

USING COSTUMES IN THE CLASSROOM

Choose a child to try on the costume, allow them to move about and share their responses with the class. Consider these questions about the costume:

- Is it easy to move in? Would it restrict your normal daily activities?
- Do you think it is for everyday use or special occasions?
- What fabrics is it made from? Is it soft, scratchy, shiny or dull – what other words describe the textures?
- Is the style of the costume similar to any you have seen before? If so, where?
- Do you think the costume is an original or a replica? Why?

Use the costumes as prompts for creative writing and art projects:

- Draw someone wearing these clothes. Think about what house or environment they might be in. What tools or utensils might they have used? What toys or pets might they have had?
- Write a short story from the point of view of the clothes. Are they being worn for a special occasion or are they tatty from being worn every day? Have they been worn by other people before the current wearer? What do they think of the way they are treated?
- Do you think any jewellery would be worn with this outfit? Have a go at making your own matching jewellery with cardboard, tissue paper and foil!
- Based on this costume, design your own outfit for the same period.

Looking at the construction of clothes and their uses can inspire children to think laterally across the curriculum. Consider these themes:

- **Weather and environment:** What clothes do you wear as the weather changes? Which parts of your body are most important to keep warm? What are your winter clothes made of and why? What fabrics help you keep cool in the summer or are waterproof for swimming in the sea?
- **Arts and Crafts:** What techniques do you think have been used to produce the fabric of this costume, e.g. weaving, applique, embroidery, block printing, batik, tie dye? Have a go at some of these in the classroom.
- **Patterns:** Can you see any patterns on the fabric of the costume? If so, how would you describe them? Are they geometric or inspired by nature? Design your own patterned fabric.
- **Materials and Sustainability:** The traditional raw materials to make clothes come from plants, animals and insects for fabrics such as cotton, wool and silk. More recently nylon and fleece were invented as by-products of the oil industry. Now many clothes are also made from recycled and sustainable materials. Chose a fabric and research its journey from source to end product. Consider pros and cons including environmental impact, cost and longevity.

Mystery Costume activity

Display the costume in a common area in the school such as the library or the entrance hall, and have students and staff submit their guesses for the era or country of origin. Announce the winner in assembly!

