NATIONAL LIBRARY of IRELAND

Using www.nli.ie/yeats as a classroom resource

What is the purpose of this guide?

This introductory guide is intended to help you and your class to get the most out of the National Library's latest digital resource – its Yeats website, www.nli.ie/yeats. It explains the purpose of the website, outlines how to use the site and suggests a number of ways it can be used within the classroom, at primary and post-primary level.

What is this website?

The website is the virtual form of the Library's award-winning exhibition *Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats* which opened in May 2006. The exhibition is about WB Yeats, his work and the Ireland he lived in. While the physical exhibition is due to close in 2010, the virtual exhibition will remain online, making all of the exhibition's resources available to a worldwide audience on a permanent basis. As well as allowing visitors to explore the exhibition as they would if they visited in person, the site also makes use of its web format to allow virtual visitors to interact with the exhibition and search across its content in a way that they cannot within the physical exhibition space.

What does this website contain?

The short answer is 'a lot'! Essentially, this content-rich website reproduces the exhibition's physical material (books, manuscripts, photographs) digitally. It also reproduces the 'born digital' information which supports the physical material in the exhibition; this includes applications such as a timeline of the major dates and events in the life of WB Yeats, detailed caption information and additional photographic material. As well as textual information, the website also includes excerpts of the documentary footage which was specially commissioned for the exhibition.

In summary, www.nli.ie/yeats is a rich resource for teachers and students across a range of disciplines, in particular primary SESE and language and post-primary English and History.

How is the website organised?

The website's layout mirrors that of the physical exhibition space so finding your way around the site is logical and straightforward, even if you have never visited the exhibition in person.

Navigation is controlled using the toolbar on the bottom of the screen:

The map in the right hand corner of the toolbar shows you your location relative to the rest of the exhibition. The exhibition follows the story of Yeats' life around the room in an anti-clockwise direction; to tour the exhibition chronologically, turn to your right upon entry. You can move around the virtual exhibition in this way using the central compass device or you can go directly to a particular area by selecting it from the **areas** or **interactives** menus. You can also locate exhibition items, featured individuals or themes using the **search** function. The supporting **timeline** of major dates and events can be accessed at any time, either through the **interactives** menu or using the 'timeline' button at the bottom of the screen that appears at each interactive area.

The website's intuitive layout gives students the opportunity to discover and explore the exhibition for themselves, following their own interests at their own pace. There are, literally, thousands of opportunities for students to interact with the site's featured content. The accompanying exercises and lesson plans have been designed to encourage students to interact with this material in a focussed way.

Technical requirements

A broadband internet connection and Adobe Flash Player are required to view this site. Users whose computers have a sound card will also be able to listen to the website's audio content. The accompanying exercises do not require student access to a printer, however, teachers may need to download and print off activity sheets in advance of the lesson.

How can teachers use this website?

While there is nothing to compare to a real visit to the exhibition, teachers and their classes can derive great benefits from this website. Some teachers have found it helpful to use the site as an 'advance organiser' to give their class a preview of the exhibition and help them to prepare for their 'real' visit to the Library. (You will find downloadable pre-visit resources to assist you towards this end in the 'education' section of www.nli.ie)

We have also compiled a number of suggested web-based activities for use after the class has visited the Library to help consolidate learning done in the exhibition. These activities can also be used by classes who are unable to visit the Library – in this way the website also offers visitors a stand-alone learning experience.

How do the exhibition and website relate to the national curricula?

The real and virtual exhibitions support the objectives of the national curricula across several subject areas including History, Geography, language and ICT. To help you and your class to get the most out of the website, we have prepared a number of suggested activities which integrate the site and its content across these subject areas. These

activities have been designed so that they can be used by small groups of pupils working either at multiple computers or using one computer as part of a series of 'stations'.

Help and feedback

We want the website, guide and suggested activities to be as easy to use and as beneficial to your class as possible. If you or your students have any queries or suggestions (including ideas about how else the website can be used in class), we would really like to hear them. Please email Sarah at sshiel@nli.ie or call us on (01) 6030346**.**

We would eventually like to have a web gallery which features work done by primary school classes using the Yeats website and welcome 'donations' of virtual art- and project-work to display: these can be sent as .jpg files to the same email address or on CD to Yeats Website, Education and Outreach Department, National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.