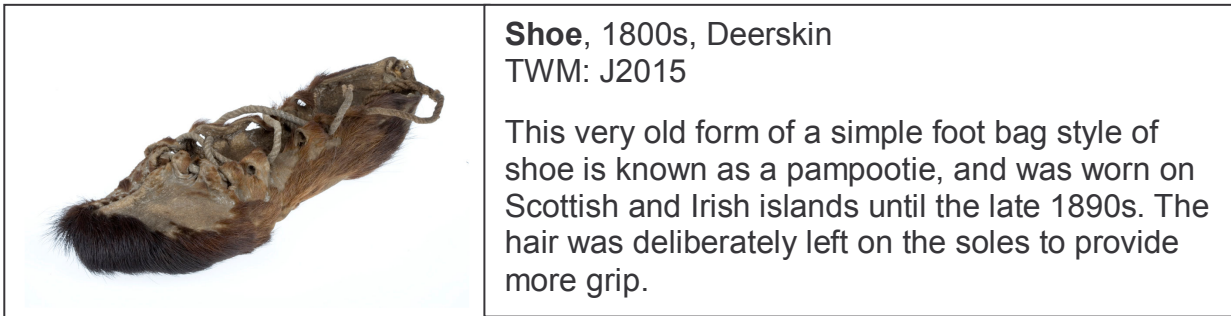


# SHOES

## The Agony and the Ecstasy

### Classroom activity - Shoes from scratch

The earliest shoes were probably made from pieces of skin wrapped around the feet and fastened at the ankle with twine. From these shoes developed.



There is a story about the discovery of felt – bronze age people used wool in the sole of their shoes to keep their feet warmer. The warmth and sweat of bronze age feet and the agitation of the wool during walking, led to the wool felting into a mat. People realised this and so the first fabrics were invented. The story points to people’s natural inventiveness, and ability to learn from accident and observation to improve the things they make. This applies to shoes, which have become gradually more complex as time goes by. The style of shoes was also influenced by geography and climate.

Encourage pupils to emulate the development of shoes in the classroom by starting from bare feet and through trial and evaluation, develop more comfortable shoes. You should only need a minimum number of tools and a large supply of scrap materials.

Try out a modern version of the bronze age foot-wrapping using scrap fabric and thread. This could be tested in the playground and evaluated using criteria such as:

Are they comfortable?	Do they support the feet?
Are they warm?	Are they strong?
Would the sole last long if used frequently?	Would the shoe fall apart if used frequently?
Are they waterproof? Do they need to be?	Are they easy to put on?
Are they easy to walk in (non-slip)?	Do they look nice?

The next step will be to decide what improvements should be made to each child’s shoes, with the emphasis on practical rather than aesthetic considerations.

For instance, some children may decide that their shoes are very uncomfortable when walking in the playground and that the soles need to be improved.

What materials should they use – felt, foam, bubble wrap?  
How should it be fastened to the body of the shoe – stitching, staples, glue?

The cycle of design-make-trial-evaluate can then be repeated until an optimum playground shoe has been designed.

Another possibility is to divide the class into two groups and have one group design a playground shoe, whilst the other designs a classroom slipper.

## Activity sheet 1 – Whose shoe?

In the space below, write down as many different types of shoes as you can in three minutes (ballet shoes, Wellington boots, etc).

What do you think shoe manufacturers will have to think about when producing these different types of shoes? Think about what each shoe needs to be made of, what would make the shoe safe, how comfortable does the shoe need to be. Write down the design requirements which would be needed for five of the different types of shoe which you have chosen above.

Design requirements

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## **Activity sheet 2 – Design a shoe**

Before you start to design your shoe, make sure that you can answer the questions below:

- Who is going to wear the shoe?
- What type of shoe is it?
- When will the shoe be worn?
- What different types of ground/weather will the shoe have to endure?
- What would be the best material for the shoe to cope with the environment?
- If you were to make your shoe, which things would you always have to keep the same? And why?

**Use the downloadable design sheet to draw the shoe.**