

History

Making every child matter

We are, of course, all part of history – our own and others' – and we can't avoid it even if we try! But how can we set out the historical landscape in front of the children and make the big ideas explicit in our teaching? We hope what follows will do just that ...

Years 3/4 unit 10 and Years 5/6 unit 15 Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt: children use their own experience, particularly of being at school, as a springboard to find out about the influence that the ancient Greeks and Egyptians continue to have on our lives

'What have the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians ever done for us?'



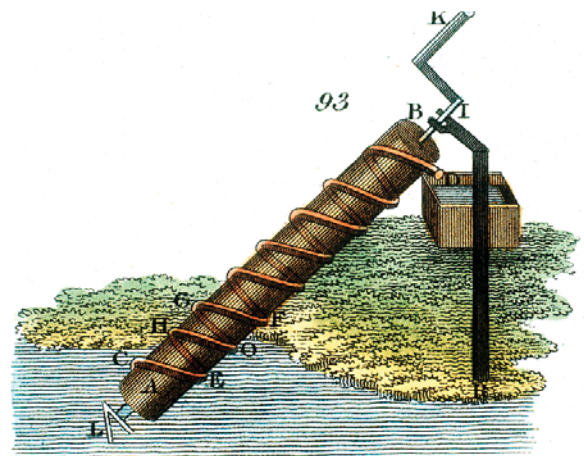
Photo: © Ann Ronan/Heritage-Images

The big ideas: how history contributes to Every Child Matters

Years 5/6 unit 19 The Tudors: investigating one of the explorers in depth

'How should we remember Sir John Hawkins?'

Children investigate the life of the famous Elizabethan seadog and slave trader, designing the kind of monument Elizabethans might have created for him, and comparing this to how we would commemorate him and his African victims now.



Archimedes' screw

Photo: © the British Library

Using a variety of material, half the class create mindmaps on sugar paper showing how ancient Greek ideas are still important in the modern world; the other half do the same

for the ancient Egyptians. The groups swap mindmaps and the teacher leads a discussion as to which ancient people the modern world owes more.

Years 3/4 unit 5 Romans, Saxon and Vikings in Britain: considering the effects of the invasion and settlement of the Romans on Britain



'How do we know who was buried at Sutton Hoo?'

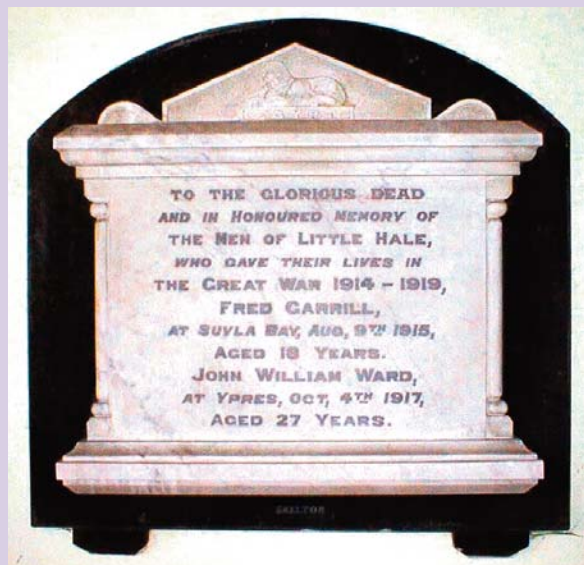
In teams, children look at the archaeological sources from the Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo and decide whether they support King Readwald or King Siegebert as most likely to have been buried there. They discuss the rival sets of evidence for each king, concluding by taking a vote.



Years 3/4 unit 18 Britain since 1930 and Local History: an enquiry-based approach to a local study *'What was it like to live here in the 1950s?'*

Children interview a local person who was resident in the locality during the 1950s. Using their testimony, cross-referenced with old photographs and newspapers, the children locate sites unchanged since the 1950s. Take photos of them in costumes and in role as people from the time at these sites.

Teaching history at key stage 1: Why, who, what, how ...?



'What are we doing this for?' I was asked, as we entered the churchyard to look at the local war memorial. The curiosity and directness of a six-year-old child is guaranteed to pull one up short – a reminder that for young children, everything is to be discovered! So how can we build upon the children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm? Well, good teachers make history come alive. The visit to the war memorial not only ticked several National Curriculum boxes but, I like to think, did it in an engaging and memorable way.

Teaching history at key stage 1 can be a real pleasure. All human life is there: our understanding of ourselves is tied up with our understanding of our past: history is the essential ingredient. But then I am passionate about history and biased, and I need to ask myself: what is really happening in my classroom? Why are we doing this? Who is it for? What is the best way to do it? Did it work? Do we want to do it again? If not, why not? How do I ensure I provide opportunities to develop those five National Curriculum elements of

chronological understanding, knowledge of people and events, historical interpretation, historical enquiry, and communicating knowledge?

In our school we are developing a thematic curriculum based around key questions. Here history comes into its own: cross-curricular links are abundant. We've found the key to success is to try to keep them simple and relevant. In Year 1, finding out about the past can literally be a hands-on experience. A local museum supplies us with dolly tub, scrubbing brushes, aprons, caps, clothes pegs, washing line, washtub and mangle and the home corner quickly becomes a centre for speaking and listening and doing history. At another point in the year, the willingness of staff or grandparents to come in and share their childhood memories and toys brings an added dimension: even the basis for a classroom museum¹.

¹ You can find out more about setting up a classroom museum at:

www.campaignformuseums.org.uk/miclass/html/mi_class/classroom.htm

www.hilaryclaire.co.uk/History_Publications/MuseumClass.pdf

How do we remember the past?

The key question is 'How do we remember the past?' I believe in the importance of story: the piecing together of our past as a patchwork of memories. For small children the story of the past becomes vivid when focused upon an investigation of a particular person's past. A photograph, some clothes or belongings are all that is needed. A photograph of a young man in uniform, a beret, badge, medals, a Red Cross nurse's apron and a photo of a group of laughing VADs (Voluntary Aid Detachments) provided the children with opportunities to develop their investigative skills. Which brings me back to standing beside the war memorial for 'The Great War 1914-1918' and the beginning of this piece – but that is another story.

Cathy McIlroy is a key stage 1 teacher and history co-ordinator.



History matters for every child, parent or guardian and teacher because:



perspectives. Where in your planning do children make choices about what they study?

For example: Let your children plan an investigation: brainstorm the questions to ask and decide what to find out. Let them work out the 'big questions' they want to ask about – children in World War 2 for example – and then help them find the answers. This helps develop independent study skills, as well as 'personalising' learning.

History promotes creativity

Firmly rooted in historical fact, history encourages creativity, empathy and imagination. It is a 'safe' way for young children to explore uncertainty. Where in your planning do children use their imagination?

For example: children like being detectives – ask them to look for deliberate mistakes in a story. This is a great way to understand historical events and develop a 'feel' for a period or situation.

History is fun

Children enjoy the story, drama, intrigue and excitement created by effective teaching and learning in history. Does your planning make the most of links into literacy and drama?

For example: Children love heroes and villains. Focus on the contribution of a particular person to an event. What made them do what they did? Why did they do it? Did they expect the result, or did they expect something different? Questions like this help to move children away from the 'inevitability' of history into the dynamics, the human involvement, the uncertainty and the fun!

History shapes us all

We are the result of a shared past that gives us a sense of local, regional and national identity. Where in your planning do children have opportunities to explore their own history?

For example: Using images of local street scenes, ask children what they can hear or smell. Help to transport their imaginations into another time and think about how people in the past viewed changes. Did they like them? Or hate them? Which aspects of change would they welcome? This helps children see people as three-dimensional and so makes them think harder about the impact of any changes.

History is the cement that binds society together

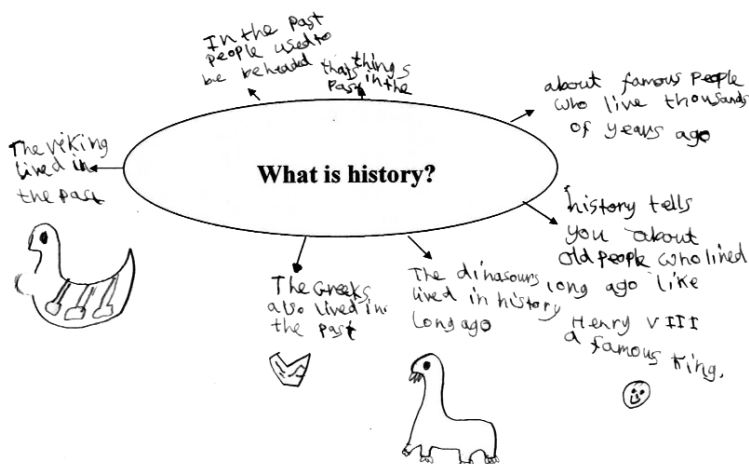
History can help heal the wounds inflicted by racism, nationalism, sectarianism and fundamentalism. Where in your planning do children put themselves into others' places?

For example: When you are telling the children about a historical event, stop the action at key points and ask questions: 'What is happening?' 'Who is where?' 'What are they thinking?' 'What will they do next?' These all require active

learning responses that fully engage children.

History is a thinking tool

It empowers us to question, investigate, explore and create our own understanding of the past from many different



History and the Primary National Strategy

History maps beautifully on to the Primary National Strategy's key goals in terms of concepts, skills, processes and emotional and cognitive development, i.e. **what matters for every child.**

Who are we?

The Primary Committee is part of the Historical Association. We:

- represent the interests of those involved in teaching and learning history in the Early Years, key stage 1 and key stage 2
- publish *Primary History*, through which we promote and develop excellent practice in primary history education, each term
- organise regular CPD events across the country
- represent the interests of our members at a national level, and have an active role in developing history within the curriculum with DCSF, QCA and other national bodies.

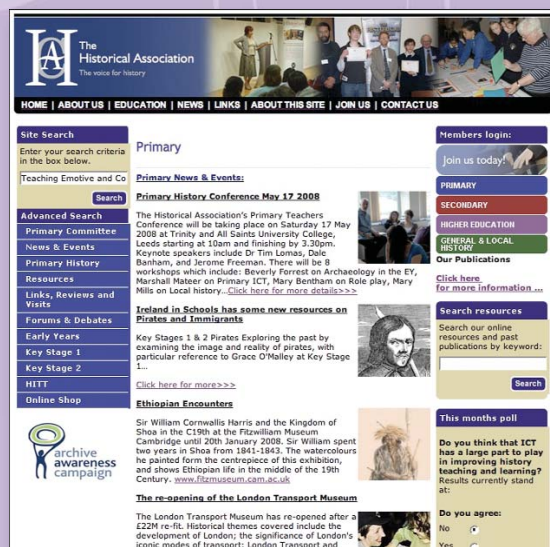
HA membership gives you:

- 12 months' online subscription to *Primary History*
- access to the Primary areas on our website
- the latest news, events, reviews, resources, message boards and forums
- online access to our archive of articles, journals, handbooks, films and classroom support
- the monthly primary e-newsletter.



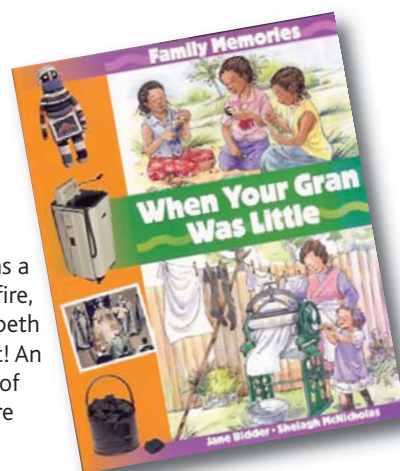
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Look out for ...

recently published *Family Memories: When Your Gran Was Little*, by Jane Bidder and Shelagh McNicholas. It is published by Franklin Watts and costs £5.99 in paperback. Several grandmothers from the 1940s and 1950s each describe an incident from their life as a child, from gathering around a coal fire, to watching the Coronation of Elizabeth II on the only television in the street! An excellent way to introduce the idea of time passing, and the illustrations are gorgeous.



The HA recently published a report – *Teaching Emotive and Controversial History 3-19* – looking at how to tackle these issues in the classroom. If you would like a copy, the report can be downloaded from our website. In the Primary area of our website (www.history.org.uk/primary.asp) you will also find some case studies and examples of good practice for key stages 1 and 2 for you to download and use in your classroom.

Archive Awareness 2008

The Archive Awareness Campaign is an ongoing celebration of all kinds of fascinating archive treasures. Hundreds of archives are planning showcases, open days, workshops and many other activities to celebrate their holdings of original documents and introduce them to new audiences. You can find out about events near you at www.archiveawareness.com, which also carries resources for schools, for example a key stage 2 resource pack and lesson plans using Victorian source material from archives across the UK (www.victorianvoices.com/resource_pack/).

coming soon ...

Primary Conference

Saturday 17th May 2008

Trinity and All Saints University College, Leeds.

- keynotes plus workshops
- archaeology in the Early Years
- ICT including using 'moviemaker' and Pathe News
- role play
- 'hands on' history
- induction for new Initial Teacher Trainers.

Places by now will be limited but contact 020 7820 5986 for last minute information.

Contact simon.brown@history.org.uk or phone 020 7820 5986. Closing date 18 April 2008

Council for Subject Associations
A Voice for Subjects

