**The Tower of London Visual Story Support Notes**

**Who are the slides for?**

The slides on the Visual Story are for teachers to use with their students and assisting adults to help them prepare for their visit to the Tower of London. They highlight some of the key aspects of the Tower.

**How will the slides support my students’ understanding of the Tower?**

Each slide has a different focus or learning point, to help your students understand a particular aspect of the historical site. These points include:

- introducing some of the staff they will meet during their visit to the Tower;

- familiarising them with some of the spaces or rooms they will visit;

- illustrating a sensory aspect of the session, e.g. ‘You can look for and listen to the ravens’;

- highlighting how they may feel or what it may be like moving around the tower, e.g. the Jewel House can be busy;

- flagging up themes which you may like to investigate in more detail either before or after the visit, e.g. polar bear, ravens, Crown Jewels;

- encouraging students to look out for particular features.

The Visual Story Support Notes correspond with the Visual Stories slides and give you contextual information which you may wish to use with your students.

**1 and 2. Header and Title**

The Visual Story will help to familiarise students with the spaces around the Tower.

**3. This is the Tower of London. Come and look around.**

This slide shows the site of the Tower of London. The oldest part is the castle in the centre, called the White Tower. Ask your students what the Tower looks like, e.g. it is big? Old? What sort of person or people do they think might have lived there? What might it look like inside?

The White Tower was built in the late 1000s. The Tower of London has been used as many things over the past 1,000 years including a castle, a fortress for storing weapons and armour, a palace, a prison, a mint (place where money is made), a menagerie (a collection of animals kept for display) and a place to keep the Crown Jewels safe.

**4. You will arrive at the Schools Desk. There will be someone to meet you.**

This is the main entrance to the Schools Desk. There will be a member of staff on the desk who will give you a coloured sticker or wristband to put on when you arrive. A member of staff will then accompany you to the Group Entrance.

**5. You will walk to the Group Entrance, which looks like this.**

This is the entrance you will travel through to enter the Tower of London. You will be able to spot lots of different types of buildings at the Tower of London. You can see some battlements (gaps for archers to shoot through) here.

**6. Your bag may be searched for security reasons.**

To make sure all our visitors stay safe while they’re at the Tower, our Security Guards sometimes need to look inside visitors’ bags. If you are carrying a bag into the Tower of London, our Security Team might ask to look inside it.

**7. You will then enter through this archway.**

You can touch the stone walls on the side of the archway as you pass through.

**8. Look out for this sculpture of a polar bear.**

There are 13 wire sculptures of animals around the Tower of London. They are an ‘exhibition’ or display which shows the different animals that were kept in the Royal Menagerie at the Tower from the 1100s. A polar bear was given to Henry III by the King of Norway in 1251.

**9. There are toilets near here.**

There are male, female and accessible toilets near here. There is also a fully accessible changing places toilet in the New Armouries Cafe. Please ask a member of staff in the cafe if you need to use this space.

**10. You can look for and listen to the ravens**

There is a famous legend which says that six ravens must guard the Tower and if they leave, the Tower and the kingdom will fall. There are seven ravens at the Tower today as one is a spare! The ravens are looked after by a Yeoman Warder called the Raven Master. They eat lots of meat and one egg per week!

**11. The Crown Jewels are kept inside the Jewel House. It can get very busy and you may have to queue to go inside.**

The Jewel House is a very busy part of the Tower of London as lots of visitors want to see the Crown Jewels! Ask your students to stay close to their assisting adults when they are inside.

**12. There are lots of things to see at the Tower of London.**

This building is known as the White Tower. It was built by William the Conqueror. It is called the White Tower because it was whitewashed about 200 years after it was built. It is nearly 30 metres high. This is roughly the height of 30 polar bears standing on all fours on top of each other!

**13. You may go inside this Tower.**

The Tower of London has lots of stone archways and corridors. You may visit spaces that look like this. When travelling through the Tower, you can go from very dark spaces to very light spaces. Take some time for your eyes to adjust to these different light levels.

The floors at the Tower can be uneven and there are lots of steps so take care!

**14. Or this room.**

When the Tower of London was a Medieval Palace, the rooms where the Royal family stayed would have been richly decorated with brightly coloured fabrics and paint on the walls.

**15. You might see writing on walls.**

Many of the letters, numbers and symbols you might see engraved on the walls at the Tower were made by Tower prisoners.

**16. If you need help or have any questions, you can ask someone in uniform.**

These are Yeoman Warders. Yeoman Warders look after the Tower of London site. They also help visitors to find their way around!

**17. We hope you enjoy your visit.**

We hope the Visual Story and Support Notes are useful in preparing your students for their visit to the Tower of London. Please let us know if you require any more information before your visit.