

BONJOUR MADAME DE POMPADOUR

Teachers' Notes

French Language Workshop for Key stage 2
at the Wallace Collection

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'Mme de Pompadour excelled at an art which the majority of human beings thoroughly despises because it is unprofitable and ephemeral: the art of living'.

Nancy Mitford

Step back into time, to the 18th century and meet Mme de Pompadour. A native French speaker who will encourage pupils to speak in French, and each session is adapted to the ability of your group. Pupils learn new vocabulary and the session gives them a glimpse into life at King Louis XV's extravagant court. This workshop is aimed at key stage 2 and lasts one hour.

Madame de Pompadour, 1721 - 1764

Born Jeanne Antoinette Poisson in Paris, she was beautiful, intelligent, well-educated and appreciated literature and theatre. She also studied music, dancing and painting. She liked to claim that when she was 9 years old her mother took her to a fortune teller who predicted that she would one day reign over the heart of a king. In 1745 she was introduced to the court of Versailles and soon thereafter became King Louis XV's official mistress, and was awarded the title of Marquise. She was his friend, aide and advisor, even taking charge of his official schedule. She had many political enemies, but she was careful not to alienate the queen, was friendly to her and encouraged the king to spend time with his children. She is credited with having a decisive role in making Paris the capital of taste and fashion, and she was a major patron of architecture, the arts and decorative arts including porcelain.

Introduction

At the start of the visit the group is brought upstairs and prepared to meet the Marquise. They learn how to greet her properly so as not to offend her but never fear, no group fails to impress her. The Marquise will introduce herself and ask some of the children to introduce themselves, telling her their names and ages, and she will talk a little about her life and where she lived.



The vocabulary includes: *Je m'appelle, j'habite à Londres, le roi, les amis.*

François Boucher, *A Summer Pastoral*, France, 1749

The Wallace Collection is the perfect setting for a meeting with Mme de Pompadour, for although she never travelled to England, she would have felt quite at home surrounded as she is here with beautiful 18th-century French furniture, porcelain and paintings. Indeed many of these objects actually originally belonged to her. Mme de Pompadour will lead your pupils over to look at paintings by her favourite artist François Boucher, and the group will learn the names of the various colours and talk about what they see. Mme de Pompadour will encourage the pupils to tell her what they do and do not like, using vocabulary like: *J'aime, je déteste, j'adore*, and *je n'aime pas*. Other vocabulary will be such as: *la campagne, les animaux, une chèvre, les moutons*. Pupils will be encouraged to use short sentences and phrases in French, for example *ma couleur préférée est*. Mme de Pompadour likes helping pupils with their pronunciation. She may also ask the group if they like music and whether any pupils learn instruments. Depending on time and the group's dynamic they will also be able to learn a very simple French song with hand gestures to help the memory, "*Ainsi font, font les marionnettes*" (See over)



François Boucher, *Madame de Pompadour*, France, 1759

Mme de Pompadour will then lead the group to her own portrait, painted by Boucher, where she is shown in the same dress along with her pet dog Inès. She will invite some of the students to tell her if they have any pets and their names.

Vocabulary: *un chien, une chienne, un chat, une chatte, un cochon d'inde, un poisson rouge.*



Studio of Louis-Michel van Loo, *Louis XV*, c. 1761 - 1771, Oil on canvas

The group meets Louis XV, and bow and curtsy to him, (*faire une révérence*). The king's portrait is looked at and discussed by the group. Vocabulary used will include: *une épée, une couronne*, and *le trône*. Then Mme de Pompadour will show the pupils some Sèvres porcelain from the factory that she and the king patronised. The group will then have an opportunity to draw something that they admire in the room, and naturally Mme de Pompadour is only too happy to pose if asked.



Ainsi font, font, font



Vocabulary List:

- **Les couleurs:** bleu, rouge, jaune, noir, rose, vert, orange.
- **Les chiffres:** un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix, onze, douze, treize, quatorze, quinze.
- **Les animaux:** une chèvre, un chat, un chien, un poisson rouge, un cochon d'Inde, un mouton, une vache.
- **Le corps:** une main, un pied, la tête, les jambes.
- **Les instruments de musique:** le violon, le piano, la guitare, la flûte.
- Le Roi, la Reine, la Marquise. Une couronne, une épée, un trône.
- Une fille, un garçon, un enfant, un ami, une amie.
- J'aime, je n'aime pas, je déteste, j'adore.
- Une maison, un château, un palais, un jardin.
- **Les Vêtements:** une robe, les chaussures, un pantalon, une chemise.
- **Les verbes:** suivre, marcher, s'asseoir, regarder, faire une révérence, chanter, parler.