

Design Technology Projects (Textiles) Primary

These project suggestions are linked with the **Untold Stories** from the SS. St Louis (<http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-ss-st-louis>). Before selecting a project **introduce** the narrative using the case study as a guide. **Re-tell** the story in your own words. As the story contains sections which students might find quite sad, especially the part where the passengers are not allowed to leave the ship and have nowhere to go, **invite** students to ask questions and **allow** time for them to express their feelings towards the events. Discussions could include why the passengers wanted to escape from Germany, why they were not allowed to dock in Cuba, why the Captain was determined to help his passengers find a safe place to live and how his bravery was eventually recognised.

Show the students the coloured picture of the SS St Louis, drawn by a child who was a passenger and eyewitness to the story. You will find this picture at the end of this document. **Explain** that this picture helped the child to retell the story of her adventure at sea.

Tell everyone that this story is one of many **Untold Stories** which students have been asked to share with other people for Holocaust Memorial Day. **Announce** that members of this class have been invited to become storytellers. This is a good chance to use the skills everyone has developed working with textiles to share the St Louis story with other people. **Point out** that they will be making lots of important decisions, based on their knowledge of textiles, later in the lesson.

Explain that good storytellers have to make lots of decisions. The first one is to decide what they think are the most important parts of the story and to put them into the right order. Storytellers have to decide how they will tell the story and what props they can use to encourage people to pay attention when the story is told. The props can help the listener remember the story long after they hear it. When people pay attention and remember storytellers know that their storytelling has made an impact. **Revisit** the story together and **make** notes on the board. **Collect** ideas from everyone but **aim** to finish with an agreed short list of scenarios taken from the story. Here are some examples but the best ones will be chosen by the students themselves.

- in Hamburg Harbour, the Captain talks to the crew
- the passengers arrive

- the St Louis crosses the sea
- the ship reaches Cuba
- small boats come out to meet the ship
- the Captain goes ashore
- the ship is turned away from Cuba and the passengers wave farewell to the small boats
- sailing down the coast of America
- sailing back to Europe
- arrival and welcome in a safe country. If the country chosen is the UK this could be a scene at Waterloo station

Decide whether to work as a whole class or in groups. **Offer** students a choice of tasks.

Remind students that they will be retelling the story through the use of textiles so they should choose their project with care. They will want to use their skills to make an impact.

Project one

Create a big activity book which tells the story in a simple way to younger students. Each page of the book should be a different scene. It should contain interactive pages eg flaps to open, perhaps a porthole for children to open to see who is on the ship, or something which moves like a person's arm waving.

Project two

Create a storytelling quilt made of eight to ten panels. Panel one should be the SS St Louis in Hamburg harbour but students must decide the content of the other panels themselves. The storyteller will encourage people to sit around the edges of the quilt and to follow the story as it unfolds in each panel. **Remember** that making a quilt takes a long time. You could do this as a whole school activity, where each class makes one panel or you could simply design a pattern for a quilt and make a paper version. You could ask students from your local secondary school to help you and work on a joint project.

Project three

Create a set of hand or finger puppets which could be used to tell the story to a small audience. You will find a template for a simple puppet here

<http://www.puppetsforministry.com/Freebies/sspeople.pdf>

You could also create some scenery, showing the sea or a port or the deck of a ship as a background for the puppets.

After they select their project **remind** students to apply their knowledge of textiles to the tasks ahead. **Suggest** they prepare a project plan. They will need to think about measurements and shapes. It might be helpful to mark out templates. **Explain** the importance of thinking carefully about the characteristics of available materials and the special requirements of the project eg puppets and interactive books will invite lots of people, especially children, to touch them. What are the sensory qualities and the strengths of different materials? A quilt needs to be warm, strong and large enough for everyone to gather under it to hear and see the story. Does it need to be washable?

Ask students to consider what types of textiles are most suitable for their project. Why are these best for their chosen task?

How will they join the materials together eg with glue, a special binding or using a variety of sewing techniques such as appliqué?

What help might they need to construct the project? Who could they ask to help them? This might be a good opportunity to invite other members of the school community to work with the class. You could see if classroom assistants or parents, the caretaker or the Head Teacher would like to assist the group, perhaps helping with the backing on a quilt or creating a special effect in the book?

Are there any new techniques that the students would like to learn to help them create a special effect?

How will they test the project to see whether it will meet its intended purpose as a storytelling artefact?

As the students begin to draw up their plans **show** the St Louis presentation <http://education.hmd.org.uk/resources/hmd-2011-primary-assembly-presentation> which contains photographs of the ship and the passengers. **Remind** students that the story took place over 70 years ago and that they should make a note of the different styles of clothing worn by the passengers. Their choice of fabrics to dress puppets might reflect this.

As the chosen project takes shape **encourage** students to announce to the school/college community what they are creating for Holocaust Memorial Day. **Aim** to encourage an air of expectation. **Hold** an official unveiling of the project, giving its creators the chance to use their artefact to tell the **Untold Story** of the St Louis and her refugee passengers to others. **Encourage** as many people as possible to view the work. Let local community leaders or library and your local newspaper know about the book, puppets or quilt and create a large audience for the story.

If another class is using the primary assembly <http://education.hmd.org.uk/resources/hmd-2011-primary-assembly> join with them to demonstrate that there is more than one way to tell a story.



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THE GERMAN SHIP
"ST. LOUIS" FROM HABANA TO ANTWERP

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