



National  
Guidance  
[oeapng.info](http://oeapng.info)

## Heritage Visits

Heritage Visits are visits to sites of historical interest such as castles, historic or architecturally interesting buildings, monuments, canals, old industrial sites, sacred spaces, battle sites and concentration camps. They can help participants to understand their own heritage or the heritage of others, and to learn about and from history. They may also include re-enactments that bring historical events to life in a unique and memorable way.

Heritage Visits can provide many learning opportunities, such as:

- access to guides who can provide added value to the visit;
- curiosity and creativity – by seeing, touching, hearing or feeling, visiting a heritage site can provide real world learning, which may raise questions, stimulate thought and bring study to life;
- a new and possibly very different study environment, which can stimulate learners to question their preconceptions and think in new ways;
- exploring culture and identity – heritage sites tell us about our past and provide a valuable route for exploring cultural diversity and understanding our own place in the world;
- access to other experiential learning opportunities – heritage sites often provide other learning facilities such as museums and galleries.

Some heritage organisations provide guides, or deliver learning programmes as part of their services. There are also short programmes and one-off events, such as Heritage Open Days, that enable free or unrestricted access to some sites.

If you decide to use a guide, or to take part in an activity or learning programme provided by a heritage site, it is important that you are confident about the safety and quality of provision and have a clear, shared understanding of the roles of establishment and site staff, and how the duty of care for the safety and welfare of the participants is to be exercised at any given time. See the following OEAP National Guidance documents:

- [4.4g "Selecting External Providers and Facilities"](#)
- [4.4h "Using External Providers"](#).

## Safety Considerations

Some heritage sites have hazards that require careful risk management, taking into account the nature of the participants. For example, medieval castles often have features such as open (and sometimes broken) embrasures overlooking long drops, unguarded access to open and deep-water moats and steep but relatively

unprotected staircases. These features heighten the curiosity level of young people and are what make such places interesting and exciting, but they require leaders to remain alert and vigilant.

Visit Leaders who are not familiar with a site are advised to undertake a pre-visit to identify such hazards and to plan how to manage the risks during the visit, taking into account the nature of their group. Some sites provide information or guidance for group leaders to assist with this risk assessment.

## Quality Standards

Sites open to the public must meet legally required health and safety standards, and it is not necessary to seek assurances about these unless there are specific issues highlighted through the planning process. Where a site is not open to the public (e.g., where special arrangements have been made to visit a closed site), assurances about health and safety should be obtained.

Where a site holds a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, this is assurance that it meets safety as well as educational quality standards. There are other quality accreditation schemes in place, such as the Sandford Awards ([sandfordaward.org](http://sandfordaward.org)) that accredit heritage sites for excellence in education provision. Large heritage bodies such as English Heritage and the National Trust also monitor standards in their education provision.

## Learning Support Provision

Many heritage sites provide support to make a visit more useful:

- specialist staff – some heritage sites have education officers who deliver activities and programmes to meet specific learning needs;
- interactive materials – some heritage sites can provide interactive materials, e.g. allowing young people to dress in period costumes;
- web-based materials – many heritage sites have developed resources such as lesson plans, worksheets and activity ideas that are downloadable from their website (these websites often have interactive capacity and provide a stimulating way of accessing information about the site, and they may also have follow-up materials to use after the visit);
- pre-visit tours – these are often provided free of charge to enable potential Visit Leaders to become familiar with the site, to clarify risk-benefit assessment issues and provide material that can be used to prepare learners for their visit;
- evaluation and planning – heritage site staff are often experienced in providing planning support for a visit, and may be able to offer help with the evaluation of learners' experiences after the visit;
- outreach – some heritage sites develop long-term relationships with establishments and learners and provide support by visiting learners in their own setting.

