



REMEMBRANCE DAY AT KS1

REMEMBERING THE PAST – QUESTIONING A PICTURE

This account shows how an imaginative teacher introduced a famous event in the past through personal family history. The photograph of Angela's grandfather, and the surrounding illustrations, provided a direct route into discussions about remembrance and war, then ranged wider still. The teaching relates to QCA Unit 17 'What are we remembering on Remembrance Day?'

The children's literacy was extended throughout in the areas of speaking, listening, reference skills and writing. The topic also stimulated excellent artwork by the children.

Jacqui Dean writes: Angela attended a Nuffield in-service course in Leeds, and tried out several Nuffield approaches in her teaching. In this lesson, we see two of the Nuffield principles (*Questioning* and *Economy of sources*) in action. Angela used just one source: a large coloured picture, containing a black and white photo of her grandfather in uniform, taken in 1917 during the First World War. She put questioning by her Year 2 class at the heart of the lesson by casting them as history detectives. This proved a powerful metaphor that stimulated questioning, detailed observation and the keen search for clues.

Year group/class and Teaching time

Year 2, mixed age and ability. One whole morning.

Learning objectives

For the children to:

- Develop observation skills through examining a picture closely
- Build up knowledge of Who, When, What, Where and Why from the evidence in the picture (i.e. historical knowledge, skills and understanding)
- Extend their language through questioning and discussion (Literacy)
- Communicate their findings through written accounts (Literacy).

Key question

What can we find out from the picture of Mrs Suddall's granddad?

Resources

A large coloured picture, with in the middle a black and white photograph of a man in uniform, taken in during the First World War.

Reference books.

The teaching

Episode 1

Focus: Observation and language play.

I brought from home a large framed picture of my grandfather, made during the First World War. Above his photo were the words *For King and Country*, surrounded by painted pictures and symbols.

To encourage the class to look closely at the details in the picture, I played 'I-spy' with them. I also wanted to extend their descriptive language.

The 'I-spy' was very effective; the children looked closely and thoroughly enjoyed guessing what was being referred to. Everyone could join in.

They took turns, listened well and were eager to guess.

Episode 2

Focus: Questioning the picture – history detectives.

Now I cast the children as detectives, asking questions and looking for clues in the picture. I was pleased by how many questions the children asked, and how much detail they noticed.

During the questioning and discussion, the class built up a picture of who, what, when, where and why. They asked lots of questions, and here I used the opportunity to model reference skills. (Together we searched encyclopaedias and topic books to find out e.g. who was the King, who was Britannia.) As language points arose, they were explained and discussed in context.

Children's questions included:

Who was the King?

Who was Britannia?

Why was the picture done?

Who was the artist?

What is the name of the man in the photo?

When did the Queen take over?

He's wearing a uniform - why? What kind is it?

Where's West Yorkshire?

I did not rush the children, and allowed points such as men perhaps not returning from war to be discussed, again in the context of my grandfather. All the children felt that was the reason for having the picture done – so the family could remember him if he was killed. Here we moved into the idea of posterity. (In her report Leanne wrote: *When some poeple go into the wore they get killed. They never come back. So they do a photo.*)

The children also learned about symbols. Scott wrote:
The bulldog is a sign for england. The white rose tells us it is yorkshire and The red rose tells us that it is the Penins.

Episode 3

Focus: Writing - reporting on findings.

Now the children wrote as much as they could about the man in the photo. This was an open-ended task; all could tackle it at their own level. The accounts ranged from half a page to four pages long. They were all keen to show they had worked out the most clues, been the best detectives. When they were unsure about a point they referred back to the picture, checking details – the source was at hand!

Episode 4

Focus: Art – producing own versions of the picture.

We discussed the best materials to use for the children’s drawings of the picture. I gave the class the choice. After extensive debate they decided that pencils and pencil crayons would be the best medium for reproducing the picture’s faint colours. Felt tips were too bright.

The children now drew their versions of the picture. They found the observational drawing very difficult, as they were determined to be accurate, and wanted theirs to be just like the ‘real’ one. I was pleased to see that they picked up on the date (1917) and the artist (J H Barnes).

Learning outcomes

All the learning objectives were fully met. The children:

- Developed observation skills through examining a picture closely
- Built up knowledge of Who, When, What, Where and Why from the evidence in the picture (i.e. historical knowledge, skills and understanding)
- Extended their language through questioning and discussion
- Communicated their findings through written accounts.

The children also explored concepts such as posterity, and the idea of regional and national symbols (white rose, British bulldog). Many of the children developed their chronological understanding (Scott: *There is a scroll which says for king and country which tells us the picture was taken a long time ago because we do not have a king now a days.*)

Reflection/evaluation

We all enjoyed the lesson. I felt the children learned a lot and I would definitely use it again. Its development from the initial close observation ('I-spy'), through to questions, searching for information, discussion, and ending with writing and drawing, proved very successful.

Before the lesson, I had feared that the picture might not interest the children. I needn't have worried – they were fascinated, and the picture contained enough information to enable them to write good reports, helped by the discussions we had had.

Nuffield Primary History project

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