



Take One is inspired by the National Gallery's Take One Picture programme. It encourages teachers to use collections as a springboard to develop skills and understanding across the curriculum. Work in many subject areas can be inspired by using an object as a starting point.

These notes are designed to help you use one object from the Jewish Museum's collection to highlight UK Jewish History; celebrate its diversity and richness and enable children to relate to their Jewish past through making connections to their everyday Jewish lives. The object is a focus for cross-curricular teaching and learning and subjects covered include History, Jewish Studies, Citizenship and Art.

A visit to the Jewish Museum to see your chosen object offers your class a stimulating learning outside the classroom opportunity.



## Educational Approach

The educational approach has three elements:

- ways in
- questioning
- lines of enquiry.

Identify a few ways in to introduce the object to pupils that will raise their curiosity and develop their imagination; identify key questions to initiate discussion and identify lines of enquiry- a range of themes, issues or avenues for exploration which are generated by the object.

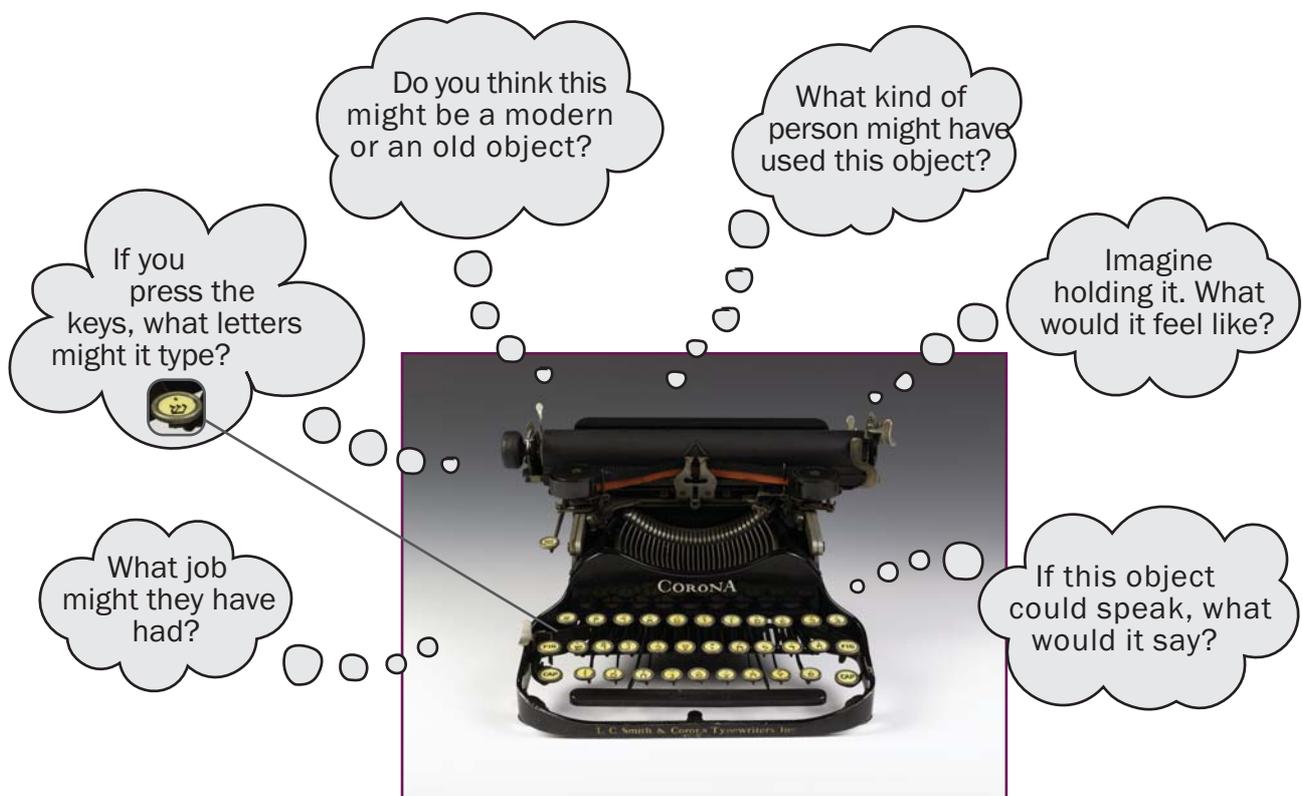
### Ways in: Strategies to support looking

Show a high resolution image of the object on a whiteboard. The image can be found on the JCP Fronter site

- Describe the object to someone who cannot see
- Draw the object without taking the pencil off the paper/looking at the paper

### Questioning: Open questions to initiate dialogue develop imagination and facilitate higher order thinking

The following questions may be useful as a starting point for developing speaking and listening skills with your pupils.



## EVIDENCE: ABOUT THE OBJECT

### Abish Meisels (1896-1959)

This typewriter belonged to the celebrated Yiddish playwright Abish Meisels. Meisels was born in Galicia (a region of Eastern Europe now split between Poland and Ukraine) in 1896 into an Orthodox Jewish family. He began acting at the age of 13 and spent 12 years working in Vienna as a dramatist before coming to London in 1938, where his play *The Way to Tel Aviv* was produced at the Grand Palais Theatre in Whitechapel. During World War II (1939-1945), Meisels was a central figure in the New Yiddish Theatre in Adler Street, where he worked as a playwright and prompter.

### Jewish immigration to the East End

Between 1881 and 1914 large numbers of Jewish immigrants arrived in the UK, fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe. Many of these settled in London's East End, where a thriving Jewish community was soon established. Synagogues, kosher shops and restaurants served the Yiddish-speaking local community. However, life was hard for new immigrants. Housing was cramped and of poor quality. Many people were forced to work long hours for very little pay in various trades including tailors' workshops around Brick Lane.

### Yiddish

The letters on this typewriter are in Yiddish. Yiddish was the mother-tongue of most Jewish people from Eastern Europe. It was a richly expressive language based on medieval German but also including Hebrew, Russian and Polish words. It was written in Hebrew characters, and read from right to left. Yiddish was the language spoken in the home and workplace, in contrast to Hebrew which was used for prayer.

Since the Holocaust during World War II there are very few people who speak Yiddish as a first language, due to the murder of so many Jewish people by the Nazis. Many of the Yiddish words brought to Britain and America by Jewish immigrants have become part of English language. Words such as 'klutz' from the Yiddish klotz, 'chutzpah' from the Yiddish khutspe and words such as 'beigel' and 'schlep'.

### Yiddish Theatre

Yiddish theatre quickly became well established in London's Jewish community. For many, a trip to the theatre was a rare opportunity to relax, escape the harsh realities of life in the East End and reminisce about memories of home. Plays were very dramatic, and ranged from comedy to tragedy. Productions were often based on Yiddish folk tales, Shakespeare adaptations or stories of immigrant life. A visit to the theatre was a social occasion and people liked to talk during the performance, eat food they had brought with them and join in with the songs. Eastern European Klezmer music was often incorporated in performances.



Poster for *The King of Lampedusa*, a Yiddish folktale at the Grand Palais Theatre, 1944

## Lines of Enquiry: Ideas for Creative Planning across the Curriculum

You can use Abish Meisels' typewriter as the starting point for developing pupils' critical and creative thinking while inspiring learning across the curriculum. You may want to consider possible themes or 'lines of enquiry' as a first step. Choosing a line of enquiry may help you to build strong links between curriculum areas.

Here are a few suggestions of possible lines of enquiry.

- Life in the Jewish East End (Cable Street)
- Yiddish/Israeli/Sephardi theatre then and now e.g. Habima at the Globe Theatre
- Levers and simple machines
- Everyday objects adapted for specific people e.g. language keyboard; Braille on bus stop buttons; leaflets in different languages
- Modern technology for the Jewish/Israeli population e.g. online Torah resources; children's DVDs in Hebrew such as Rehov Sumsum (Sesame Street)
- Immigration (Ashkenazi and Sephardi)

Using one or more lines of enquiry as your starting point consider how you can work in a number of curriculum areas to build strong links which cross over subject areas.

### Line of enquiry: **Yiddish Theatre**

Here are a few ideas of how you can develop a range of learning opportunities to engage pupils with a single line of enquiry.

