



SCHOOL: THEN AND NOW

Examination of Schools through Historical Photographs

OVERVIEW:

Students will examine historical photographs of schools and school environments to learn how they have changed over the past one hundred years.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the types of changes schools have gone through over the past one hundred years.
- Students will appreciate the opportunities their schools and education provide for them.
- Students will be able to demonstrate (through verbal or written communication / artwork) an understanding of some characteristics of schools of the past.

RESOURCES / MATERIALS:

- Historical images from the Celebrating Saskatchewan's Heritage Website (school gallery) – printed for classroom use or set up to display on the computer.
- Paper, crayons.

PROCEDURE:

1. Create a **KWL** chart entitled “Schools of the Past” and have students contribute to the **What Do We Already KNOW** section of the chart. Brainstorm a list of questions to be answered for the **What Do We Want To Know** section of the chart.
2. Display historical photographs of various schools.
3. Have students identify things that appear to be different from schools and school environments of today. Record the students' suggestions.
4. Repeat this process several times, showing new historical images each time. Lead the students in discovery of differences by asking pointed questions. Lead students in examining more than the school building itself – playground equipments, buildings, desks, writing tools, books/resources, heating, water supply, bathrooms, evidence of games played, teaching styles, number of grades, student behavior (expectations of students), getting to and from school, number of staff and so forth should all be considered.
5. Discuss the list of student responses and help students summarize the information they have pulled from the historical photographs. Have students create some generalizations.
 - Schools tended to be small one-room buildings.
 - Bathrooms were not part of the school building.
 - Heating was provided by firewood and stove.
 - They had no creative playgrounds.
6. Have students finish the KWL chart in their books. In the **What I Have Learned** section, students should make a list of their top 5-10 generalizations that came of the classes' discussion.

ADAPTATIONS / EXTENSIONS:

1. Students could create a VENN diagram to illustrate the similarities of schools then and now.
2. Students could create a fictional journal entry regarding a typical school day of the past (students travel, chores, learning, lunch, games, etc).

EVALUATION: Student understanding can be evaluated through the examination of the student's completed KWL chart and their contribution to the group discussions. Consider using the VENN diagram assignment as an assessment tool.





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Lessons Plans for an Olden Day School

OVERVIEW: The following activities are lessons that are similar to what children in the early 1900's would have experienced in school.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will gain an understanding of what school in the early 1900's was like by participating in activities that were done by students during that time period.

RESOURCES / MATERIALS:

- Assorted clothing for the girls and boys (suspenders, buckets for supplies, aprons, long skirts)
- Set of slates and chalk or quill pens for assignments.
- [One Room School House Centre](#) – website for background information or images
- [Collected Stories](#) – Memories of those who attended one room schoolhouses
- [Pioneer School Discipline](#) – Students will find the “rules of the school” very interesting.
- Each “lesson” below will require its own materials

PROCEDURE: Select the activities you would like to use with your class. Individual descriptions of each activity are outlined below the activity list.

- Memorization/Recitation
- Spelling Bee
- Dictionary Work
- Paper Weaving
- Canadian Folk Songs
- Reading Aesop's Fables
- Pioneer Game: Red Rover

Memorization/Recitation

Students spent much of their day learning things by rote memorization. One famous poem that students memorized was “Thirty Days Hath September.” It was taught to encourage students to memorize the number of days in each month of the year.

Thirty Days Hath September

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November;
All the rest have thirty-one,
Excepting February alone,
And it has twenty-eight days time,
But in leap years, February has twenty-nine.

Spelling Bees

Spelling Bees were a popular activity in pioneer school. In this activity students will work in teams to spell words. They will take turns calling out the letters to correctly spell words and they will earn points for each word they spell correctly.

You will need a list of spelling words that are appropriate for your students' ability.





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Arrange students into equal-size teams of anywhere from 3 to 10 players. Have students line up. Each team should choose a member to be their first player. Choose a team to begin and call out a word for that team to spell; use the word in a sentence so students hear the word used in context.

To encourage student attention, have students take turns calling out one letter of the word at a time; the first student on the team calls out the first letter of the word, the second person calls out the second letter, and so on. (If the word has four or more letters and the team has only three members, then play returns to the first person on the team after the third letter is called out.) If the team correctly spells the word, they earn one point and play moves to the second team. If the second team spells their word correctly, they earn one point and play moves to the third team...

When a team spells a word incorrectly, play passes immediately to the next team. If that team spells the word correctly, they earn two points (the one they earned and the one that would have been given to the first team if they had spelled the word correctly); if the second team spells the word incorrectly, play passes to the third team, which earns three points if they correctly spell the word... At the end of the game, the team with the most points might be awarded a special prize.

If students have the hang of the game, instead of individual letters being called out, each student could be responsible for spelling the entire word.

Dictionary Work

Dictionary work was a common activity in pioneer schools. It kept students busy working and allowed the teacher to help other students.

Assign between 10 and 20 words to your students. Students look the words up in the dictionary to learn their meaning. They also must be able to pronounce the word correctly, find a synonym and use each word in a sentence. Consider having students look up words that are related to pioneer school days so that they are learning meaningful content as they experience this new approach to teaching and learning.

Paper Weaving

In this activity, the student will use two pieces of colored construction paper to produce a woven paper mat. A variation of this activity could be creating a loom by using a shoebox as a frame for weaving with yarn. Yarn weaving projects can be used as wall hangings for mom, or when folded in half and sewn, the resulting "bag" could be used to hold special items.

- The teacher may prepare a sample(s) ahead of time for showing to the class. Begin with a brief discussion of weaving and what it is (the interlacing of threads to form a continuous piece of fabric).
- Distribute materials and tools. Construction paper or yarn and looms depending on your approach to this activity.
- Students fold one sheet of paper horizontally. Draw a line about one inch from the open end of the folded paper. This is the limit of cutting. Make sure student don't go past this line or the frame will tear.





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- From the fold, make cuts up to the line. Cuts need not be straight. Unfold and lay it flat. Measure and cut from the second sheet of paper, one-inch wide by nine-inch strips. Tip: Teacher may pre-cut the one-inch strips.
- Begin by weaving one strip over one "warp thread" then under the next warp and over the next, etc.
- Continue this process alternating over and under with each weft thread. If the previous weft thread went under the warp thread, the following row will begin by going over the warp.

Have students display their finished products in the school or classroom. Variations on this activity could include making the strips thinner, offering more colour selections, and encouraging more complex designs. The simple over-under sequence can be altered from every other warp to every second or even third warp to form a regular pattern that will differ from the standard "checker board" style design.

Canadian Folk Songs

Early pioneers spent time with others entertaining themselves. Folk songs were sung to lift their spirits and to tell their stories. In this activity students can simply learn some early Canadian folk songs or they can take it to the next level and create their own lyrics that go with a familiar tune that tells the story of the Saskatchewan Pioneer.

At this website (<http://www.plainsfolk.com/songs/song6.htm>) you will find several verses that tell of the life on the Plains. In particular, the last two verses read:

Saskatchewan, the land of snow,
Where winds are always on the blow,
Where people sit with frozen toes--
And why we stay here, no one knows.

Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan,
There's no place like Saskatchewan.
We sit and gaze across the plains,
And wonder why it never rains,
Till Gabriel doth his trumpet sound,
And says the rain has gone around.

(The song is the secular localization of the Methodist hymn, "Beulah Land.")

Students can create their own verses that tell more stories of the Saskatchewan pioneers. For a selection of other songs that may be appropriate for your young composers, please see <http://www.plainsfolk.com/songs/>





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Reading Aesop's Fables

Early toys and games for pioneer children included reading if they could get their hands on a book. Aesop's Fables were popular because each story had a moral. The stories are short and make a positive addition to any reading program. Students could read several of the fables and create illustrations for their favourite moral.

If you do not have copies of the fables in the classroom, this website (<http://www.childclassics.com/index.html>) has several fables narrated online. You can use your computer to have students listen to the fables and learn of the morals. This is a great way to entice the students.

If you would like to print off a few of the more popular ones for your students to read, a list can be located at <http://www.tomsdomain.com/aesop/aesopmain.htm> - Consider printing them off and gluing to construction paper. The fables could then also be displayed where student illustrations are displayed for all to enjoy.

Pioneer Game: Red Rover

You will need at least 8 students (the more the merrier), fifteen minutes, and an open field big enough to run around freely. The rules of the game:

- First, split the kids into two teams of equal size. Then have the children line up shoulder-to-shoulder and hold hands.
- The two lines should be about 15 feet apart and facing each other.
- Decide which team will go first. This team starts the game by choosing a player from the opposing team and adding his name to this little rhyme: "Red Rover, Red Rover, send (insert name) right over."

The chosen child lets go of his teammates and makes a rush for the other line. His goal is to break through the hands of the other team. If he does so, the triumphant child trots back to where he came from with someone from the other team in tow. If he fails, then he's considered caught by the other team and must join it and try to capture his old teammates. The two teams take turns calling people over until there's only one team left, which is the winner.

