

School Materials



NOBLESSE OBLIGE!

Château de Prangins.

Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century

School Material - Content

Presentation of the exhibition	3
Suggested topics and links to the curriculum.....	4
1. THE NOBILITY IN SWITZERLAND	4
2. ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ELITES	7
3. LIFE IN THE CITY AND THE COUNTRYSIDE	10
4. WRITING HISTORY	13
5. CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN THE 18TH CENTURY.....	15
6. JOURNAL & WRITING	17
7. WOMEN AT THE CHÂTEAU	19
8. TECHNIQUE & TECHNOLOGY	21
9. DECORATIVE ARTS	23
10. THE FIRST TOURISTS	26
Activity sheet to print out	28
Bibliography.....	31

Château de Prangins.

Presentation of the exhibition

The permanent exhibition *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* is an immersive museum experience enabling visitors to share in the day-to-day life of a noble family in the Vaud region during the Enlightenment.

The former reception rooms at the Château de Prangins comprise:

- Butler's pantry
- Small dining room
- Large dining room
- Salon
- Study
- Library

All these rooms have been returned to their former splendour and now form the backdrop for the exhibition. Boiseries in their original colours, textiles with lustrous motifs and false-marble decorations provide the perfect surroundings for some 600 objects from the era.

Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century recreates the existence of a noble family in the Vaud region at the end of the Ancien Régime, and the life of a baroness and baron.

Two (free) audioguides by the writer Eugène (a winner of the Swiss Literature Award 2023), one for adults and the other for young people aged six and over, feature the voices of the château's former inhabitants.

Château de Prangins.

Suggested topics and links to the curriculum

1. The nobility in Switzerland

There were no kings, queens or grand royal courts during the Ancien Régime in Switzerland. However, the nobility was very much in evidence, and those who represented it had a central role, clearly defined responsibilities and privileges within society. The exhibition *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* is a unique opportunity to learn more about their history and functions.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, Citizenship, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental), Swiss history, Human and social sciences.

Skills: vocabulary and expressions, putting an event in context and using conventional representations, interpreting evidence from the past, comparing ways of life.

Vocabulary

Château – lordship – baron and baroness – barony – servant – *domus* – estate – rule – Age of Enlightenment – lighting – candle – knowledge – pomp – appearance – heritage – *pater* – homeland.

Before visiting

- **Do some semantic research:** what do the roots of words such as “servants”, “estate” and “heritage” tell us about the social context of the 18th century?
- **Familiarise yourself with the concept of nobility:** make a list of all the noble titles you know. Try to place them in a hierarchy. What are the differences? What are these titles for? How do you become a noble? What is the use of a noble title?
- **Imagine a typical day in the life** of the baron or baroness of Prangins so you can compare it with the information you find in the exhibition when you visit.

At the museum

- In the château courtyard, **observe or draw the façades:** what features do you notice? How many windows are there? How many doors? How many pavilions (commonly known as towers)? What purposes do these features serve? You can find the answers in the model of the château in the exhibition.
- In the château courtyard, discuss the **various functions of castles** over the course of history: What were they used for in the Middle Ages? Were they still used for the same purposes in the 18th century? What are the corner pavilions at Château de Prangins used for?
- In the exhibition, look for the big map of the barony on the floor. In your opinion, what does managing this estate involve? What work needs to be done to maintain it? How did the Guiguers earn money? Make a list of the **Guiguers’ sources of income**. Can someone live like that today?

Château de Prangins.

- In the servants' area and the small dining room, **list the objects** that you particularly notice. What kinds of objects are on display? **Deduce**: who lived at Château de Prangins? Are there any differences between the living conditions of the château's various inhabitants? Who has heating? Which rooms are decorated?
- In the large living room, listen to the crackle of the fire, soak up the atmosphere created by the subdued lighting and **imagine a conversation between a number of people in the 18th century**. What are they talking about? Do they speak the same way as you? And about the same things? Where do you draw your inspiration for this little scene?
- In the large living room and the library, make a list of the objects that in your view best show **the privileged lifestyle** of the nobility. Then make a list of the objects that best represent their activities and duties.
- **Writing exercise**: imagine you are living the life of Matilda, Louis-François Guiguer, or one of their children. Describe a typical day. Who do they encounter during their day? Imagine their conversations with the servants. What emotions do they feel? What do they dream of? Would you like to become them for a day?
Suggestion: write your texts in the exhibition rooms during your visit or ask for a special room for this purpose (in advance, booking required).

Further activities after the visit

- **Discuss the nobility in Switzerland and the Helvetic Revolution**. Why is so little generally known about this topic? Who were the key figures in the Helvetic Revolution? And the revolution in Vaud? What did the revolutionaries want? What were the links to the château?
- **Compare the lifestyles of the nobility through history**. Compare daily life at the château at the time of Louis-François and Matilda Guiguer with daily life in a Roman villa or a medieval castle. **Consider the sources** and evidence that have formed the basis for hypotheses about ways of life at those various times and for validating them.

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge.
- *Discovering the Enlightenment*: walking tour in the château grounds. Using the plan, go and find the silhouettes of Louis-François Guiguer and his wife Matilda, baron and baroness of Prangins, and some other people who lived at the château at the same time (servant, gardener, peasant).
- *Discovering the Enlightenment*: meet various historical figures from the nobility or with links to the revolutions, such as Germaine de Staël, Louis Guiguer, Voltaire and Joseph Bonaparte.
- *Portrait Gallery*: meet in front of the outfit probably worn by Jacques Necker during the Estates General of May 1789.
- *The château's portraits*: thematic guided tour, booking required. Includes the portraits of Louis Guiguer, Joseph Bonaparte and many others. (ages 8 and over)

Château de Prangins.

- Thematic guided tour of the château's architecture (booking required) or self-guided tour: in the château courtyard, in *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* with the activity booklet or (free) audioguide, then on the panoramic terrace. (ages 8 and over)
- *Enlightenment Switzerland*: thematic guided tour, booking required. (ages 14 and over)

Château de Prangins.

2. On the activities of the elites

Hunting, astronomy, parties, theatre and reading: the 18th-century elites engaged in a wide variety of activities, which provide the opportunity to examine a large number of topics. Visitors to the exhibition can explore historical cultural practices – both tangible and intangible – *in situ* and the context of an artistic heritage.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, Creative and manual activities, Visual arts, Music, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental), Swiss history, Human and social sciences.

Skills: writing and written/oral expression, diversity of literary genres, comparing ways of life in different periods, economic, cultural and social dimension, discovering regional cultural heritage.

Vocabulary

Privileges – rights – duties – representation – entertainment – living room – literature – society – socialising – conversation – philosophy – *belles-lettres* – erudition – scholar – sciences – stroll.

Before visiting

- Together, discuss all the leisure activities and hobbies of class members. **Compare the present and the past.** What activities already existed back in the 18th century? What activities wouldn't have been possible? What accessories or equipment used for those activities are similar to today? What historical individuals might have had the same occupations?
- **Think of some of the most unlikely associations.** For example, Louis Guiguer playing football, Marie-Antoinette making a parachute jump. What makes them unlikely and funny?
- **Read a work from the 18th century**, for example by the following writers:
 - Choderlos de Laclos
 - Manon Roland
 - Jean-Jacques Rousseau
 - Voltaire

Or watch a film set in the period:

- *Barry Lyndon* (1975), Stanley Kubrick
- *Marie-Antoinette* (2006), Sofia Coppola
- *Fanfan la Tulipe* (2003), Gérard Krawczyk

What are the main themes? What are the historical backdrops? What demonstrates the lifestyle of the characters? You will try to find elements of these in the exhibition.

- **Choose some extracts from 18th-century texts** to read in the exhibition, in the large living room, in the atmosphere of an evening spent by the fireside. Everyone can read an extract.

Château de Prangins.

At the museum

- Walk through the baron and baroness's reception rooms: **list the objects** that represent the activities of the elites. Are there some in every room? What do those objects tell us about the people who lived there? Can you categorise them? For example: art, receiving guests, games, etc.?
- **Imagine that the class has been invited to visit the baron and baroness:** which room do you go to? In what order? What do you do when you get there? Describe a fine evening reception by walking through the exhibition and looking for clues around you.
- In the exhibition, look for the big map of the barony on the floor. **Point out the places outside** where the baron went hunting. Where did the baroness and her guests go for a stroll? Were there places specially for them to do that? In the 18th century, people liked to be outdoors. There are a number of depictions of this in the exhibition. Find as many as you can (paintings, engravings, etc.).
- In the servants' room, **guess what the exhibition does not show**. What might the servants have done in their free time? When did they have time off? Why isn't this shown in the exhibition?
- In the large dining room, be completely quiet and **listen to the notes of the harpsichord**. What dance does it make you want to do? What part did music play in the 18th century? What is the difference between classical and Baroque music? Did the nobility of Vaud go to the opera? Can you find any other instruments in the exhibition? In class, listen to some compositions by Vivaldi, Rameau, Bach, Handel or Gély...
- **Compare your bookshelves with the baron's**. Are there books that you both read? Are there any writers you might find on your bookshelves? Do you have as many books as the baron? Are your books similar? What do you like to read? Do you have an encyclopaedia at home? Do you read it in your free time?
- In the 18th century, a library like this cost **a lot of money**. Only the elites could have one. Today, can everyone afford a collection of books? In what ways are books made accessible to all?

Further activities after the visit

- **Set up a class theatre**, creating everything yourselves: the costumes, lighting, script; perform the play in front of an audience, just like the people who lived at Prangins did.
- Read one of the books you saw in the Guiguers' library, or writers from the 18th century such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Choderlos de Laclos, Montesquieu, Manon Roland or Marivaux.
- In class, organise **a manual activity of the kind people engaged in in the past** (engraving, painting, etc.).

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. In each room, objects attest to the lifestyle of the nobility, and the entertainments and activities they engaged in.

Château de Prangins.

- *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour exploring the theatre set from Hauteville and viewing a performance of an extract from an 18th-century play: *Le médecin Suisse allemand*, Samuel de Constant, 1791 (ages 8 and over)
- *What is Switzerland?*: visit the “A time for work and a time for leisure” room to learn about how free-time and leisure activities became accessible to all during the 20th century in Switzerland.
- *Theatre workshop* and *story workshop*: activities for schools (booking required, includes a visit); these workshops linked to *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections* are also an ideal complement to a visit to *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* (ages 10 and over)
- *Lend me your quill pen*: workshop (booking required). An introduction to writing with a quill pen (ages 7 and over)
- *Shadow play*: workshop (booking required). An introduction to the art of paper-cutting silhouettes (ages 6 and over)
- *Treasure hunt*: fun tour (booking required, ages 4 to 7)
- *A museum mystery*: fun tour (booking required, ages 8 and over)

Château de Prangins.

3. Life in the city and the countryside

When we talk about the nobility, we often think of the nobility at court, in Versailles or other big cities. In Vaud, however, the nobility mostly lived in the countryside. Of course, the elites often went into town and generally spent the winter in Lausanne, but when the weather improved they returned to their country estates. The Guiguers, in any event, lived at the château all year round. *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* examines social and spatial/urban organisation through the history of local customs.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental, Swiss history, Human and social sciences.

Skills: relationships between human activities and spatial organisation, geographical spaces and relationships with human beings, issues in the human and social sciences, observing and interpreting evidence from the past, comparing ways of life at different periods.

Vocabulary

Town – countryside – mountain – country – landscape – peasant – customs – rural – urban – urban design – organisation – territory – lands – estate – stroll.

Before visiting

- Conduct an imagination exercise. **What did modern-day Switzerland look like in the 18th century** in terms of land use? What did it mostly consist of? Towns, countryside, forest? When did Swiss towns start to become important? Were the major urban centres of the 18th century the same as today? Do some research to confirm or refute your ideas.
- In 10 minutes, draw or **give a spontaneous description of at least four types of dwelling** in the 18th century. In small groups, compare and discuss ideas.
- (Re-)read the fable *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* by Jean de la Fontaine, one of Louis-François Guiguer's favourite authors. Which rat best matches your personality? Do you prefer to live in town or in the countryside? Do you think the Guiguers were more town or country people? Do you think the clichés about the differences between town and countryside are justified? List and discuss them.

At the museum

- In the exhibition, look for the reproduction of the map of the barony of Prangins on the floor. **Describe the land use** you can see. What did the estate consist of? Mention at least three things. Where are the houses? Where is the château? What did they grow?
- In the exhibition, many depictions of landscapes adorn the walls of the former reception rooms. Find as many as you can. What do you notice about them? **How is country life depicted?** What information can you deduce? Do you think they faithfully reflect the realities of the 18th century? Who represents peasant life?

Château de Prangins.

- In the antechamber showing the barony of Prangins, find **the land surveying instrument**. How was it used? Why was it important to survey the land and mark boundaries?
- In the antechamber showing the barony of Prangins, look at the picture on the wall: Johann Rudolf Byss, *The Game Seller*, oil on copper, after 1719. What does it show? How are the people depicted? Is this how you imagine the 18th century?
- **In the room with the model of the château, note the silhouettes moving in the staircase**. Why is it more comfortable to live above the kitchens in winter? In your opinion, what other arrangements shown in the exhibition make life in the country less harsh in winter? Why do you think most of the nobles headed off to town when the cold weather arrived?
- In the dining room, **what did people eat at this table**? Where did the food come from? Who produced it? Write a menu.

Further activities after the visit

- Discuss the following sentences:

The idea of inhabited nature that we call the “countryside” has never influenced the general culture of an era more strongly than in the 18th century. From economics to aesthetics, from literature to technology, there is not a single field that fails to mention the countryside, its invigorating beauty, the harmony of its backdrop, but also the extraordinary ability it has to be the only place in the world where a moral version of richness proliferates. Harvesting ten times what he plants, the farmer is the hero of this dominant sensibility, the only person to turn such a profit without departing from the path of virtue, resorting to usury or impoverishing his neighbour. And indeed, what is true of general thought at this time is equally true of individual knowledge: everyone is caught up in the feeling of true naturalness, of simplicity, the purity of the air and the water, the satisfaction of the good, also, for the soul and the body. People fear the fetid atmosphere of the indoors (M. Guiguer), advocate opening windows (Du Pan), loosening cravats (Tissot), returning to the great outdoors (A. de Haller), and the fashion for engaging in agriculture (L-F. Guiguer).

Amsler C, Badoux S, Rey C, Corbaz R, “Plantes potagères au Château de Prangins”, *Revue suisse d’horticulture*, 33 (2001).

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. Suggested tour: start in the baron’s room, visit the servants’ area for an insight into modest peasant life, and the Guiguer reception rooms for a family who lived there all year round.
- *Chintz. How a Fabric Conquered the World*: find the tester bed that takes pride of place in the exhibition and analyse the motif of a genre scene from the 17th century, which was very popular in the 18th century. Analyse the way in which people and peasant life are depicted.

Château de Prangins.

- In the kitchen garden, to appreciate the contrast between nature and culture, and indoors/outdoors. Visit with the booklet of fun activities or the audioguide (free of charge, available at museum reception, ages 4 and over).
- *What is Switzerland?*: in the “In search of identity” room, find the wallpaper *Little Helvetia* and compare the depiction of an idealised Switzerland with what you have seen in the Guiguers’ reception rooms. What conclusions can you draw?
- *A garden for the five senses*: guided tour of the kitchen garden (booking required). A multi-sensory experience (ages 4 and over)

Château de Prangins.

4. Writing history

The journal that Louis-François Guiguer kept for 15 years, with the help of his secretary Christoph-Daniel Renz and his wife Matilda, contains a wealth of information about the history of the château and the lifestyle of the elites in the Vaud region during the 18th century. This can serve as the basis for a discussion on historiography and writing practices: who writes history? What narratives do we get to hear? What do they tell us?

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, History, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental), Reflective approach, Human and social sciences.

Skills: Written and oral comprehension and expression, writing in a group and individually, vocabulary and expressions, organising a narrative, diversity of literary genres, comparing information supplied by text and image, observing and interpreting evidence from the past, gathering information and comparing various sources.

Vocabulary

Journal – personal – correspondence – ego-documents – sources – polyphony – narrative – history – historiography – witness – testimony.

Before visiting

- **Think about your visit together:** why visit an 18th-century stately home? What is a museum? What can we learn there?
- **Think critically about how history is made:** why, for a very long time, did historians write only about the history of the elites and “great men”? Why is it only recently that we have started considering the history of social minorities, such as women, poorer people, children and so on? Do you feel that the history of the elites is relevant to you?

At the museum

- In the exhibition, **consider the sources** and evidence that have provided the basis for hypotheses about ways of life in the 18th century and for validating them. **Look for at least three different historical media** that provide information about ways of life in the 18th century (visual representations, written evidence, etc.).
- In the study, read **the journal of Louis-François Guiguer**. What information does it contain about everyday life at the château? Why is this object so valuable to us today?
- In the study, think about **your own relationship to writing**. Do you write every day? What can your calendar and personal diaries tell us? How do you think they could be useful to future historians? What media do you use to maintain them? Are digital archives like paper archives? Is it possible to preserve the same elements?
- In the library, find the *Paris Encyclopaedia*, which is open at the page with the tree of knowledge. Where is history? How is it classified in relation to other knowledge? What can you deduce from this?

Château de Prangins.

Further activities after the visit

Raising awareness of the concept of heritage / write a short text answering the following questions: What was your favourite object in this exhibition? Why? – Why do you feel it is “worthy” of being preserved in a museum? – What objects belonging to your parents or grandparents are you particularly attached to? – For what reasons? What value(s) do they represent for you? – Do you own an object that you would like to hand down to future generations? What is it? – For what reasons? – Do you feel it is “worthy” of being preserved in a museum? Why?

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. Begin in the small library with the journal of Louis-François Guiguer, then move on to the library and the *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot and d’Alembert, and finally the servants’ room.
- *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections*, in the “Investigating interiors” room: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Learn about how the stories and lifestyles of underprivileged people are told, given the lack of written sources.
- *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections*: at the end of the exhibition, watch the film on the collections of the Swiss National Museum.

Château de Prangins.

5. Children's education in the 18th century

Louis-François Guiguer was the initiator of an educational project: a little school at Prangins for the children of peasants. Matilda Guiguer read Rousseau and discussed the education of children, while the Guiguer children themselves, like Charles-Jules, had a tutor at home. Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century looks at education in history.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, History, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental, Learning strategies, Reflective approach, Human and social sciences.

Skills: vocabulary and expressions, observing and interpreting evidence from the past, comparing ways of life at different periods, the economic, cultural and social dimension.

Vocabulary

Education – school – parents – tutor – learning – childhood – training – work – catechism.

Before visiting

- Read the extracts from *Emile, or On Education* by Jean Jacques Rousseau and think about how his ideas on education resonate today.
- Have a **philosophical discussion** in class. What did Rousseau and contemporary thinkers change about how children's education was perceived compared with previous centuries? In what ways have we inherited that thought?
- Make a quick list of the differences between the education of the nobility and the peasantry. Do you think children learned the same things? In *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*, you can find some more ideas.
- **Compare your daily routine with that of children in history:** how many hours' school per week? How many weeks of school per year? How many subjects are taught? What are they? And so on.

At the museum

- In the small dining room, list **the objects that might have belonged to the Guiguer children**. What kinds of objects are they? Have you ever had the same toys/objects?
- In the exhibition, look for **the portraits depicting children**: describe the children. Do they look like children? Analyse the paintings with the help of the document *Portrait Analysis Sheet* and suggest an interpretation.
- In the servants' room, look at the frieze showing the château's servants. In your view, **who learnt to read and write?** Why? Deduce from the information you can see. Once you are back in the classroom, you will be able to do some historical research to confirm your impressions.

Château de Prangins.

Further activities after the visit

- **Continue discussing gender and education:** when did girls start to learn the same things as boys at school? And at home? Are there any differences? For example, compare what brothers and sisters, male and female cousins, etc. learn. Are the teacher's instructions the same? Do you think they were the same in the 18th century?
- **Writing exercise:** imagine the life of a child in the 18th century on the basis of the objects you discovered during your visit. Is it a life you envy? Or not? Why?

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century.* guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. On request, thematic tour on school education and learning through history (ages 8 and over)
- *What is Switzerland?.* guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Visit the "Free and liberated / Youth in revolt!" room to explore the subject of gender distinctions in education from the 18th century to the 1960s, and the "A time for work and a time for leisure" room to look at the rights of children and child workers.
- *Portrait Gallery.* self-guided tour in the niches devoted to the Moravian Brethren and Charles-Jules Guiguer: learn more about children's education in a complementary, fun way; Charles-Jules and his tutor at home in the late 18th century and a school for young men in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- *Lend me your quill pen:* workshop (booking required). An introduction to writing with a quill pen (ages 7 and over)

Château de Prangins.

6. Journal & writing

In the 18th century, writing was an important part of people's lives. This is particularly visible at Château de Prangins, where the baron wrote in his journal almost every day. Not forgetting the letters that people sent each other and received several times a day! The exhibition *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* showcases many objects that attest to the importance of this practice and will encourage you to do some writing of your own.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, History, Creative and manual activities, Media, Customs, Human and social sciences, Communication, Creative thinking.

Skills: written and oral comprehension and expression, writing individually and in a group, vocabulary and expressions, organising a narrative, diversity of literary genres, gathering information and comparing various sources.

Vocabulary

Journal – writing – correspondence – letters – seal – secret – desk – pen – coachman – manuscript – inkwell – ego-document – originator – recipient – communication – polyphony.

Before visiting

- In order to familiarise pupils with Louis-François Guiguer's journal, **extracts can be read and studied in class.**
- Suggest **a semantic research** linked to the journal: personal diary, logbook, magazine, daily newspaper, weekly magazine, TV news, blog, social network profiles, vlog.
- To continue with the subject of the journal, list some **parallels with the media you are already familiar with**: daily newspapers, children's magazines, TV news, internet, social networks. For each of these sources of information, try to identify the originator, recipient and the entire process of sending and receiving a message (how does the message travel from one to the other?) Who produces it? Who receives it? Who interprets it? What functions do the different parts of a message perform (informative, phatic, argumentative, etc.)?

At the museum

- In the servants' area and the baron's study, **find the handwritten objects.** Why does writing occupy such an important place in the life of the 18th-century elites? Mention at least two of its functions. Can you decipher them? What are the documents? Are there many of them?
- In the servants' area, find the servant who was in charge of the mail. What is he called? How does he work? In your opinion, why is he so well paid? What about the others: how much do they earn? What do you think this salary represents?
- In the same room, look at the letter lying on the table and consider **the materials used in writing it.** How was the text protected before envelopes were invented? What are the parts of the letter?

Château de Prangins.

- In the study and the library, find as many tools and pieces of furniture used for **writing** as you can. What kinds of objects are they? Do you have any objects like them? Why is it possible to say that they reflect the importance of writing in the 18th century?
- In the study, look at the journal. Try to decipher some passages. Who do you think is writing? Who is the journal for? Why? Make a comparison with modern-day practices (vlogs, blogs, personal diaries, etc.)

Further activities after the visit

- Write **a page of a diary** and describe an event that made an impact on you, for example:
 - A day on holiday
 - A birthday
 - A family celebration
 - Or an invitation to the château at the time of Louis-François and Matilda Guiguer.
- Make **some short videos** talking about your daily life or something you care about for the future. You can address them to future pupils or historians, for example.
- Read an **epistolary novel** from the 18th century, such as *Julie, or the New Heloise* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the *Persian Letters* by Montesquieu or *Dangerous Liaisons* by Choderlos de Laclos.

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. Begin in the servants' room and look at the form of letters before the invention of stamps and envelopes; go to the study to see the writing tools and the journal, then back to the servants' room to see the coachman's boots and how people managed before the advent of electricity.
- *Lend me your quill pen*: workshop (booking required). An introduction to writing with a quill pen (ages 7 and over)

7. Women at the Château

The exhibition *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* looks at the condition of women during that period. By exploring the everyday lives of various social groups, from Baroness Matilda to the servant Marianne Viande, and looking at the Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d’Alembert, students can discover the ideas and aspirations of the 18th century and compare them with the realities of women’s lives in the 21st century.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, History, Citizenship, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental), Human and social sciences.

Skills: vocabulary and expressions, comparing information provided by texts and images, putting an event in context and using conventional representations, observing and interpreting evidence from the past, comparing ways of life during different periods, identifying the differences between narrative, myth, legend, reality, economic, cultural and social dimension.

Vocabulary

Country – homeland – patriarchy – heritage – maternity – marriage – living room – socialising – power – sensibility – sensitive – theory of humours.

Before visiting

- Discuss the issue of **gender distinctions**: what was the situation before the 18th century? How have views on the differences between women and men changed over the course of history? What are the broad factors that have influenced those ideas? How were men and women viewed in comparison with each other? How was this justified? Are things similar today?
- **Analyse the literary and medical discourses on women in the 18th century**: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Jean de La Fontaine in literature (writers that the Guiguers read) or Diderot, Jean le Rond d’Alembert and Bartolomeo Felice in the sciences are some of the 18th-century scholars who wrote on the subject of women. What are the recurring points? Compare present-day opinions with the historical texts.

At the museum

- Writing about women’s history is often a matter of **digging up a hidden story**. Do you find the history of women to be different from the history of “great men”? Do you recognise yourself in either of them? Or neither? Why?
- In the exhibition, which objects could serve to tell the history of women? What sources are available? What did historians preserve? Why? Can a link be made with the history of servants or peasants, for example?
- In the study, look at the journal. It is open at a page containing the writing of Matilda Guiguer. This is a chance to examine **women’s education** and unequal access to writing in the 18th century. Why did women learn to read? What could and couldn’t they read? Was it the same for all women at the time?

Château de Prangins.

- In the large living room, analyse the paintings of married couples. Consider the topic of **marriage in the 18th century**. Why did people get married? What was marriage? Were there love matches? Who married whom?
- In the large living room, compare the painting of Louis-François and the painting of Matilda Guiguer. Describe how they are different from the paintings of Louis and Judith Guiguer, which are not painted to show everyday life as with Matilda and Louis-François, but for representative purposes on the occasion of their marriage. Read the captions, find out about the context and compare the depictions through the prism of gender.
- In the exhibition *What is Switzerland?* refine and extend your investigation in the “Free and liberated? / Youth in revolt!” room, which looks at the question of education by gender.

Further activities after the visit

- **Organise a historical debate in class:** recreate the debates around education and the place of women in the 18th century.
- Read some female writers from the 18th century. For example:
 - Isabelle de Charrière
 - Louise d’Epinay
 - Félicité de Genlis
 - Olympe de Gouges
 - Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont
 - Suzanne Necker
 - Jeanne-François Polier de Bottens
 - Françoise-Louise de Pont-Wullyamoz
 - Manon Roland
 - Mary Shelley
 - Germaine de Staël
 - Gabrielle de Villeneuve

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. In particular, visit the servants’ area, small dining room and large living room.
- *What is Switzerland?*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Go to the “Free and liberated” room to learn about the history and evolution of customs; the “Peak time!” room for female mountaineers; and the “A right to happiness” room for the acquisition of political rights for women up to the present day.
- *Portrait Gallery*: self-guided tour of the niche devoted to Katharine McCormick to compare with the 20th century.
- *Chintz. How a Fabric Conquered the World*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour in the “Jouy” section to learn about Catherine Renée Darcel, an example of an exceptional businesswoman of the 18th century.
- *Women at the château*: thematic guided tour (booking required), with option to examine the desired areas in greater detail (ages 14 and over)

8. Technique & technology

Was the 18th century a time of advanced technology? From mechanical furniture-making to the illustration of technical plates in the *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot and d’Alembert, prepare to be amazed by the technological prowess of the Age of Enlightenment.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, History, Human and social sciences, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental), Visual arts.

Skills: observing and interpreting evidence from the past, comparing ways of life in different periods, gathering information and comparing various sources, economic, social and cultural dimension, discovering techniques used in the plastic arts and crafts, discovering regional cultural heritage, presentation of arts and crafts.

Vocabulary

Technique – technology – work – innovation – crafts – art – manufacture – proto-industry – Huguenots – expertise – chintzes – watchmaking – furniture – comfort.

Before visiting

- Do some historical research into **Switzerland’s proto-industrial history**. What products were produced locally? And in your region? Make a list of the products you expect to find in the exhibition *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* (furniture, fabrics, etc.). Is Switzerland famous for some of these products?
- Examine the **Revocation of the Edict of Nantes** and the arrival of Huguenots in Switzerland as well as the repercussions for industry and the importing of expertise.

At the museum

- Go through the exhibition and search for objects that looked modern in the 18th century (“tronchin” table, clocks, large mirrors, etc.). **Write an object specification:** type of object, date of manufacture, origin, dimensions, material(s), user(s) and explain why it looks modern. Once you are back in the classroom, give a mini-presentation of the chosen objects.
- **“Who am I?” game:** guess the objects that the other groups have studied by asking them questions.
- In the exhibition, put the objects you find into categories: **what are their functions? What is the technique/technology used for?** Are they objects that provide comfort? Scientific objects? Art objects?
- In the library, locate the ***Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d’Alembert***: a key work for those studying the Enlightenment, which aimed to compile all knowledge existing at the time. However, it is often forgotten that the *Encyclopaedia* also has a very technical aspect, notably comprising **illustrative plates** showing a wide range of trades and professions. Some examples can be found in the exhibition: look at, discuss and analyse them together! Would you like to acquire some of these technical skills? Can you learn them from a plate in an encyclopaedia?

Château de Prangins.

Further activities after the visit

- Perform a **manual activity** in class inspired by the engravings in the *Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d’Alembert*.
- Oral expression: make some **short presentations of the objects** that impressed you, explaining their history and how they work, as well as the contribution they make to technology (5 minutes max.).
- What are the major technical advances of the 18th century?

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. Go to the library and the “tronchin” table; observe the clocks in (almost) every room, the items that enhance comfort – mirrors, candles, etc. – the marble fountain and the harpsichord in the dining room, etc.
- *Chintz. How a Fabric Conquered the World*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour in the “Switzerland” and “France” sections to understand the development of Swiss industry thanks to technological progress, see the chintz printing plates and understand the impact of the arrival of the Huguenots on the Swiss chintz industry – a sample case to compare with other Swiss industries: watchmaking, embroidery, etc.
- *What is Switzerland?*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour in the “A time for work and a time for leisure” room and the “A right to happiness” room: examine the struggle for workers’ rights (child labour, paid holiday, decent wages, etc.)
- *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour in the “Middle-class living room”: learn the techniques used in furniture making at Yverdon. Have fun building and decorating an Yverdon chair.

Château de Prangins.

9. Decorative arts

The history of the decorative arts is also the history of individuals, their ways of life and their aspirations. For example, in the 18th century, people wanted more comfort, and the exhibition *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* bears witness to this. In addition, the decorative arts provided a living for many people, and even entire regions of Switzerland.

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, History, Human and social sciences, Creative and manual activities, Visual arts.

Skills: various forms of expression (oral, written, plastic, musical, media, gestures and symbolism), exploring various sources and understanding what each contributes, answering questions from the information gathered, using varied sources of inspiration, creating space for dreams and imagination, identifying and appreciating the original elements of a creation.

Vocabulary

Decorative arts – art – crafts – artist – craftsperson – chintz – porcelain – silverware – watchmaking – furniture – motif – exoticism – style – service – pomp – comfort – tableware.

Before visiting

- Make a quick **list of the styles and/or types of furniture** that you know (neoclassical, Louis XV, modern, office furniture, street furniture, etc.). Which do you expect to find in a recreation of 18th-century noble apartments?
- **List and categorise:** all the furniture you know, and all the decorative objects that come to mind. Will you find them in 18th-century apartments?
- Bring a picture of an item of furniture you cannot do without into class and during your visit. You should try to **find the equivalent of the item of furniture in the exhibition and compare them** (please note: there is no bed in this exhibition!).
- Do some **semantic research into “comfort”**: when did this concept first appear? When did people start expecting it from their interiors? What is the difference between comfort and pomp? What technological advances were essential to improving comfort (window glass, mirrors,, fireplace, electricity, etc.)?

Topics related to furniture in the museum

- **Compare the situation with the present day:** do we still use furniture as people did in the 18th century? Are there fashions too? How long do they last? Is an interior from the 2000s similar to one from the 2010s?
- **Fashion and durability:** where did people buy furniture in the 18th century? Could anybody have a chest of drawers like the one the Guiguers had? And what about the furniture coverings and wall hangings? What about today? Do we know where our furniture comes from? Is furniture handed down from generation to generation? How long on average do people keep a piece of furniture?

Château de Prangins.

- In an exhibition room or a special room for this purpose (on request, book in advance), position yourself in front of a piece of furniture and **write a short text about it** in 10–15 minutes. It can be written in the first person, describing its everyday life, a dialogue with another piece of furniture, etc.
- In the large living room of *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* and then in the exhibition *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections*, in the “Middle-class living room”, compare or spot the differences between a chaise longue in the large living room and the armchairs from Yverdon. Which do you prefer?

Topics related to decorative objects at the museum

- **Style, motifs:** in the exhibition, you can identify common motifs among all the decorative objects (tableware, curtains, seating, etc.). Find them. What kinds of motifs are they? Can they be divided up into categories (plants, figures, geometry, and so on)? Do you like them? Do they remind you of memories or of places you know?
- **Customs and social distinctions:** who can afford to have a dining room in their apartment? What about lots of chairs or a private theatre? Glittering candle holders? What did servants use for heating and lighting, for example?
- Things to think about: **what is the point of having beautiful things? Art in the place where you live? Is it important to you?** Write a short text setting out an argument and present it to the class. Discuss it.
- Sit down in the exhibition facing the beautiful wall hangings and **draw the motifs** you particularly like.
- In each room, **look for the order in which the decoration is conceived**. In your opinion, what is the starting point, what feature sets the tone? Look at the fireplace, the parquet floor with the motifs derived from it, the colours of the wall hangings which match the tones of the stonework in the fireplaces perfectly, the way in which everything is coordinated, etc.

Further activities after the visit

- Expression exercise (oral, visual arts): describe or put together your dream interior, drawing inspiration from the décors you’ve discovered in *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*.
- Descriptive exercise (written): **describe, from memory or as in a naturalistic text, a room** in *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*. Then, read the extracts to the class and get them to guess which room you are describing.

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge.
- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* (30 min.) and *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections* (30 min.): guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour to compare the variety of styles and materials developed over time, as well as the vitality of Swiss creativity.
- *Chintz. How a Fabric Conquered the World*: guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour to continue your investigation of the decorative arts, where you’ll discover

Château de Prangins.

that as well as being magnificent, the baron and baroness's curtains have a fascinating but eventful history.

- *Chintz. How a Fabric Conquered the World:* guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour: in the “Glarus” section, admire the local expertise in making chintzes.
- *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections:* analyse the evolution of furniture by comparing exhibits from *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century* with the present day. Analyse how they were made by craftspeople or industry and the changes in styles.

Château de Prangins.

10. The first tourists

Ideally situated on the route of the Grand Tour and commanding magnificent views of Mont-Blanc, Château de Prangins was visited by many people travelling through Europe. In the 18th century, these were the first tourists!

Curriculum

Areas and subjects: French, Geography, History, Interdependencies (social, economic, environmental), Human and social sciences.

Skills: Exploring a range of sources and understanding the importance of each, selecting relevant resources, cross-referencing information from a variety of sources, answering questions based on the information gathered, using varied sources of inspiration, creating space for dreams and imagination.

Vocabulary

Tourism – Grand Tour – Europe – elite – aristocracy – study trip – knowledge – discovery – exploration – experience – mountaineering – routes – countryside – contemplation – exile – ideal.

Before visiting

- **What is your experience of travelling?** On a map of the world, mark all the destinations the class has visited. Which places have been visited most? Compare the places visited with the principal destinations of the Grand Tour.
- **What is a study trip? Compare school lessons today with study trips in the 18th century such as the Grand Tour.** Do they involve studying in the literal sense? Why travel to study?
- **Who were the first tourists?** Which countries and backgrounds did they come from? What did they come to visit in Switzerland, and why didn't they come earlier? Do people still go about tourism in the same way? What has changed?

At the museum

- In the small dining room, look at the two works showing **landscapes of ancient ruins**: Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros and Giovanni Volpato, *Temple of Antoninus and Faustina*, around 1780 (right) and *Temple of the Dioscuri at the Campo Vaccino*, around 1782 (left). These are watercolour prints that Louis-François Guiguer may have brought back from his trip to Italy. Identify the features that are very old (ancient) and those that are from the baron's time in the picture. This type of depiction was very fashionable in the 18th century: they are **souvenirs brought back by tourists**. What do you bring back when you travel somewhere?
- In the marble hallway, admire **the view of the mountains**. In your opinion, what did tourists come looking for in Switzerland? Which places did they see? What activities did they come to engage in? Imagine which routes they travelled, and what means of transport were available to them.

Château de Prangins.

- In the marble hallway, do you know / have you already visited **the iconic Swiss places** shown in the prints on the walls? Do you have any objects at home that contain depictions of famous places? Plates, pictures, posters, etc.?
- In the library, identify the scientific works and the busts: present the **dissemination of scientific knowledge in the 18th century**, both through figures such as von Haller and de Saussure, and by looking at the favoured areas: the Alps, the natural sciences, etc.
- In the exhibition *Chintz. How a Fabric Conquered the World*, in the study centre, open the “Architecture” drawer and look at the “Monuments of Paris”. Suggest a design for the motifs of your town/village.

Further activities after the visit

- **Writing exercise:** imagine a dialogue or correspondence between Matilda and/or Louis-François Guiguer and an English friend who wants to stay at the château while following the route of the Grand Tour.
- **History – geography:** study the must-see destinations on the Grand Tour: what did people visit there? Were they the same routes/cities/monuments that people like to visit today?
- **Group discussion on mass tourism** and its impact on the environment.

Tour suggestion

- *Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Château in the 18th Century:* guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour. Activity booklet and audioguide (ages 6 and over) free of charge. Meet in the hallway – paintings of iconic places in Switzerland; in the small dining room – tourist views of Rome.
- *Let the Journey Begin!:* guided tour (booking required) with suitcase game activity or self-guided tour: small kiosk at the landing stage to learn more about the souvenirs that people brought back from their travels (ages 4 and over)
- In the exhibition *Décors. Masterpieces from the Collections:* guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour in the “Middle-class living room”: souvenir objects such as tableware and glassware are on show in the display case.
- *What is Switzerland?:* guided tour (booking required) or self-guided tour in the “In search of identity” and “Peak time” rooms to learn how a “Swiss identity” was forged, especially through the eyes of the first tourists, and find out more about mountaineering.

Château de Prangins.

Activity sheet to print out

Antechamber

1. (Mark the correct response(s))
On the floor, the giant reproduction of the plan shows part of the lands and buildings belonging to the barony of Prangins in the 18th century. What can you find on the plan?
 - a. a vineyard
 - b. orchards
 - c. a kitchen garden

2. Also on the floor is a reproduction of the blazon of the barons of Prangins. What do you think the crown and lion symbolise?

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Model room

3. Look at the model of Château de Prangins in the 18th century. Which parts of the building remind you of a medieval fortress?

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Butler's pantry

4. Given that the servants' bedrooms were most often in the château's attic (under the roof), why were their places of work close to the reception rooms (dining room, living room, etc.)?

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Small dining room

5. At this time there was no central heating. How did people keep warm in the winter? Look around you.

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6. In the 18th century, rich families had products shipped to them from faraway countries. What are these very expensive drinks? Why? Find some clues in the room.

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Château de Prangins.

Large dining room

7. (Mark the correct response(s))

This dining room was only used in summer. How can you guess that?

- a. There is no fireplace.
- b. The room is made of marble, a material that stays cool.
- c. There is a fountain.

8. (Mark the correct response(s))

In the 18th century, the nobility didn't work. They spent a lot of time entertaining themselves, especially in this room. What were their favourite pastimes? Find the clues around you.

- a. dance
- b. music
- c. karaoke
- d. formal dinners
- e. theatre
- f. yoga

Salon

9. Family portraits of the baron and baroness of Prangins adorn the wall. At the top, in the middle, are Louis-François and his wife Matilda Guiguer. What objects is the baron shown with? What about the baroness? Name four and discuss these depictions.

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10. In the 18th century, electric lighting hadn't yet been invented. Count the objects in the room that were used to provide light at the time. Name at least two.

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The marble hallway

11. Can you recognise the mountains through the glass? What famous summit can you see?

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Château de Prangins.

Study

12. (Mark the correct response(s))

The baron and baroness of Prangins spent a lot of time writing letters and their journal. What did people write with back then?

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Library

13. (Mark the correct response(s))

What type(s) of books can be found on the shelves of Louis-François Guiguer's library?

- a. an encyclopaedia
- b. a detective story
- c. a travelogue
- d. a collection of fables
- e. a history book
- f. a work on natural history
- g. a cookery book

14. (Mark the correct response(s))

Some items indicate that Louis-François Guiguer was an educated man and wanted to show it. What are they?

- a. He has an extensive library.
- b. He has himself pictured with books and a globe.

15. What was your favourite object in the exhibition? Why?

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Château de Prangins.

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All tours and workshops must be booked in advance by contacting info.prangins@museenational.ch

Admission to Château de Prangins – Swiss National Museum is free to all school pupils, accompanied by their teacher. One guided activity is also offered per day and pupil; if a second activity is required, this will be offered for the entire class at a price of CHF 80.

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