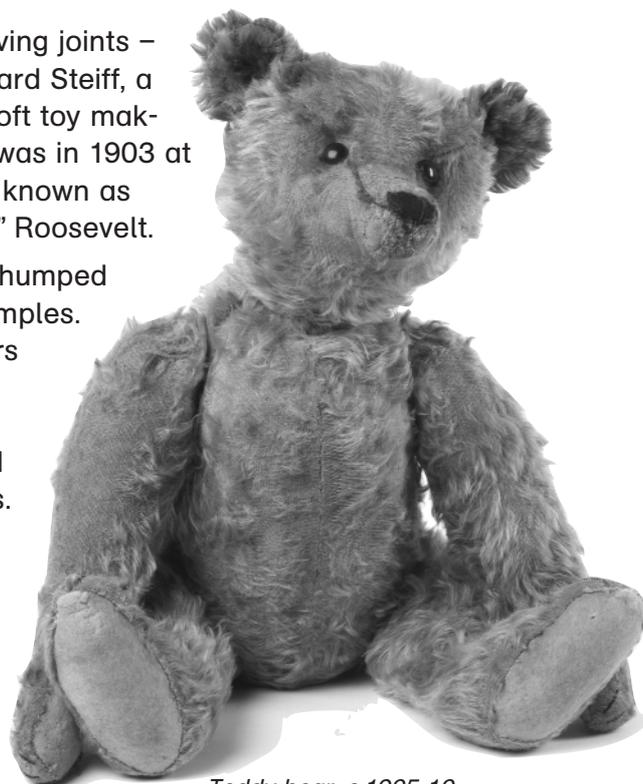
Early Teddy Bears, with their pointed muzzles and humped backs, look more like real bears than modern examples.

They were made of mohair plush in realistic colours with felt, linen or cotton paw pads, hand-stitched noses and mouths, and glass or boot button eyes. They had hard bodies, stuffed with wood-wool and jointed with a mixture of card disks and metal pins.

By the 1930s, teddies had shorter limbs, fatter bodies and less pronounced muzzles. Synthetic fabrics and kapok stuffing resulted in a more "cuddly" toy. During World War II (1939-1945) materials were in short supply so teddies from this period were often home-made. In the 1950s and 1960s, machine washable bears were produced, made completely from synthetic materials with plastic eyes and no joints.

The Museum has numerous examples of teddies, including nine owned by the Cattley family. The five children of the family (born between 1885 and 1892) adored their bears, making beautiful clothes for them, taking them on holiday, painting and photographing them.

mohair plush	a natural material woven from the fleece of Angoran goats
wood-wool	long, fine-quality wood shavings
kapok	a silky fibre that comes from the seed pod of a tropical tree



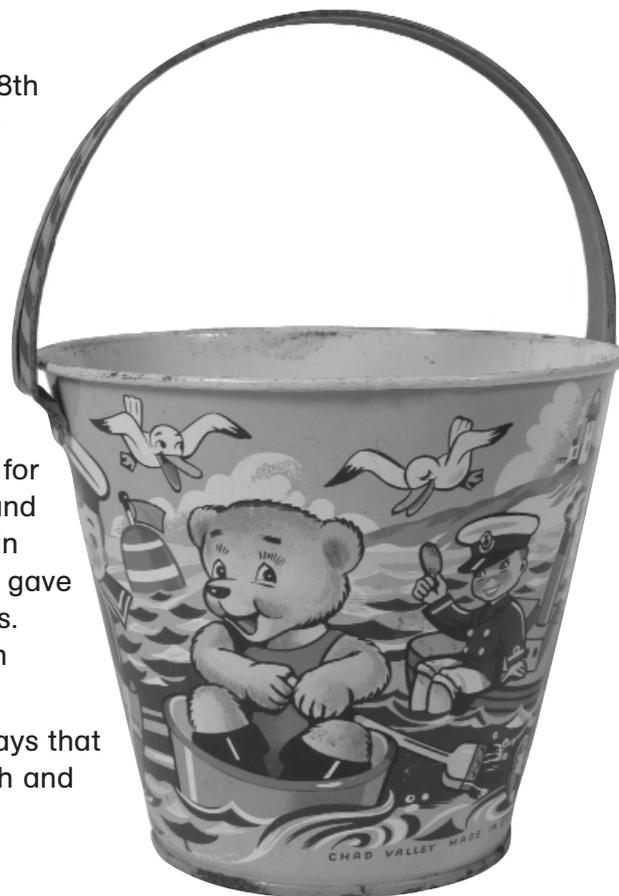
Teddy bear, c.1905-10

Seaside toys

Wealthy families began to visit the seaside in the 18th century, but it wasn't until the 19th century that the seaside holiday, as we know it, developed. It was made possible by the expansion of the railways in the 1840s and 1850s, which made long distance travel affordable for most people. Children could enjoy Punch and Judy shows, paddling, donkey rides and building sandcastles. Few people learnt to swim, but those who had costumes could "bathe" in the sea.

From the 1870s, manufacturers began making toys for the beach including buckets, spades, sieves and sand mills. Initially these were made of wood, but soon tin became more common, especially for buckets as it gave more opportunity for colourful patterns and pictures. Today most seaside toys are made of plastic, which means they no longer become rusty.

The Museum has an area devoted to seaside holidays that includes displays of old toys, a sandpit and a Punch and Judy booth.



Tin bucket

Useful websites

- www.hants.gov.uk/museum/toys/history
Site containing brief overview of the history of toys and illustrated information about dolls, soft toys, games, puzzles and models.
- www.mountfitchetcastle.com
Click on "House on the Hill Toy Museum" and then "History of Toys" for information on a variety of toys including Barbie, toy trains and puppets.
- www.topmarks.co.uk/slideshows/victorians.htm
Slideshow of photographs of Victorian toys. Text suitable for independent reading by pupils working at upper KS1 levels.
- www.toypost.co.uk
Mail order company that sells a variety of traditional wooden toys including spinning tops and cup and balls.

N.B. TTS History in Evidence (telephone: 0800 318686 for a catalogue) is another mail order company that has a good selection of toys including skipping ropes and yo-yos.

Pre-visit activities

Junk modelling

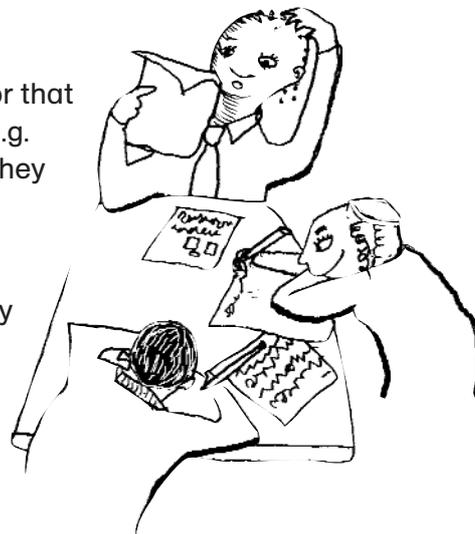
Give groups of children a collection of modern “junk” (e.g. cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, newspaper, wool). Can the children use the materials to make a toy or game? Why did many children in the past make toys at home? Would the same materials have been available to them?

Baby toys

Ask children to bring in any toys they played with as babies, or that belong to a baby brother or sister. Discuss “safety” features (e.g. rounded edges, nothing that babies could swallow). How do they help babies learn?

Games we play

Ask children to help you make a list of all the games they play in the playground, or with friends outside school, that require little or no equipment (e.g. clapping, skipping, chasing games). Children can choose one of the games and draw a picture to illustrate it; those working at the higher literacy levels could write a set of instructions for how to play it. These could be displayed in a class book.



What to see and do in the museum

- Look at the role play toys in the “Who will I be?” area in the Childhood Galleries on the upper floor.
- Find the domestic toys in the “Home” area in the Childhood Galleries.
- Look at the dolls in the lower galleries.
- Explore the “Good times” area in the Childhood Galleries.
- Bring some 20p coins to make the automata machines in the “Good Times” area come to life!
- Role play using the domestic objects in the “Home” activity area.
- Look at the outdoor toys and play hopscotch in the “Playing Outside” area in the Childhood Galleries.
- Play one of the board games in the “Good Times” area.

Post-visit activities

Photo archive

Find out if any parents/carers and other relatives would be willing to loan photographs of themselves as children with their toys. Take photographs of the class with their favourite toy. Create a classroom photo gallery.

Make a cup and ball toy

Help the children to make their own cup and ball using the instructions provided.

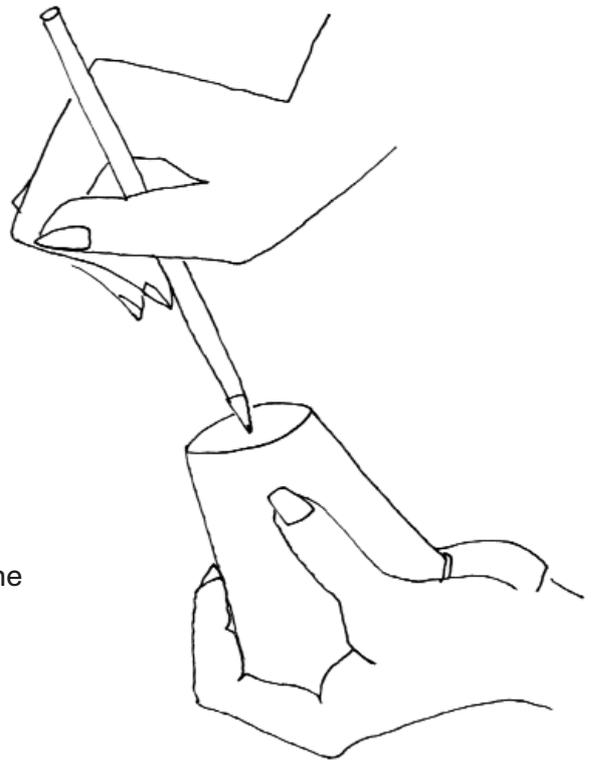
Make your own Cup and Ball

Materials

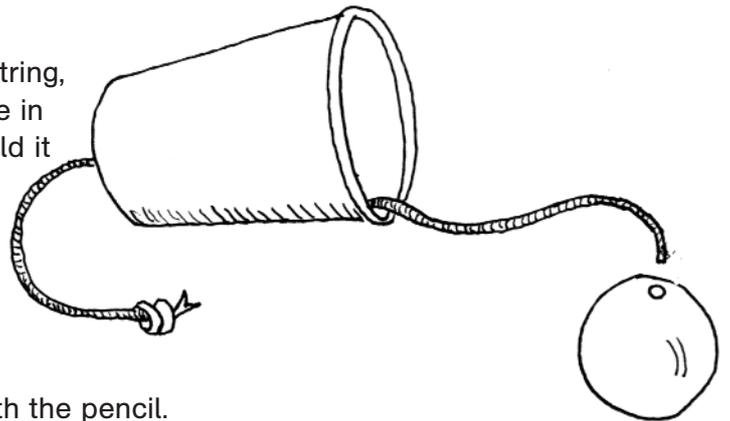
polystyrene or paper cups
string
ping-pong balls
a sharp pencil
felt pens or pencil crayons

Instructions

1. Decorate the cup with shapes and patterns.
2. Punch a small hole in the centre of the bottom of the cup with the pencil.

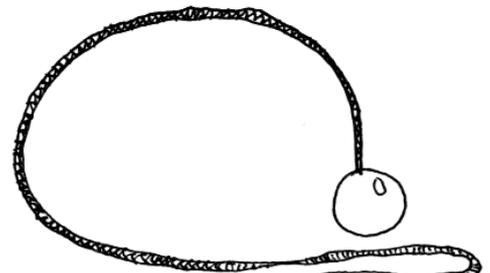


3. Tie several knots at the end of a length of string, about 50 cm long. Thread it through the hole in the cup from the inside so that the knots hold it in place on the bottom.



4. Punch a small hole in the ping-pong ball with the pencil.

5. Tie several knots in the other end of the string. Using the pencil, gently push the knotted end of the string through the hole in the ping-pong ball.



6. Hold the cup in one hand. Throw the ball up into the air and try to catch it in the cup as it falls back downwards!



Guide sheet 1

Dolls

In the past, dolls were made out of a variety of materials including wood, porcelain (china), wax, rubber and papier maché. From the 1950s, new soft plastics, such as vinyl, were used.

Go to the “Dolls” area in the lower galleries

Find the dolls made out of wood

- Can you find the jointed “Dutch dolls”? (*also known as “Peg Woodens”*)
- Would these have been cheap or expensive toys in the past?
- The dolls would often be bought without clothes. What do you think the child was meant to do? (*Make clothes for them.*)
- Can you find any other dolls made out of wood? (*e.g. the poupard dolls with no arms or legs*)

Find the dolls made out of porcelain

- How can you tell these dolls are very old? (*e.g. clothing fashions*)
- Do you think they would have been cheap or expensive?
- What happens to china cups if you drop them?
- Why do you think none of these dolls are broken? (*Because they were so fragile, children had to be very careful when they played with them.*)

Find the dolls made out of wax

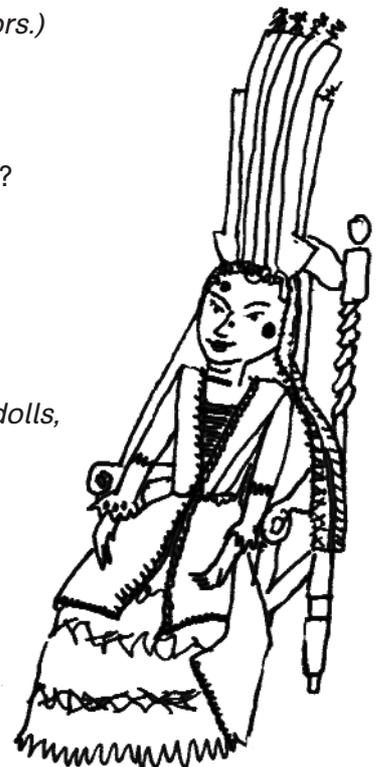
- What would happen to these dolls if you left them out in the sun or the cold? What if they were left near a fire? (*They would fade, crack and might melt.*)
- Do we make dolls out of wax today? (*Yes, but they are for collectors.*)
- What material are most new dolls made out of? (*plastic*)

Find the teenage dolls (*e.g. Barbie, Sindy*)

- Do you have any dolls like these at home? How many do you have?
- Did your mummy have one when she was little?
- Which ones in the cases do you think are older than the others? (*Clue: look at changes in fashions and hairstyles*)

Other things to see and do in the museum

- Look at the different dolls on display (*e.g. baby dolls, mechanical dolls, Russian dolls, Action men*).
- Look at the dolls displayed with the children’s clothing in the “What we wear” area in the Childhood Galleries on the upper floor.



Guide sheet 2

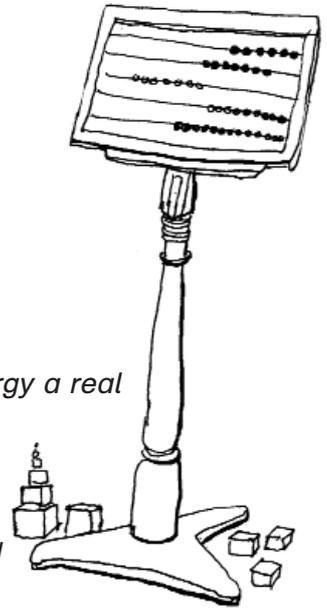
Role play toys

Many toys made for children in the past were intended to have a dual purpose – to educate as well as entertain.

Go to the “Who will I be?” area in the Childhood Galleries on the upper floor.

Find the toys that you could play “homes” with (i.e. the domestic toys).

- Look at the toy stoves and cookers. Which are old and which are new?
- How can you tell? (e.g. the materials they are made out of; type of energy a real one would use)
- Can you find toys to help you pretend to do the washing? (e.g. mangle)
- What materials are the old wash day toys made of? How would you play with them? (e.g. the mangle is wood and metal; you would pretend to squeeze the water out of clothes with it)
- Can you find toys that you could pretend to clean the house with? (e.g. dustpan and brush, carpet sweeper, vacuum cleaners.)
- How are the modern ones different to the old? (e.g. made of plastic, real ones would use electricity, make cleaning the house easier)



Find the toy forts and the Action Man dolls

- Are the forts new or old? How can you tell? (think about materials, condition, colours)
- Does anyone have an Action Man at home? What do you pretend when you are playing with him?
- What else would you need to play with the forts? Can you find any? (knights/soldiers – on the other side of the case)
- How are the old soldiers different to Action Man? (compare materials, uniforms, equipment)

Other things to see and do in the Childhood Galleries

- Look at the babies’ toys in the “Babies” area in the Childhood Galleries.
- Role play being a grown-up in one of the activity areas.
- Play one of the board games in the “Good times” area.

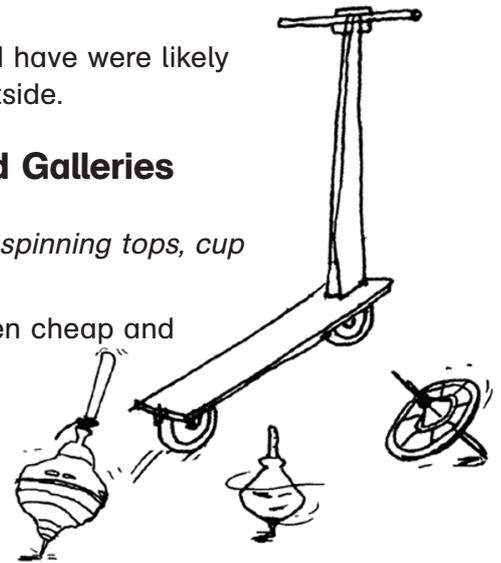
Guide sheet 3

Outdoor toys and entertainment

Many children in the past had very few toys. Those that they did have were likely to be simple wooden toys, often designed to be played with outside.

Go to the “Playing Outside” area in the Childhood Galleries on the upper floor

- What old toys can you see in the cases? (e.g. hobby horses, spinning tops, cup and ball, a tricycle)
- How would you play with these? Which ones would have been cheap and which ones expensive?
- What new toys can you see? (e.g. scooters, skateboards, Beyblades)
- How are they the same or different to the old toys? (e.g. the Beyblade is similar to a spinning top, but is made of plastic)
- What do you think children in the past did if they couldn't afford to buy toys? (They made their own out of scrap materials, or made up games to play in the street.)



Go to the “Good times” area on the other side of the Childhood Galleries

Find the seaside display cases

- What toys can you find to play with on the beach?
- Which are old and which are new? How can you tell? (consider materials, colours, condition)
- What is a “souvenir”? Can you find one in the case? (Souvenirs are objects that remind people of their holiday like the miniature china cradle brought back from Weston-Super-Mare.)
- Have you ever been to the seaside? If so, where did you go?
- Look at the old seaside jigsaws. What can you see people doing in them?
- Are these the sorts of things you do at the seaside today?
- Can you find the old swimsuits on display?
- What materials are they made out of? (wool, cotton)
- What do you think would happen to the knitted swimsuits when they got wet? (They would sag and slip down.)
- What else can you see in the cases to wear to the beach?

Other things to see and do in the Childhood Galleries

- Find out about other sorts of entertainment in the “Good times” area. (e.g. fairs, zoos and circuses, parties, Punch and Judy shows)
- Play in the sand pit, or put on your own Punch and Judy show.
- Dress up in the dressing up clothes and dance to the music playing on the juke box!
- Play hopscotch, in the “Playing Outside” area.

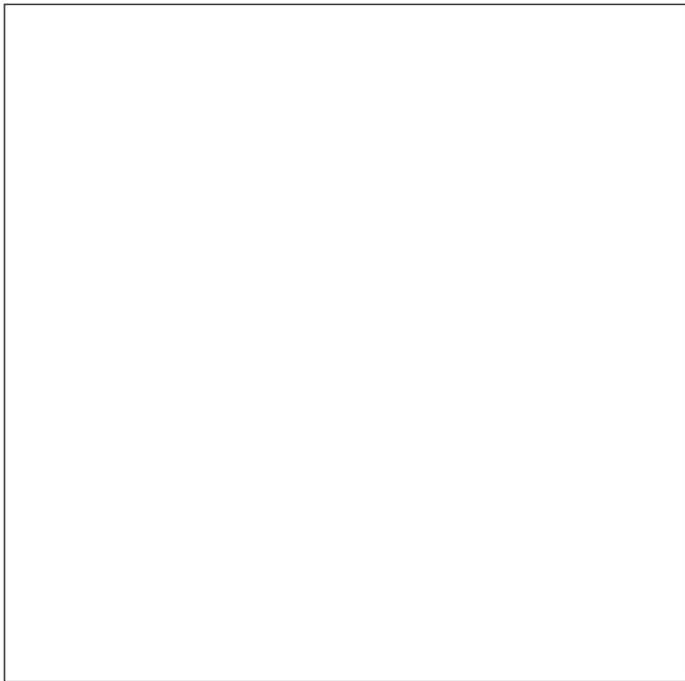
Activity sheet 1

Dolls, dolls, dolls!

 Tick the boxes when you find dolls made out of:

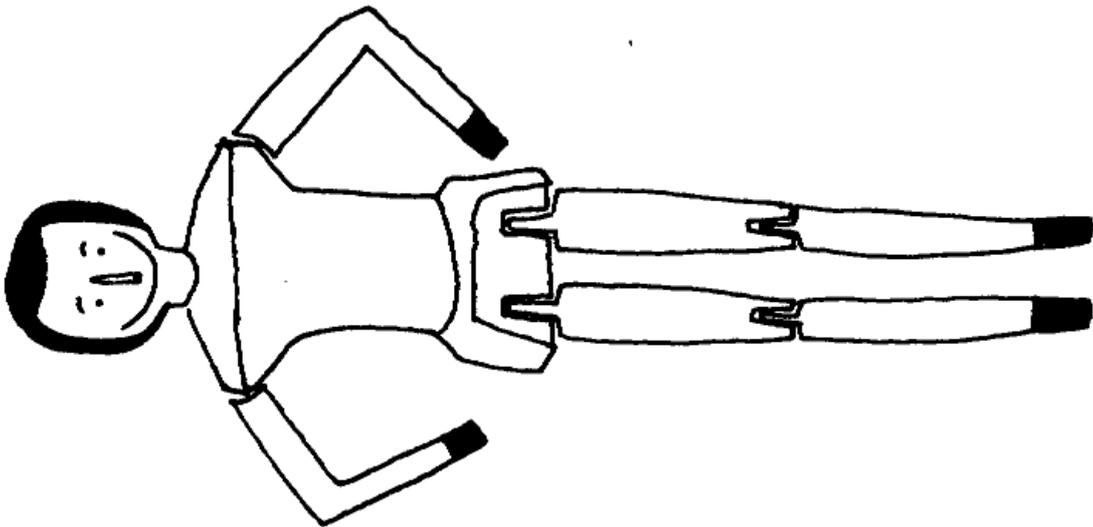
wood china wax plastic

 Draw your favourite doll in the box below and complete the sentence underneath.



My favourite doll is made out of.....

 Now draw some clothes and a hat on the wooden Dutch doll. You can make it a boy or a girl!



Activity sheet 2

Who will I be today?

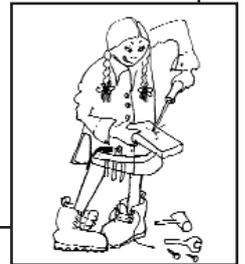


Find the toys that you could play with if you were pretending to be each of the people below. Draw one toy in each box.

a cook



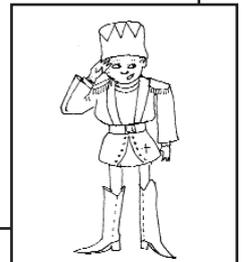
a builder



a teacher



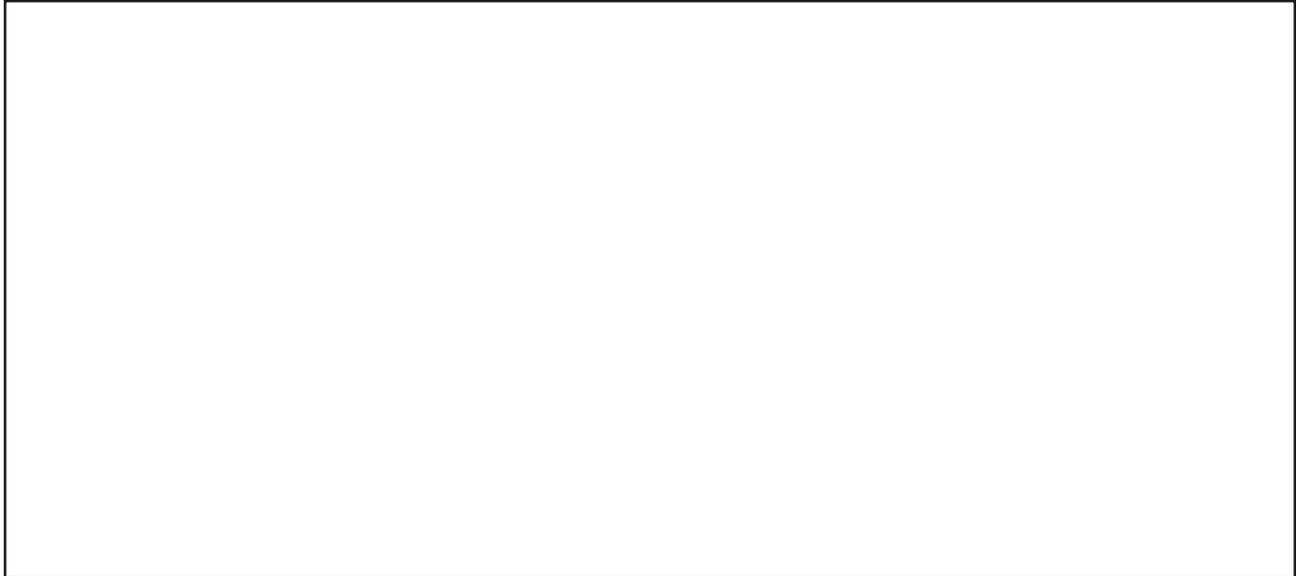
a soldier



Activity sheet 3

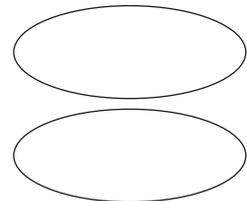
Playing outside

 Find the toys that you can play with outside. Draw your favourite in the box below.



 Circle the words that describe your toy. Can you write some words of your own in the empty circles?

- old new shiny dull
- rusty scratched clean dirty



 Now find the seaside toys. Which are old and which are new? Draw some people playing with the old toys on the postcard.

