

USING TIME LINES

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GRADE LEVEL: Elementary

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LESSON PLANS
Using Time Lines

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Young students are not capable of thinking about history in a formal manner. They learn best by hands-on experiences. Developing a concept of placement in time and a sense of chronology is difficult in view of the fact that Primary age students have only lived on this earth for eight years or less. My goal is to use some techniques to help students develop a sense of time and chronology in history.

This set of Lesson Plans is intended to be used at a grade three level. Most third grade curriculums include a study of communities in general and oft times their own community in particular. The students in Evansville have a textbook written at third grade reading level that is a history of their own city.

In part, these lessons are designed to give greater understanding to the students of their own city's history. The plans also incorporate current events, both local and worldwide. Also incorporated are the personal lives of both the individual child and that of his family.

History is the story of daily events in the lives of individuals. Individuals comprise groups - from family units to nations. Some events have significance to only one individual. Some effect the course of the world. It is hoped that students will have an enriched understanding of daily events and how those events comprise history.

We learn about the past through pictures, personal documents, reports, oral and written recollections. Revelations are made about individuals and the society in which they lived by studying original documents. These Lesson Plans feature the implications of documents as they pertain to an exploration of the past.

Credit is given to Claudia Hoone of Indianapolis whose workshop presentations have been an inspiration. The Document Enriched Classroom appearing in Hoosier Heritage of November 3, 1986 was of particular value in developing the Lesson Plans.

Lesson 1

What Is History?

Objectives

1. To develop an understanding that history is a story of the daily events in the lives of individuals, who comprise family units to nations.
2. To strengthen an understanding of the concept of history.

Opening the Lesson

Display a large banner-type display entitled History in the Making. Discuss how everyday events comprise the making of history.

Developing the Lesson

Add items from the newspaper or other periodicals over a period of several months. Discuss these current events as they are added. Put other items of a documentary nature on the display - ticket stubs, programs, handwritten accounts, pictures, etc.

Concluding the Lesson

Continue display, add documents to it, creating the understanding of the making of history.

Materials

Large banner of paper displayed in a prominent place.
Month indicators
On-going contribution of documents

Lesson 2

My Personal History

Objectives

1. To introduce and gradually build an understanding of time and chronology.
2. To recognize one's self as part of history.

Opening the Lesson

Using an imaginary child, create a time line on the chalkboard.
Create an understanding of putting dates and events in chronological order.

Developing the Lesson

Have each child develop an informal time line of their own life, using a piece of adding machine tape.
Elicit ideas as to what events are of importance.
Encourage the drawing of illustrations to accompany the time line.

Concluding the Lesson

Send a letter home to parents, asking them to assist their child in putting together a pictorial or documental time line of their own life.
Display these personal time lines as they are brought to school.
Compare time lines from different students, developing a tolerance for differences as well as likenesses in their lives.

Materials

Roll of adding machine tape.
Half sheets of poster board for any child who needs that material in creating his own time line at home.

Lesson 3

Personal Documents Chronicle Personal Lives

Objectives

1. To strengthen the concept of the importance of personal documents in exploring the past.
2. To develop an understanding of the importance of personal documents in gaining insight into personal lives and society as a whole.

Opening the Lesson

Ask each child to bring a personal document from home.

Send a letter to parents, explaining the project and giving examples of personal documents: photos, news clippings, ticket stubs, birth certificates, award certificate, ribbon or trophy, receipt, etc.

Developing the Lesson

Categorize the documents, comparing them, discussing likenesses and differences.

Let each child share their document and tell of its significance.

Concluding the Lesson

Working with a partner, have each student answer the following question about each other's document, "What does this document tell me about my classmate?" Discuss responses, leading to the conclusion that documents suggest much about an individual and society as a whole.

Materials

Several documents of your own - to get the ball rolling
Letter to parents

Lesson 4

A Time Line of Our Community's History

Objectives

1. To introduce and gradually build a more expansive understanding of time and chronology.
2. To place in historical context persons and events of the past.

Opening the Lesson

On a table or shelf, set up a free-standing time line with room for displaying objects or documents.

Share your own collection of documents with the class, placing each at the appropriate place along the time line.

Developing the Lesson

Begin sharing your own collection of documents and objects of historical interest with the students.

Have students analyze documents, concluding a time frame.

Place the documents or objects in the proper place in front of the time line.

Concluding the Lesson

Leave the time line on display so students may bring their own documents and objects for analysis and placement at the proper place along the time line.

Materials

Time line constructed in a manner that it is free-standing and durable over a period of several weeks.

Personal collection of documents and objects of a historical nature.