

**Art lesson:
Walking over the time, Art as a message to locate,
understand and decode.**



Visit to “Ajutamicristo Palace” – Palermo

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Summary

Very often, when we walk around the streets of our historic centres, we don't pause to think about the stories, events, inventions and efforts that monuments, palaces and churches can hide. Or even the tangle of lanes leading to the popular markets, beating heart of daily life.

The aim of this learning activity is:

- to get students to observing urban environment, guiding them to locate artistic buildings, architecture and historical-social evidences.
- to provide students with tools to decode iconographic messages that art wants to show us.
- to inspire students a sense of belonging to a social-historic community.



Introduction

Two students, attending the second classes of our school carried out a real time travel, entering the hidden rooms of “Ajutamicristo Palace” one of the most prestigious buildings in Palermo, dating back over five centuries.

The Baron Vincenzo Calefati of Canalotti, last descendant of the family that owns the palace, guided the students to do their historical and artistic research, giving them all the information about the place and the people who lived there. Finally, the owner answered the students’ questions patiently.



Times

The activity was carried out in April - May in 12 hours distributed as follows:

- Introduction to the topic, preparation and organization of the activities.

Time: 3 hours

- “Visit-action” real outdoor activity.

Time: 5 hours.

- Tabulation, revision, data dissemination, transcription of the interview and final PWP.

Time: 3 hours.

Learning objectives

- Learning to observe the urban environment
- Learning to identify art styles and architecture.
- Learning to identify, observe and decode iconographic messages
- Learning to work in group.
- Learning to select information

Learning to connect all the selected information

Resources

- Camera equipment
- Audio recording equipment
- Sketchbooks, pencils and crayons.
- Block notes

Activity

First step: Preparation.

The students, guided by Italian, History and Art teachers carried out the research about the Palace and its story and drew up a list of questions to prepare the interview.



Second step: Visit-Action

The students reached the place by bus and visited the Palace in small groups. Each group was in charge of observing, taking notes, taking pictures, shooting videos and drawing everything of special importance in terms of History and Art. Particular attention was given to the Monumental Dance Hall with a vault embellished with a baroque fresco “*Triumph of the virtuous prince*”. In this fresco every human figure conceals a reference to the Prince Giovanni Luigi Moncada Ventimiglia Ruffo of Paternò, leading nobleman in Sicily at the end of XVIII century.



Third Step: Art and Life.

Interview to the Baron Vincenzo Calefati of Canalotti in order to find all the connections among art, history and his life in the Palace.



Fourth step: Final product.

Production of PWP with news, pictures, drawings and videos concerning the whole activity, including the interview

Final Remarks

Our students, autonomously and consciously, really appreciated the role of active protagonists over the time through art and history, they had a real field experience enjoying all its advantages.

Supplementary material

<https://youtu.be/peIYOYXRF7M>
<https://twinspace.etwinning.net/45380/pages/add>



