

A School Time Tunnel

Shelly Schmidt
Eastridge Elementary
Aurora, Colorado

OVERVIEW

You have just been sent back to a school in the early 20th century. Write (with pencil or fountain pen and quill, not with ballpoint pen or computer) what it is like in school in the early 1900's. What kinds of things are you learning? What is the classroom like? Tell about the families, children, school, and classrooms, Now, if you were to travel back in that time tunnel to today, how would you tell someone from long ago what your 21st century classroom is like?

STANDARDS

- History Standard 2.3: Students apply knowledge of the past to analyze present-day issues and events from multiple, historically objective perspectives.
- Reading and Writing Standard 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will research schools of the early 20th century.
- Students will use compare and contrast strategies to show how schools have changed over time.
- Students will then write to an audience as if he or she has just traveled through time. The student will write a story to tell and show what classrooms, school, and children were like in the 20th century and the 21st century. How are they alike and different?
- Students may even choose to write a persuasive piece taking either view: schools of today are better, or schools long ago were better.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What kinds of things are different in the classroom? (Furniture, books, technology, etc.)
- How were schools built differently because of the cost of land? Were there differences in large cities and small communities?
- How as learning different?
- How were families different? Did that affect schools?

- How would you be affected if you had to go to school in 1900 instead of 2000? What changes would you see?
- What other differences would you see if you traveled back 100 years, or if someone traveled in time from 1900 to today? Would it be harder to go back 100 years in education or go forward 100 years in education? Why?

MATERIALS

- Writing materials
- Doing History CD-ROM disk or website, 20th Century Topic: Families, Children, and Schools
- Resource books about school today and school in the early 20th century

PROCEDURE

1. After viewing, reading, and discussing the information held in the Doing History CD-ROM disk or website, 20th Century Topic: Families, Children, and Schools, students will begin writing down the differences they see between schools/classrooms/children of the early 20th Century and what they know to be true today.
2. From here, students may choose to write a story about going back in time to a classroom of long ago. Write about what it was like, how it was different, what he or she liked or didn't like. Etc. Or, students may choose to write a persuasive piece about how schools of today are better than long ago and why (or vice-versa if they feel). The paper written must show evidence of information from the Doing History CD-ROM disk or website.
3. Share what has been written.

Extension:

To get a better idea of this comparison, the teacher may choose to do a field trip to an old school house. Or, a teacher may have students come into their own classroom and act as if it were 100 years earlier – dress like long ago, read with readers from early days, etc.

ASSESSMENT

Using a writing rubric of the teacher's choice, and including instruments that assess how much information from the Doing History CD-ROM disk or website is included, as well as correct information from other resources may make assessment. Is the student able to see that schools of today are very different from those of 100 years ago? What changes have been brought about by technology, etc.?