



MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

education

Supporting teaching and learning across the curriculum

Science



CREATING SPARKS: Early electricity and the lightning conductor

Key Stage: 4 and AS/A2

Length: 1-2 hours (adaptable)

Maximum number: See [Planning a visit](#)

This facilitated session is intended to give pupils an insight into the development of early ideas about electricity. These include theories about electrostatic charge and the nature of lightning.

Students will explore the development of theories of electricity from the early concept of fluids to later ideas about charges. They will gain insight into challenges of developing new scientific concepts from a historical perspective.

The session includes a dramatic demonstration of an early electrostatic generating machine and some of the popular experiments that were done in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Students will hear the story of Benjamin Franklin and his discovery of the electrical nature of lightning and invention of the lightning conductor.

A follow-up activity will give students the opportunity to carry out their own electrostatic experiments with simple home-made devices.

This session offers particular insights into **how science works** and support for **ideas and evidence** at GCSE.



For booking and further information contact the Education Officer:

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