A resource designed to make links between schools and the Serpentine Galleries’ 2015 Summer exhibition programme.

These suggested activities take Duane Hanson’s (1925–1996) lifelike sculptures portraying the working lives of Americans as their starting point. Writer Natasha Soobramanien uses the theme of labour to explore links between the subjects of English and Art and Design.

This resource is designed to use out on a visit to the Serpentine Galleries and then inside your classroom when you return.

You can find out more about the exhibitions here:

www.serpentinegalleries.org
Inside

Writing is a form of labour — a physical effort.

Refuse this labour.

Print out a text on the topic of work. Lydia Davis’s City Employment is good.*

Blow it up on the photocopier. A3 works well.

Work on it — do something physical to it.

Cut out or scribble over certain words.

Draw over the text. Rip it up.

What are you left with?
Use the fragments.
Repeat with different texts.

Out

At the gallery, choose a sculpture.

Take a few moments to observe it closely.

Pay attention to every detail.

Make a list of everything you notice, all the activities associated with this person’s job, the things they might be thinking.

Swap your list with someone else.

Take a notebook and make similar lists about people you see in the supermarket, on the bus or in the park.

When you get home write a list of questions to help you find out more about the people close to you and their working lives inside or outside of the home.

Now try and capture the work that you do in the home day after day.

Describe the ‘obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise’***
