



Warning words

This activity examines the dangers – and accompanying vocabulary – associated with electricity. It uses the ‘Do not touch’ exhibit as a starting point for discussion, but could be adapted quite easily to other exhibits on the gallery.

You will need

- Paper
- Pencils
- Coloured marker pens

Steps

1

Ask your pupils to work out why the exhibit is called ‘Do not touch’.

2

Ask your pupils to think of other situations where small electrical charges are used to provide warnings (e.g. electric fences, cattle prods, etc.).

3

Ask your pupils to write their own warnings – or create symbols for people who cannot read – about the dangers of electricity.

4

Place the warning signs on the floor and ask others to comment on their effectiveness.

Analysis/ discussion

**Why do we have warning signs?
Shouldn't we all be responsible for
our own safety?**

**Can you think of any instances in
nature where the warning signs are
clear?**

**Why is it normally a bad idea to
ignore warning signs?**



Warning words: background information

'Do not touch' is an interactive artwork by the artist Christian Moeller. It is on display in the Energy gallery at the Science Museum. This artwork is made up of many unusual materials including a rubber sign, computer-generated warning sounds and a tall metal pole with electricity running through it.

When viewing this artwork you're faced with a tricky decision: should I touch it or not? The signs on the floor say 'Do not touch', but there's no barrier there to stop you. Will you be put off by the warning sound that grows as you approach the pole? If you actually poke your fingers through the bars you will receive a mild electric shock. And you can't say nobody warned you!