

INVENTION AND INNOVATION: THE HISTORY OF EVERYDAY THINGS

A UNIT in Two Lessons for Kindergarten & 1st Grade Classes

Unit Overview:

The everyday things that we rely on in our homes were all created by someone, somewhere. Most of the items that we use to keep things clean, to communicate and to entertain ourselves today are all innovative advancements on much simpler designs and early inventions. This unit will examine those early innovations from our history.

Unit Summary:

Students will learn the historical beginnings of four everyday things. The phonograph, typewriter, washboard and rug beater lead to the I-Pod, computer, washing machine and vacuum cleaner. Understanding that the everyday items that we rely on today have their roots in historic antique machines will allow students to understand the process of innovation and give them the opportunity to consider how these and the other everyday items that they rely on may change over time.

Time Allotment:

Two lessons taught in 20 to 30 minutes

Grade Level: K-1

Standards

History-Social Science Content Standards

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

1. Students frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research.
2. Students distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories.
3. Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author's perspectives).

Historical Interpretation

1. Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.
2. Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long-and short-term causal relations.
3. Students explain the sources of historical continuity and how the combination of ideas and events explains the emergence of new patterns.
4. Students recognize the role of chance, oversight, and error in history.
5. Students recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.

Writing Standards K-1

1. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
5. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed
6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

Define invention an innovation

Identify a phonograph, rug beater, washboard and typewriter

Match historic items to the present-day innovations

Materials

Images:

Photos of antique tools (Rug Beater, Washboard, Typewriter, Victrola)

Handout:

Then & Now Matching Worksheet

Reading:

A Brief History of Everyday Things (definitions and historic data on the four selected tools)

Introduction and Learning Activity #1: Inventions of the 19th Century

Set-up: Share with the class the brief history of the four 19th Century inventions listed below. Have the students study the image and ask them to share their observations of the item with the class. Ask students to guess what the item may have been used for.

- Phonograph/Victrola
- Rug beater
- Washboard
- Typewriter

Then, ask students to think about what item they believe is being used now for the same purpose.

- I-Pod or Mp3 Player (CD Player also accepted answer)
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Washing Machine
- Computer

Learning Activity #2: Then & Now

Matching: Provide the *Then & Now* worksheet to students (available in Materials section above). After having reviewed the items in learning activity #1, have the students color the items on the page and identify each item from the past and present. Then have them draw an arrow to the corresponding item used today on the right-hand side of the worksheet.

Assessment

Use the following questions to guide a recap discussion, as a quiz, or a guideline for a quick drawing assignment.

Learning Activity #1:

Recap discussion: With the class, talk about the inventions of the past and ask students to describe how the items have changed overtime. Discuss the following:

What looks different between the item from the past and what we use today?

What do you like about the item from the past?

What do you like about the item we use now?

Has this item improved from the past or would you like to use the old item?

Learning Activity #2:

Pair & Share: After completing their worksheet, pair students with a classmate to share their drawings and responses. Ask a few students to share their findings with the entire class.

Distance Learning Options

- Hold discussions via video conferencing software like Zoom or Teams
- Each group share out to class to ensure all students comprehend the content.