Museum Tour + Activity Options

2024-25 School Year

Mystery Fabric

Recommended Grades: 2 - 4
Activity duration: 30 min.
Following our tour which highlights information on the history of textile production in this region, we will talk about the difference between cotton/wool fabrics and woven/knit fabrics. Looking closely at the different materials under a microscope and with magnifying glasses, students will hone their observational skills and, working with a small group, "investigate" a number of mystery fabrics to see if they can identify them based on what they have learned.

Design a Fabric Pattern

Recommended Grades: 3 and up
Activity Duration: 30-35 min.
Following our tour which highlights the art of Bates textile design department and the history of textile production in this region, we will look closely at many of Bates most popular designs and the special materials those working in the art department used to draw them in preparation for the jacquard loom. Students will be challenged to reimagine an existing Bates design on graph paper and to discover the inspiration to create their own unique design. Patterns can be adjusted based on group age and abilities so this art challenge truly works for all ages.

Shoe Design

Recommended Grades: All
Activity Duration: 30-35 min.
Following our tour which highlights information on the history of the shoe making industry in this region, students are divided into small groups. Using the design thinking process, collaboration, and limited construction materials, students are challenged to create a shoe of their own that can overcome a number of challenges. Creativity and perseverance are the key to success!

Bridge Building

Recommended Grades: 4+
Activity Duration: 45 min.
Following the museum tour which highlights information on the Androscoggin River and the canal system that surrounds the Bates Mill complex, students are challenged to build a bridge using simple construction materials. Following the design thinking process, students must build a bridge that can span a model canal and hold as many game chips as it can in a plastic cup. Find out whose design can hold the most weight!

Museum Tour + Activity Options Continued

Fun and Games

Recommended Grades: All
Activity duration: 40
Following the museum tour which highlights information about the life of children working in mills during the Industrial Revolution, students will explore what children also did during their free time for fun. Many playground games like hopscotch and jump rope for instance, began during this time and remain popular today. Through hands-on experiential learning students will have an opportunity to play with many of the toys and try many of the games that were popular with children during the 19th century.

Water Wheel Design

Recommended Grades: 6+
Activity Duration: 45 min
Following the museum tour which highlights information about the Androscoggin River, canal system and power station complex, students are challenged to create a functioning water wheel using simple construction materials. Following the design thinking process, students must create a drawing, prototype and test their design and improve upon their results through redesign and testing.

Historic Coding

Recommended Grades: 4+
Activity During: 30 min.
Following the museum tour which highlights early innovation in the creation of power looms and early coding systems to control them, students are challenged to create a message using cards and hold punches. Through hands-on experiential learning students will discover the connection Industrial Revolution age machinery and modern computing.

Binary Basics

Recommended Grades: All
Activity Duration: 30
Following the museum tour which highlights early innovation in the creation of power looms and early coding systems to control them, students are challenged to create a bracelet using string and beads showing their initials in binary code.