

## Winchester Mystery House Project Kit

Congratulations! You're going to the Winchester Mystery House! Use these project ideas to enrich your educational experience. Read through them before you go to make sure you understand the terms and concepts, and to help you determine if you want to expand upon any of them. **You'll find fun facts and printable worksheets at the end of this packet.**

a- elementary level activity    b- middle school level activity    c- high school level activity

### **Language Arts**

The Winchester House inspires the imagination. What would it have been like to live there? Or even just visit as a guest of the house? Use your surroundings and your imagination to create a piece of fictional writing.

- a. Draw a storybook or write a short story with illustrations inspired by the house.
- b. Write a short story inspired by your visit, including a main character and the main elements of a story (setting, plot, conflict, and resolution).
- c. Choose between writing a fictional first-person narrative or a screenplay inspired by your visit.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil

Submission: A copy of your writings/drawing, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

### **Applied Math**

The engineering and design of the Winchester House is incredible. Everywhere you look there is visual math. Notice the geometry in the designs, the accuracy of the engineering, and all the application of math all around you. Every artisan who worked on the estate had to be proficient in math. Find applications for mathematical thinking and calculation all around you.

- a. Go on a shape hunt. Draw and label the shapes you find. Also, draw a representation of at least two patterns you find.
- b. Look closer at one aspect of the house. It can be anything: room design, general layout, a hallway or staircase, etc. Detail the math it would take to create it. Try to identify at least one part of your chosen area which would require math or skill beyond your current understanding. What could you do to learn that skill?
- c. Math is everywhere. Imagine you are one of the artisans working at the house. Describe your project and what you would need to know and do to complete it. Choose at least one application of math that you see, estimate measurements, and use calculations to show how the artisan designed and created that element.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil, calculator or smartphone (optional)

Submission: Your calculations, estimations, and conclusions, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

## **Science**

Art and architecture mirrors the beauty of science, and this can be seen all throughout the house. Take a closer look at the tapestries, rugs, carvings, sculptures, paintings, designs, and architecture. What representations of science can you find? Can you see their reverence for astronomy, anatomy, biology, physics, etc. in their work?

- a. Inspired by a science-related work of art and architecture at the house, design and draw/build your own art or building design. Make sure to include aspects of science and aesthetics in your piece.
- b. Draw a picture of one of the pieces of art or instances of architecture you found which depicts science. What is it showing? Why do you think the artist chose to represent that particular aspect of science through their artwork?
- c. Identify a representation of science at the house. Describe what is being represented. Try to find and describe differences in what they understood about science when the piece was created and what we know now? How does this piece and its science add to the beauty, wonder, and mystery of the house.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil

Submission: A copy of your drawings, diagrams, or designs, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

## **Social Studies**

The Winchester House has a rich history. Visit [www.winchestermysteryhouse.com](http://www.winchestermysteryhouse.com) and learn more about the house's history. When was it built? How long did it take to build? Who originally owned it and why did she build it? How has it been used over the years? Why is this house significant?

- a. Write or draw about the beginnings of the house and what it might have been like to have been there.
- b. Choose one person who was influential to the history of the house and detail who they were and their importance to the castle.
- c. Choose one area of the house to study. Detail its significance and its history, including individual aspects of its design.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil, smartphone (optional)

Submission: A copy of your writings/drawings, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

# FUN FACTS

- The Winchester Mystery House covers 6 acres with 160 rooms, 40 bedrooms, 13 bathrooms, 47 fireplaces, 6 kitchens, 40 staircases, 3 elevators, 10,000 windows, 2,000 doors, 52 skylights, 2 basements, and 1 shower.
- Sarah spent over \$5 million building and rebuilding the bizarre Winchester House.
- When Sarah died, construction stopped abruptly. Even now, there are unfinished rooms, walls, and even nails in the house; aside from maintenance and regular repainting, it remains largely unchanged from then.
- Sarah was very superstitious. There are 13 bathrooms; 13 palm trees line the driveway; most of the windows have 13 panes; a sink drain has 13 holes; a chandelier that originally had 12 lights was modified to have 13; and so on. It is also frequently said that she slept in a different bedroom every night.
- When the great earthquake struck San Francisco, part of the Winchester house was damaged, including the bedroom in which Mrs. Winchester was sleeping that night. Although she was unharmed, she believed the spirits were trying to tell her something. As a result she had the front portion of the house blocked off, and continued construction elsewhere.
- Construction on the house continued for 38 years!
- Sarah had elaborate spying systems built into the house so she could watch the workers, and regularly spooked them so badly that they started believing she could walk through walls, teleport, etc.
- Sarah was only 4 feet, 10 inches (147cm) tall, but was reputed to be charming, intelligent, and beautiful.

## Winchester Mystery House

1. Draw a picture of your favorite piece of art in the house.



2. Describe your favorite art and why you love it.

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3. What is one thing you learned about Sarah Winchester?

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4. Draw an architectural aspect you thought was interesting.



5. Describe or draw landscaping you thought was interesting.



6. How many rooms were you able to see on your tour?

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BONUS:

Winchester Scavenger Hunt!

- Something gold \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that you can eat on \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that hangs \_\_\_\_\_
- Something old \_\_\_\_\_
- Something smaller than your hand \_\_\_\_\_
- Something larger than your car \_\_\_\_\_
- Something modern \_\_\_\_\_
- Something that holds water \_\_\_\_\_
- Something with triangles \_\_\_\_\_
- Something made out of wood \_\_\_\_\_
- Something made out of glass \_\_\_\_\_

