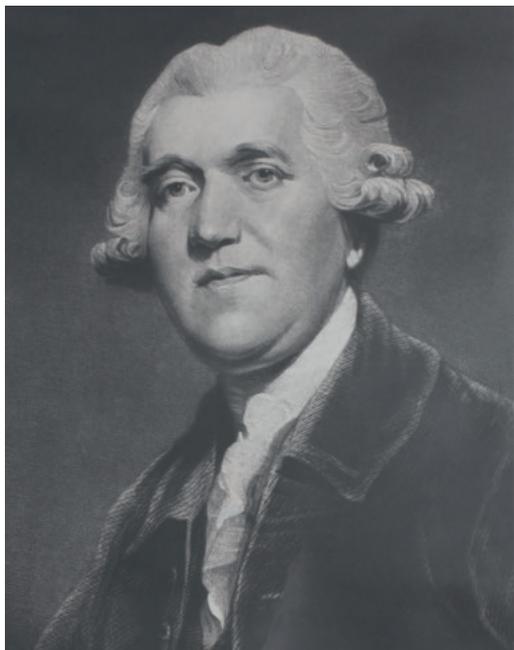


Josiah Wedgwood

'Am I not a man and a brother?'

Josiah Wedgwood was born into a family of potters in 1730. During his childhood he caught smallpox and suffered from a range of disabilities throughout his life. Despite this, he began to work in the family business at the age of 9.



Josiah Wedgwood ©The Wedgwood Museum

When he was 29 he decided to set up his own business making a wide range of products, including vases, dinner services, jugs, bowls and trinket boxes. He was curious about how new scientific techniques could improve his pottery, and his work soon became famous. During his career, he made items for Queen Charlotte and Catherine the Great of Russia.



Jasper Portland Vase, late 18th Century ©The Wedgwood Museum

He is probably best known for developing a type of pottery called 'Jasper', which was strongly coloured, perhaps green, black or yellow, but most famously blue, with white scenes applied to the surface. This proved incredibly popular and is still on sale today.

Wedgwood is known for making much more than pottery. He was curious about all areas of life, and his projects included developing a pyrometer, a device that measured the high temperatures in his kilns, and working out how to run the most efficient factory possible.

He had huge interest in politics, and was an active member of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery from 1787. He also produced a famous medallion that was given by him to supporters of the Abolition of Slavery campaign. It featured a kneeling slave, and had the words, 'Am I not a Man and a Brother?' around the edge. Many supporters of the anti-slavery movement wore these medallions to publicly show their support.



Wedgwood Slave Medallion
circa 1787 ©The Wedgwood Museum

Josiah Wedgwood died in 1795 and is best remembered as a great innovator who used his talents to create ceramics that were both beautiful and timeless.

Glossary

- Smallpox** A viral infection that killed many Europeans during the 18th century.
- Medallion** A circular piece of pottery, which may have been attached to clothing or displayed.
- Ceramics** The art of making products from clay or similar materials.

• • • Josiah Wedgwood Activity Sheet

Slogans



Josiah Wedgwood's anti-slavery medallion contained an early example of a catchy slogan, 'Am I not a Man and a Brother?'

1. Make a class list of effective slogans that we hear today, e.g. Make Poverty History. Discuss what makes a good slogan.
2. Use the *Have your say!* sheet on the back of this lesson card to design slogan badges and t-shirts. A PDF of this sheet is also available to download at www.bridgetowerproject.org.

Form a campaign group

Josiah Wedgwood believed that he should speak out about issues that concerned him. One example of this is his work to support the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

1. Look at contemporary pressure groups. Some good examples are Oxfam (oxfam.org), Amnesty International (amnesty.org) and Greenpeace (greenpeace.org.uk). There is still even a campaign against slavery (antislavery.org).

- How do these groups get their message across?
- What do they actually do?
- How are they funded?
- What sort of image do they have?
- Whose attention are they trying to get?

2. Get into groups of 4-5 and discuss what issues you think are the most important in current society. Select one that your group would like to focus on.
3. Use the CAMPAIGN! sheet on this lesson card to develop a campaign group.
4. Make posters, leaflets or even short films and websites to publicise your campaign.
5. The sky's the limit: why not get involved in a real campaign, or see how far you can take your own pressure group?

Make a Bill of Rights for Britain



The USA has a constitution that guarantees certain rights (e.g. freedom of speech) to its citizens. The UK has never had a formal constitu-

tion, but many politicians think we should draw one up. Josiah Wedgwood was certainly keen that we should be given more rights. Gordon Brown has indicated that he may do this during his time as Prime Minister.

1. Investigate the US constitution through the web link at www.bridgetowerproject.org.
2. Draw up a model constitution that lists ten rights that you think all people should have.
3. When you have decided, compare your list to a partner's. What are the similarities and differences? Think about the effects your rights may have on the whole of society. How can we create rights that don't make other people's lives more difficult?
4. Discuss your choices as a class. Can you all agree on a final list of ten items? Why not have a formal debate, in which class members argue for and against different issues that they think should be included. Don't forget to vote at the end – assuming that your constitution agrees with democracy!

Become Wedgwood pottery



Josiah Wedgwood's Jasper was famous for being decorated with figures representing well known stories.

1. Look at the pictures of Wedgwood Jasper pottery at www.bridgetowerproject.org
2. Can you make tableaux (groups of people posing together, like living photos) to match the stories on the pots?
3. Choose a famous story and in groups, create a tableau that represents it. Think about fairy stories, myths, historical events, or even current news items.
4. Share your tableaux with other people by photographing them. You could display them by sticking them onto vase shapes. If you really want to look like Wedgwood pottery, you could consider dressing in white clothes and posing against a blue background.
5. Could you perform your tableaux in front of the school in assembly? Perhaps you could make a series of tableaux to show different stages of a story.