

Overview of Local History Unit

“Our Place in Time”

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Illinois State Standards:
16Ad, 16Dd, 18Bd

Through a study of their home through time, children will connect to the larger picture of community at the neighborhood, town, and state levels as well as understand the ongoing flow of history and their place in it.

Background lessons:

1. Urbana History plays -based on work Nancy Feir did years ago
2. Map lesson (how to read maps) –lesson from Internet
3. MTD Bus tour of town
4. Sequence changes of the prairie pictures
5. How to read, analyze and understand primary source documents

AHTC lessons:

1. Picture book lesson to introduce concept of place/home/town changing through time
Lesson Title: [History In Literature](#)
2. Sequence maps of the area (and look for own home)
Lesson Title: [Mapping Out the Past](#)
3. Interview (gather oral history) family about home (see worksheet)
Lesson Title: [Gathering Oral History](#)
Worksheet Title: [Oral History Homework](#)
4. Go to Archives and do research on their home (see worksheet)
Lesson Title: [Home History](#)
Worksheet Title: [Research Framework p1](#)
5. Locate newspaper printed the year their home was built. (see worksheet)
Lesson Title: [It was a wonderful year](#)
Worksheet Title: [Research Framework p2](#)
6. Compare/contrast past home to current home (see worksheets)
Lesson Title: [My Home -Then and Now](#)
Worksheet Title: [Comparing/Contrasting your Home](#)
Worksheet Title: [Connecting Yesterday to Today](#)
7. Create whole class time line with homes and artifacts posted
Lesson Title: [Putting it together](#)
8. Create project for open house (see rubric)
Lesson Title: [Final Project](#)
[Rubric](#)
9. Write and practice oral presentation (see rubric)
10. OPEN HOUSE
11. Bring our current pictures to the Archives to donate for future generations

History in Literature

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Our place in Time –Urbana local history
Overview of what may have been here before us

The children should begin to recognize that they are part of a living, ongoing history. They are the latest chapter in our town's book.

Materials:

The House on Maple Street
By Bonnie Pryor
New York: Mulberry Books, 1987
A Teacup and Arrowhead

Supplemental Extension Materials:

Who Came Down That Road?
By George Lyon
New York: Orchard Books, 1992
Our House
By Emma and Paul Rogers
Massachusetts: Candlewick Press, 1993
Home Place
Crescent Dragonwagon
New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1990
Long Ago and Today A Home Album
By Peter Roop
Illinois: Heinemann Library, 1999
Prairie Town
By Bonnie and Arthur Geisert
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998
A Street Through Time
By Dr. Anne Millard
New York: DK Publishing

Rationale: After having doing the map lesson so children can see how the area has changed, I wanted to bring it home. Literally. We will be looking at a specific piece of land and how it has changed over time by reading this book. The follow up should include speculation of what was on the land where their home stands now. This lesson is a bridge between general and personal history.

Purpose Setting: Pull out an old teacup and arrowhead for the children to see. Explain that it was found in my garden when I was planting a Lilac bush. (Make up your own story if it suits you better) Have the children write about how they think it got there. Prompt: Write a page story speculating why I found this teacup and arrowhead in my yard last year. How did it get there? Who left it? Why? Tell the story of these artifacts.

Read the book *The House on Maple Street* to the children. This is a simple whole class read aloud and discussion. Question the children to have them draw conclusions about the changes that went on and how we know that. Again, the discussion and questioning are the critical elements of this lesson.

Questions should include (but not be limited to):

- What changes happened?
- When did it start looking like something modern?
- What new technologies did you see?
- How many different groups of people lived on this spot?
- Why do you think the groups of people choose this spot?
- Which one of the past eras would you like to live in?
- What might have been at the location where your home is?
- Have you ever found any evidence of people before you?

Assessment is taken from discussion. It is mostly for my benefit. Do the children understand the concepts well enough or do we need to do another lesson? Any of the books listed under “supplemental materials” can be used as further practice and extension.

Mapping out the past

Tiffany Clark

Our Place in Time - Urbana Local History

Reading and Comparing Local maps through time

Children will understand how communities grow over time meeting the changing needs of their population and the affects of evolving technology. Second, they will be able to look critically and draw conclusions from resources.

Materials: A series of local maps will be used for this lesson, which will be done in two parts: county and city.

County maps to be used:

- Historical Map of Champaign County 1819-1940
Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Karl B. Lohmann, Chairman
Urbana, Illinois
- Map of Champaign County 1863
Alex Bowman Architect and Civil Engineer
- Current County Map

Urbana City Maps to be used:

- Original Plat of Urbana Circa 1833
- Alexander Bowman Map of 1858
- Bird's Eye view of Urbana 1869
- Sanborn Map of Urbana 1897
- Sanborn Map of Urbana 1909
- Sanborn Map of Urbana 1923

Method: The children will already be familiar with reading maps from doing the map reading lessons earlier.

Prepare by covering any dates on the maps. Hang them where the whole class can see them clearly. Put the county maps in one part of the room and the city maps in a different one.

In a whole class format the children will order the three maps of Champaign County. This should not be difficult for them to do. The important part is the discussion/questioning that come next. The purpose of this is to articulate the reasons and evidence on which the children based their decisions.

Questions should include (but of course don't limit them to):

- What differences do you see?
- What things are the same?
- Can you find landmarks on all three maps?

How does the style of the maps change?
Why do you think that happened?
What do you think the person who was making the map thought was the most important think to put on it?
Why did the person make this map?
Who is going to use this map?
What makes something look old?
What makes something look newer or modern?
Why did people settle where they did?
What made some towns grow and others die?

A class list (poster) of “clues” (features that indicate change/time/growth) should be made. This list can be used by the children when they are working on the next step, working in small groups to order the next set of maps.

Divide the class into small groups. I like using preset integrated groups for this activity. The kids already know each other, yet kids of differing skills can hear what the other thinks and the logic behind the choices. If your class is new to cooperative groups, I would suggest assigning roles such as note taker, materials collector, spokes person, etc.

Have the children look at the 6 maps of Urbana and work to order them. We are not so concerned with “right” answers but with the reasons they used to make their decisions. Each group must write down at least five reasons they ordered them the way they choose. (If they have extra time, they can come up with more reasons)

When each group is finished, gather together to present to each other their findings. Let each group articulate to the others what order they put the maps in and why.

Uncover the dates on the maps and show the children where these are located and how to look for them.

Assessment will be based on presentations and discussion. It is not individual, but rather general, primarily for learning rather than of learning. I will be looking at the level of critical thinking the children are able to achieve and if not satisfied, doing other lessons of this same style.

State Learning Standards: 16.A.2c
17.A.2b
17.C.2b
17.D.2b

Gathering Oral History

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Our Place in Time - Local History

Gathering Oral History

Children will understand the definition of oral history and participate in gathering the oral history of their home.

Materials:

Paper or notebook to record in class and questions and answers

Homework worksheet titled: Oral History Homework

Rationale: The purpose of this lesson is to impress upon the children that they are an active part of history. It is also to teach them the importance of record keeping. Further they are beginning to gather information that will be used on their final projects.

Method: Ask a child to volunteer. Start interviewing them about what they remember about last year's Leal Olympics (or other event). Jot down notes on the board. Hold about a five-minute interview.

When finished ask the children what they saw to encourage interaction and processing on the children's part.

Let the children know they were watching oral history being told and recorded.

Have the children write a list of questions they would ask someone from our class about the first day of school this year.

Pair the kids and let them practice asking each other questions and recording answers.

Tell the children they will be doing this type of interviewing to learn more about their homes and families. Take questions.

The children will take home the worksheet and interview parents and/or neighbors. (Review safety information too, don't talk to strangers without a parent with you, etc)

Assessment will be done on the worksheet after it is handed in. Children will be given the opportunity to add to, re-do, or complete the homework as needed. This information will be used for final project and is necessary to have.

Home History

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Our Place in Time –Urbana Local History

Researching the history of our homes

Children will use the Champaign County Archives to research the history of their homes, learning when their home was built.

Materials:

Research Framework worksheet

Science and Social Studies notebook (or other place to take notes)

City Directories

Archive Computer Records

Any sources that are referenced

The friendly staff at the Champaign County Archives

Rationale: This is the meat of this unit. The children will be exposed to the vast amazing amount of information that is housed in the Archives. I want them to gain that perspective of themselves too. They are the latest page in the history book of our town. They will need to trace their address in the city directories until we can no longer find it. If their parents own their house they will find their parents names in the archives. The Archives have been wonderfully cross referenced so that we can find information from other sources in their computers.

Method: Call the Champaign County Archives and set up a date to make this visit. Send them a list in advance of the addresses that we will be looking up

Split the class into two or three groups depending on size. 12 kids is pushing the limits of size and materials available. If there are three groups, let one go on a walking tour of the neighborhood and the other explore the Urbana Free Library with adult supervision.

Show the children the City Directories. Teach them where the address guides are. The children in the Archives will start looking for their address in the City Directories which document homeowner history.

Take a few children to work on the computers if they have special or especially old homes. This will be known from having sent the addressed ahead.

Collect a photo if possible or at least a description or location on old map for final project.

When the children have found out the year (approximately) that their home was built, they are ready for the next lesson.

Assessment will be having a completed worksheet and knowing the year their home was built.

It Was A Wonderful Year

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Our Place in Time – Urbana Local History
Learning about the year our home was built

Children will gather data about different periods in history (based on the year their home was built) to later be amalgamated into a whole class time line and used on their final projects.

Materials:

Research Framework page 2

Science and Social Studies notebook (or other location to take notes)

Old local newspapers both on microfilm and hard copies

Microfilm projectors housed at the Archives

Rationale: The children get to tie something personal (the year their home was built) to the broader pictures of local, state, and national events. This connection gives the children a hook, a connection to events that are often nebulous otherwise.

Method: Once the children have found the date their home was built (see lesson: Home History), brainstorm with them places where they could find information about that year. Hopefully someone will say a newspaper.

Bring out the old bound newspapers (again, these will be at our fingertips because of the pre-research the wonderful archive people have done for us). Let the kids use them to gather information.

Also show the children the newspapers on Microfilm so they understand that storage system and the resources available. For the children who need it, set them up with the microfilm readers.

Give them time to fill out their worksheet gathering data. They are looking for important local and state news as well as something interesting to them that may not qualify as important.

The children also need to be on the look out for an artifact that would represent this time

Assessment is based on worksheet.

My Home Then and Now

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Our Place in Time – Urbana Local History

Comparing and drawing conclusions about their homes

Students will independently work to draw comparisons, contrasts and conclusions about their home and what the changes in it have meant.

Materials:

Worksheet: Connecting Yesterday to Today

Notes taken previously in lessons “Home History” and “It was a wonderful year”

This lesson consists of two worksheets. In the first one the children delineate the changes in their home using a Venn diagram. The second worksheet the children are going a step further by articulating the changes and their conclusions. Further they are connecting it to the year their home was build and the artifact they selected to represent it.

Method: After doing all the research this is the opportunity to synthesize the information and let it create meaning in the children’s minds.

Go over the instructions orally. Give them a chance to ask questions. Let them work.

Assessment is based on the work they do on the worksheets.

Putting it All Together

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Our Place in Time – Urbana Local History

Creating a class timeline with individual research

The children will consolidate their individual research to create a whole class timeline. This will reinforce the concept of community and give them an over view of the last 150 years in a framework that they understand.

Materials:

Teacher Created Time line (Really big)

Student information from their research in lessons “Home History” and “It was a Wonderful Year”

Photos/drawings etc of artifacts and homes

Material to affix timeline and children’s work to the wall

Rationale: It is so difficult for 9 and 10 year olds to understand history. This gives the kids a way to hook into, understand, and personally connect to local, state and even national history. They will locate where their event happened on the time line and we will attach their information. This leads to the parallel of all the little bits of history making a whole and all the little bits of our classroom (the students) making a community.

Method: Giant time line is affixed to the wall at a level the kids can see and read it.

Each student brings to the meeting their event (typed up), the picture of their home, the picture of their artifact.

Ask for volunteers to read their information and put their pictures up. You could make this a special party day or what not. It is a pretty big event.

When all the children have put their information up talk about what conclusions we can draw from this. Also talk about what we have learned. Who lives in the oldest home, the youngest?

Leave this up for the open house.

Final Project

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Our Place in Time –Urbana Local History
Display and Oral Presentation for Open House

Children will create a three-fold display to present the information they have learned about their home, family and community and present that information orally.

Materials:

- Rubric
- Rubric overview
- Template (on red poster board)
- Sample (of Leal School)
- Research and worksheets they have done in this unit
- Poster board
- Typed up information
- Picture of self, family, home, artifact
- Matting material
- Glue, double stick tape, etc
- Colored paper to make fancy
- Volunteers to help with the big hoop-la

Rationale: Now it is our time to pass on what we know. The past and future pivot on today. We have learned about the past and now share with the future.

Method:

Explain to the children that we are going to make displays and have an open house to show what we have learned.

Bring out the template and the Rubric overview. (See Rubric overview for requirements) I like to have one for each child so they can take it home or refer to it as often as they need to.

Explain each piece of the project.

- *The left wing will be Personal and family information as well as five pieces of information about their home.
- *The middle will be showing the changes in their home
- *The right wing will be local, state, national history in the year their home was built, and a photograph of an artifact from the year their home was built.

Take questions.

Most of the research should be done, it is putting it in this format that needs to be worked on now.

Allow them time to work.

Volunteers to help with the typing and printing (and sticking and cutting) would be a big help.

Oral Report:

Each student will need to decide what pieces of information they are going to include in their oral report. See Rubric for requirements. They will need to jot down the highlights of what they will speak about. They will need to practice presenting the information. Especially important is not reading it off of the card or the poster, but using those tools to be dynamic.

Assessment: The rubric used to assess this project is included. I have not put a numbering system in place to allow for professional flexibility. It could easily be numbered (graded) 1-3 for each category. Or you could have Expert, Competent, Beginner and not put grades on at all.