marking time

Before your visit

Look at two websites:
- History of Science Museum’s website - www.mhs.ox.ac.uk
  it contains downloadable trails, basic and technical
  information and links.
- The Artefact website - www.museums.ox.ac.uk/artefact is a
  customized site for art students with many images.

Be prepared for an introduction:
Your museum introduction will give valuable background
information on the Museum and its collection.

During your visit

A01: Recording Observations, Experiences and Ideas.
The sample sketchbook page with this sheet can be
photocopied and will help students in the process of
recording their own observations and ideas while in the
Museum.

A02: Evaluating artefacts, understanding their contexts.
Students can collect information to annotate their work
by looking at object labels, talking to staff and collecting
printed guides and postcards.

After your visit

A03 Developing and exploring ideas.
Look at the Student Gallery on Artefact which illustrates
ways in which schools and colleges have developed their
ideas. Some suggestions are:
- Print and pattern work based on cogs, wheels, chains and
  pendulums.
- Invent a time device utilizing sound, sand, sunlight or water
to record the passing of time.
- Design a personal clock using memorabilia such as songs,
  places and people which mark our life line.

A04 Making connections with the work of others.
- Google Images - sundials, water, sand, and incense clocks.
Did You Know?
The ancient Egyptians used giant obelisks as sundials. The obelisk cast a shadow during the day which changed length and so divided the day into times. The obelisks were known as gnomons and one stands in London, it is 21 metres tall and is called Cleopatra’s Needle.

DID YOU KNOW?
You can also make clocks using water. People from Greece, China and India all used the water clock to measure time. Particularly they were used for measuring the speech of a lawyer, so they didn’t go on too long! They have been called clepsydras, or ‘water thief’.

DID YOU KNOW?
The word ‘clock’ comes from the Latin word ‘clocca’ which means bell. Originally, clocks were devices that marked the hour by striking a bell or a chime. Some later clocks developed all kinds of chimes from cuckoo sounds to songs and trumpets!

DID YOU KNOW?
The first mechanical clock using a pendulum was invented by Galileo. The swing of the pendulum and the turning of cogs kept the marking of time regular. Mechanical clocks appeared in Europe in the 13th century and became highly decorated with moving figures and animals.
Art activity at the History of Science Museum

START
This clocks activity is designed for GCSE and 8th Form. It will take you about an hour. Before you start, make sure you have the Clocks Map and the Example Sketchbook. Follow the four steps and keep to time.

STEP 1
Exploring and selecting. Time: 10 mins.
Using the Clocks Map find the places where clocks are displayed. Notice the different ways in which people mark the passing of time; sometimes by sound, smell and sight. They use the sun, fire, incense and sand. Other examples include candle wax and water clocks.

STEP 2
Drawing and Recording. Time 20 mins.
Using pencils and pens make drawings of your chosen timepieces. Notice the fine detail in some pieces such as a bird’s beak to mark the sun’s movement, or by contrast the patterns of heavy wooden cogs and iron chains and pendulums.

STEP 3
Collecting a range of information. Time 15 mins.
Make notes on object labels about the timepieces, how the clocks are used, how small or large they are, what material are they made from and in which country were they made. Sketchbook in an attractive way.

STEP 4
Record your own ideas and experiences. Time 10 mins.
Make notes in your sketch book about anything of which the timepieces remind you, such as a film like “Back to the Future” where time is important, any music with a regular ticking beat like a clock or a story with a race against time. Finally note down any ways in which you could invent a timepiece using sand or candles or water or wax or any unusual material to mark time passing.

Art @ The Oxford University Museums
Natural History Ashmolean
Pitt Rivers History of Science
marking time

Example sketchbook

Art @ THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS
NATURAL HISTORY ASHMOLEAN
PITT RIVERS HISTORY OF SCIENCE
marking time

map of the History of Science Museum

Upper Gallery

Chinese Fan clock
Incense clock
Sun dials
Astrolabes

Entrance Gallery

Sand clocks
Carriage clocks

Basement Gallery

Art @ THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS
NATURAL HISTORY ASHMolean
PITT RIVERS HISTORY OF SCIENCE