Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

SHOES FROM AROUND THE WORLD G140A

This box contains a variety of shoes from five different countries around the world.

Wooden Clog from Holland

Wooden clogs were traditionally work shoes. Being naturally water resistant, they were ideal for protecting the feet of people working in wet and muddy fields. The wearing of clogs in Holland dates back to the fourteenth century and was popular right up until the early twentieth century when materials such as rubber became more widely used. But some Dutch farm and factory workers still wear clogs, proving that they are still considered practical and safe shoes.



The clog is carved from one piece of wood, usually willow or poplar, making it very strong. There aren't any seams to let in water or need re-stitching when they fall apart.

Nothing is needed except for one piece of wood, which doesn't need to be treated in any way. Some clogs are varnished or painted for decoration, but this is not necessary for any practical reason. Once carved, the clogs are left to air-dry for six weeks so that all the moisture from the wood is drawn out and the shoes harden.



The large shoe in the box looks uncomfortable and heavy, but clogs are actually considered very comfortable and also good for your feet. Straw was traditionally placed inside to keep the feet warm and dry and the curled up toe makes walking easier. The square shaped toe is called a chisel toe.





What are the holes in the side for?
Clogs were always hung up in pairs by threading a piece of string or leather through the small holes. They are displayed in exactly the same way today in shops and are very popular souvenirs for tourists.

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Child's Wooden Clog from Holland



This tiny clog has been made in a similar way to the adult Dutch shoe. It also has a chisel toe and a hole in the side so it could be hung up. Look at the marks on the heel from the carving process. A simple decorative pattern has been carved into the top layer of wood.

Wooden Clog from France



Look inside the black French clog and you will see the carving marks right down to the toe. The outside has been painted black and decorated with a carved pattern. It is more delicate than the Dutch clog and would have been worn by a woman. Interestingly, there is a leather strap attached to the clog with nails but the majority of clogs don't have this extra strap.

French clogs are called sabot and, according to one story,this is where we get the word sabotage. Apparently, the French factory workers threw their sabot into the machines to stop them working. They sabotaged them!

Leather Bootee from Africa

This leather bootee was made in a traditional way. It has been hand stitched using only four pieces of soft brown leather and has no hard sole. Unfortunately we don't have any information as to which country in Africa it comes from.



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Sandal from Singapore



This sandal is a modern design that is based on a traditional style called the geta. The geta comes from Japan, but can be seen in other countries across Asia. It consists of a wooden board, called a *dai*, which acts as the sole. The *dai* is then raised off the ground by two teeth, seen in the picture on the right. The teeth make a 'clacking' sound when walking. The whole sandal is held in place with a 'V' shaped thong, which goes between the toes like a flip-flop. This modern version has a single patent leather strap across the toes and a curvy-shaped *dai*.



Red Leather Shoe from Turkey



Visit a traditional Turkish market today and you will be confronted with a vibrant scene, including coloured *kutnu* fabrics (pictured right), strong smelling spices and piles of objects made from leather, including Yemeni slippers. The small red shoe with the pointed toe is a child's Yemeni slipper - the traditional hand-stitched shoe worn in Turkey. The photograph on the right shows a slipper being made. The leather is very soft, making it easy to shape and comfortable to wear. The sole of the shoe is probably made from the hide of the water-buffalo in the traditional way.





Embroidered Leather Shoe from West Africa



The West African shoe is very well worn. The back seems to have been trodden down so that the shoe could be slipped on easily. The upper part is made from two pieces of leather, which have been hand-stitched together at the side. Look closely at the bottom of this shoe - notice there is still some hair attached to the leather.