



SHAPE in Schools: Teacher resource sheet

1. Defining SHAPE subjects

A key finding from the SHAPE in Schools pilot programme is that students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes a STEM or SHAPE subject.

Start by helping students define different subject groupings. Here are examples provided by the SHAPE in Schools team for SHAPE subjects.

Social sciences

Social sciences use scientific methods to study human behaviour, society and the world around us. Subjects under the social science umbrella seek to observe, explain and analyse the way society works and how people interact with each other. Their remit ranges from economics and business to education and psychology. Social sciences impact our lives in ways we are not always aware of, shaping our politics and the international landscape.

Humanities

The humanities are crucial for understanding and interpreting the human experience. They encourage us to think creatively and critically, teaching us to reason and ask questions about the world and its cultures. In doing so, they foster social justice and equality, developing informed and ethical citizens.

Looking to the past to inform the present and build the future, humanities reveal how peoples and cultures make sense of the world, morally, spiritually and intellectually.

Arts

Art is the manifestation and representation of our culture, a unique expression of diverse human experiences. Art strengthens our personal and collective identities, preserving and promoting cultural diversity. Both the visual and performing arts are testament to human creativity and imagination. The arts can break down cultural, social, and economic barriers by engaging our emotions and teaching us to understand each other through our common humanity.

You might want to ask your students questions to prompt discussions about these definitions. For example:

- **Social Sciences:** When did you last explore how people interact with each other? Can you think of any lessons when you looked at how society works? In which subjects have you touched on issues related to business or economics?

Another idea is to ask questions about students' personal preferences, which you can revisit after conducting some SHAPE activities, to

demonstrate how students' understanding and value of SHAPE have changed:

- To what extent do you enjoy these subjects, and why? What do you think you gain from SHAPE subjects?

2. SHAPE learning resources

SHAPE in Schools is aimed at helping Key Stage 3 learners across the UK to be inspired by, and see the value in, SHAPE subjects. To this end, the SHAPE in Schools team has created learning resources, centred around four everyday objects: masks, shoes, sugar and trains.

Each resource is built around different modes, methods and mindsets.

- **Mode:** images and discussion.
- **Method:** slow looking; activating prior knowledge; responding to images; communicating ideas and emotions; linking and lateral thinking; forming opinion.
- **Mindset:** challenging preconceived ideas; providing learners with a disorientating experience; stimulating curiosity; considering the mindsets of other peoples and cultures; connecting to the world around us.

Here is an example of a 'slow looking' starter activity for shoes. The theory of slow looking is most commonly used in museums and art galleries to support visitors to engage with pieces of art more meaningfully.

- a) These six images have been specifically selected to challenge learners to think about how shoes are consciously and unconsciously associated with socio-economic status, gender and notions of 'types' of people.



Source: Canva

The six images of shoes and their key features are as follows:

Sneakers/trainers – an everyday shoe particularly used in sports, highly popularised, available in a huge range of brands and priced as varying extremes. Trainers should be comfortable and practical but have evolved to be a huge statement of fashion.

Geta shoes – shoes that are wooden and platformed with a visual similarity to a flip flop. Designed to raise the sole of the shoe off the ground to protect the foot from water or dirt. They are designed to allow for free circulation of air around the foot which is important because of the humidity experienced in Japan.

Clogs – wooden shoes with a distinctive shape and often decorative detail. Worn by farmers, fisherman, factory workers, artisans and others to protect their feet. They are often worn on boats and docks and in muddy fields to keep feet dry.

Moccasins – moccasin is a general word meaning a variety of shoe styles from the Native American and First Nation peoples of modern-day Canada and the USA.

Babouche slippers – open back, decorative, pointed-toed shoes, generally soft to wear and to the touch. The tradition of wearing this type of footwear, first adopted by women and then later on by men, crossed over from the Ottoman

Empire and the Islamic world. Their use was not exclusive to any particular social class.

Ballet shoes – silky, elegant and form-fitting shoes worn in ballet dancing, but also associated with pain due to the activities required of ballet dancers.

b) Ask students the following questions:

- I. What do you first notice about each shoe?
- II. What are the defining features of each shoe?
- III. Why are the shoes so different?
- IV. Who might wear these shoes? Think about the individual's gender, lifestyle and status.
- V. Which shoe would you most likely wear, and why? Why are you not the 'type' of person to wear some of these shoes?

c) Discuss the etymology of the word 'shoe'. 'Shoe' comes from the German word 'schuh', like the brand Schuh. Although, the Schuh brand is, in fact, Scottish!

This starter activity is part of a set of resources that aim to challenge learners' perceptions of shoes and how these seemingly mundane objects connect to a wide range of school subjects, including history, art and design, modern foreign languages, environmental science and business studies. Learners are encouraged to investigate how culture interacts with shoe design and how ethical considerations, such as environmental and social impacts, shape consumer behaviour and, thus, business strategy.

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3. "Be creative. Be explicit. Be ambitious!"

We asked Lucy Jenkins and Tallulah Machin, co-creators of the SHAPE in Schools pilot programme, what simple changes teachers of all subjects can make now, without workshops or teacher ambassadors.

Lucy: "Challenge yourself to 'be more SHAPE'. Ask yourself where the 'SHAPE' angle is in every experience and make it clear and explicit to learners – these are SHAPE skills; these are SHAPE qualities and look how they provide new insights!"

Tallulah: "Work with your colleagues to draw connections between subjects at both micro and macro levels. Discuss etymology in maths, colour theory in science, rhythm in nature and history in performing arts. Be creative. Be explicit. Be ambitious."

More resources

- To learn more about the SHAPE in Schools campaign, read this interview with Julia Black: Can an acronym help valorise social sciences, humanities and the arts? futurumcareers.com/stem-steam-and-now-shape-can-an-acronym-help-valorise-the-social-sciences-humanities-and-arts
- The British Academy houses a webpage dedicated to SHAPE, which includes case studies, lists of events and much, much more: www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/this-is-shape
- To access a wealth of practitioner training materials, visit: www.shapeinschools.org. The training covers key topics in detail, such as the policy and education context for SHAPE subjects, the mission and vision for SHAPE in Schools and the skills and careers available when studying SHAPE subjects. For sample learning resources and to create your own, there is also detailed information about the underpinning principles of the SHAPE in Schools pilot.