

RESTORATION AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Acropolis monuments restoration project is currently being carried out by the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA), with employees from various disciplines: archaeologists, architects, civil and chemical engineers, conservators, electricians, administrative personnel, information technology professionals, mould makers and casters, designers, photographers, and stone masons, who comprise the largest professional group.

Discuss these professions. Following the discussion, study the following excerpt from Plutarch (Pericles, XII, 2nd cent.), which describes the skills of the people who were employed on the construction of these major works at the time of Pericles:

The materials to be used were stone, bronze, ivory, gold, ebony, and cypress-wood; the arts which should elaborate and work up these materials were those of carpenter, moulder, bronze-smith, stone-cutter, dyer, worker in gold and ivory, painter, embroiderer, embosser, to say nothing of the forwarders and furnishers of the material, such as factors, sailors and pilots by sea, and, by land, wagon-makers, trainers of yoked beasts, and drivers. There were also rope-makers, weavers, leather-workers, road-builders, and miners. And since each particular art, like a general with the army under his separate command, kept its own throng of unskilled and untrained labourers in compact array, to be as instrument unto player and as body unto soul in subordinate service, it came to pass that for every age, almost, and every capacity the city's great abundance was distributed and scattered abroad by such demands.

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Compare the YSMA work-site with the ancient work-site. With your students, try to find the corresponding occupations today. What are the ancient occupations that do not exist today and vice versa, what professions exist today that did not exist then? How have they evolved? Discuss other professions that are not related to the execution of the restoration works, yet relate to the promotion and preservation of the monuments, since the conservation of cultural heritage is in part comprised of its management and preservation. Professionals who specialise in these areas include museologists, architects specialising in exhibition design, model makers, etc.

Museum and archaeological site shops can generate a great deal of revenue. With your students, consider who would work for such a store, for example, interior decorators, graphic designers and so on. Design some of the products that could be sold there.

You can also consider the archaeological site and the museum as a

Cultural Centre where parallel cultural events constantly run: lectures, conferences, concerts, festivals, film, theatre and so on.

In the context of vocational education you can also discuss occupations that are less familiar to students, such as those of the people involved in the lighting of monuments and archaeological sites. Galleries, statues, and monuments all have different lighting requirements. You can also visit the Acropolis Museum, where natural light is a key feature of the building.

THE “RESTORING THE ATHENIAN ACROPOLIS” TEACHER’S PACK TRAVELS...

Explore your area and adopt a local monument. Search for information about the monument in photographic archives, old family photos, the internet, and in local newspapers.

Try to work out whether the principles that have been applied in the Acropolis restoration works have also been applied to your local monument. Are there similar problems? How are they being approached? You can work together with your local Ephorate of Antiquities in order to discuss the issues.

Create an educational kit like the one for the Acropolis, by taking similar photographs of your monument, and hold an exhibition of your photographs about the problems as well as past and present restoration works. You can conduct interviews with the local residents about the monument. You can ask older interviewees to tell you what they remember about the monument from the past, whereas with younger people you can focus on their aspirations for the future of the monument.

Consider the monument as a focus for the development of your town. Focus on the cultural factors of economic development. You can organise the archaeological site, create a logo, design tickets, and create information leaflets about the site. Take your parents and relatives for a tour of the site. You can make proposals for the management of the archaeological site and the creation of a shop on the site.

Design an advertising campaign for the preservation of the local monument. Create a poster advertisement designed to persuade: a) local residents and b) the central government and the mayor, that restoration of the specific monument is a priority, and therefore it is worth spending a part of their limited budget on its enhancement.

In the same context you can consider issues of ethics in advertising, in connection to how the Parthenon has occasionally been used to advertise a particular product or a person.

Finally, look for sponsors from the region and organise an event to raise money for the monument.



The restoration works that are being undertaken on the Acropolis are ideal for interdisciplinary teaching, as they can be developed as a theme in a number of curriculum subjects and may be integrated into the educational material of many different classes. There is particularly strong potential for development of this subject in Environmental Education.

A series of proposals follows for creative discussions and projects that can be undertaken in various school subjects, relating not only to the restoration of the Acropolis monuments but also to the restoration of other monuments throughout Greece.

RESTORATION AND MODERN GREEK LANGUAGE

In modern Greek language classes you can study restoration work terminology and the etymology of the words with the aim of enriching the vocabulary of the students. This vocabulary combines the quality of the ancient Greek language with the new words of modern technology. Many of these words, like many scientific terms, have been incorporated into foreign languages and the students could search for them.

You can organise debating competitions between students based on the theoretical issues generated by the restoration works.

Ask students to create a book about the Acropolis restoration works. Students can write articles, illustrate the book, and design the front and back covers.

Students can also take on the role of journalists and conduct interviews, either real or imaginary, with members of the restoration team, or with visitors. They can then write up the articles for a newspaper. In parallel they can write a script about the works for the radio news (where there is no picture) or for television (where the text is accompanied by picture) or a longer script for a documentary. They could also create fictional texts where the monuments themselves tell their story, or the diaries of people who built the monuments or of earlier restorers, and so on.

RESTORATION AND HISTORY

In ancient history classes you can study the period during which the Acropolis monuments were built, and in particular the politico-economic and social conditions of the time.

In modern and contemporary history, study the restoration works in relation to phenomena of consciousness of the Greek national identity.

The terms “use”, “abuse” and “management” of the monuments can be analysed in parallel with the terms “political history”, “economic history” and “local history”.

A special theme is “how the ancient monuments affect contemporary life”. In conjunction with classes about the environment and the social sciences, study the motivations for each restoration, and the selection criteria for the monuments restored. Moreover, students could explore other issues, such as how the city’s urban development was determined when Athens was designed to become the capital, and what role the monuments played at that time or what role they play today in the city’s fabric.

You can also discuss the influence the Acropolis has exercised on the architecture of Greece, America and Europe and show the students photographs of buildings modelled after the Parthenon, the Walhalla memorial in Regensburg, Germany and the full-scale replica of the Parthenon in Nashville, Tennessee in the USA.

RESTORATION AND MATHEMATICS

Using the science of numbers, you can take measurements and make calculations related to the construction of the temples, you can study the proportional relationships between the floor plans and façades of the monuments, and the geometric shapes, or create tables about many different topics such as the damage to the architectural members and conservation methods.

RESTORATION AND TECHNOLOGY

In technology classes, the Acropolis, the monuments and the restoration works can comprise a rich source of research material for students. You can study the tools used by the ancient craftsmen in comparison to the tools used by modern marble sculptors. At the same time, try to introduce the materials, method and manner in which the ancient monuments were constructed, as well as the corresponding methods used today in the restoration.

RESTORATION AND THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

In geography and geology classes you can focus on the study of the Acropolis Rock, its physical structure, earthquakes, springs, and flora. In particular, you can study the plants of the Acropolis in relation to the problems they usually cause in monuments and make proposals for the planting of the Rock. You can also study Greece’s great mineral wealth and discuss the quarries used and the building materials of the monuments

– marble and also other types of stone, and their properties. Combine your research with a visit to a quarry and use of the educational museum kit “The Art of Stone Sculpture”.

In biology and chemistry classes you can study the chemical composition of acid rain and conduct experiments. Discuss the various types of damage to the monuments and in particular, atmospheric pollution. Enrich your activities with related videos. Make use of the Parthenon frieze application at <http://www.parthenonfrieze.gr>. Play the game “Become a conservator” with your students and then watch the video that follows, about the cleaning procedure used on the frieze.

In addition students can investigate the properties of iron which was used in the past for monument restorations and discuss the impact of its use in the monuments. At the same time they can study proposals for the conservation of the monuments and learn simple applications of preventive conservation.

RESTORATION AND ART

The Acropolis and its monuments have been a source of inspiration for many contemporary artists who have used them in their artistic creations.

During art lessons, you can study different artistic approaches, such as: works of art with netting and scaffolding, photorealist works, cartoons, comics and logos.

Encourage students to make a collection of cartoons, logos, posters and advertisements from newspapers and the Internet, which use images of the antiquities.

Create your own craftworks. Students can create their own monument, through painting, collage or the construction of models using a variety of materials. You can also use computers to scan images and then edit them.

You can also encourage students to find construction games related to tools and machinery and create a work-site in your classroom. You can then see which of these were also used in antiquity.

You can focus on the art of photography – photography as documentation, as a means of advertising, and as fine art. You can organise an art photography competition about the monuments of the Sacred Rock. Compare later photographs with earlier ones. Try to take a contemporary photo from exactly the same angle as an older one and look at the changes that have occurred. Put yourself in the picture and note the scale.