

Going to School in 1921

Life in the
1920s

Activities

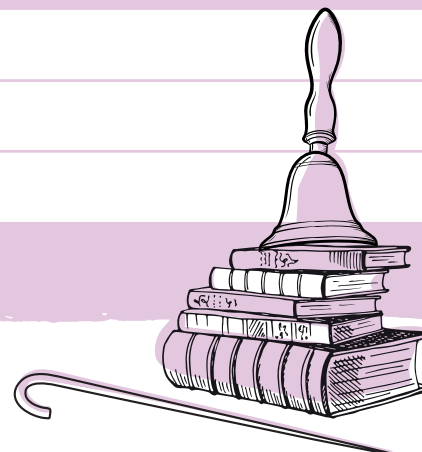
Activity 1:	The Classroom
Activity 2:	Rewards and Punishments
Activity 3:	The School Day

See individual activities for resources required.

Suggested Learning Intentions

Pupils will:

- compare and contrast aspects of the school day, then and now;
- understand how behaviour was managed in the past and how it has changed over time; and
- appreciate the differences between aspects of school life 100 years ago, and today.



Teacher Notes:

The activities focus on the school day of 100 years ago and the various aspects of school life: the classroom environment, subjects, equipment, rewards and punishments.

Through active learning strategies, pupils will have opportunities to compare and contrast school life then and now. Pupils will be able to appreciate how many aspects of school have changed over time, and how some have stayed the same.

By exploring rewards and punishments in 1921, pupils will appreciate how schools today promote positive behaviour and reward pupils' efforts.

The activities can be used as stand-alone resources or as an extended piece of work. Alternatively, adapt individual activities to link with other themes/ topics and ability levels.

Shared Education opportunities: *the theme of school 100 years ago lends itself to shared working: a joint project with pupils from partner schools participating in the active learning strategies, or a shared trip to a museum to experience first-hand a school/classroom from the past.*

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Activity 1: The Classroom

You will need:

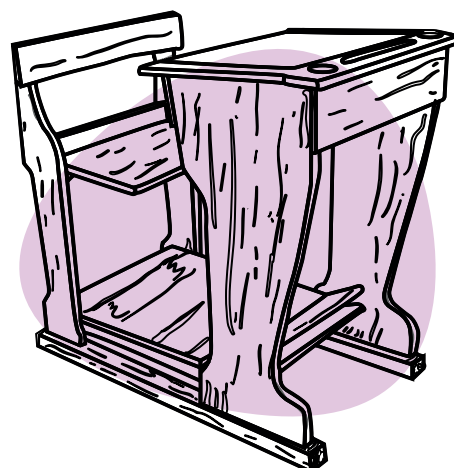
- Going to School in 1921 PowerPoint slides 1 to 4

Use PowerPoint slides 1 to 4.

- Explain to the pupils that they are going to learn about what it was like to go to school 100 years ago, in 1921. Introduce the 1921 classroom by showing the images on slide 3.
- Ask pupils to Think-Pair-Share and talk about, or note, three key differences between the classrooms in the photographs and their own classroom. (*Prompts – think about the desks, windows, equipment and resources, pupils' clothes, the teacher, the pupils – do they look happy?*)
- Discuss and summarise pupils' observations.
- Ask the pupils to watch for three differences between the school in the CCEA video: 1921 – A Day in the Schoolroom (slide 4) and their own school. *It would be useful for the teacher to watch the video clips to decide which ones are most suitable for their class.* Discuss and explain some of the language the teacher uses in the clips, for example attendance, inspector, vermin, stove, blackboard, penmanship and so on.
- Invite the pupils to talk about the differences and the key features of a classroom 100 years ago. *Examples could be as follows: pupils faced the front and didn't talk unless spoken to; the teacher was very strict; the teacher was allowed to punish pupils; boys and girls played separately; and pupils had to bring in coal or turf for the fire.*

Extension:

- Provide the pupils with an opportunity to discuss how they would feel if they had to spend a day in a 1921 classroom. *What would they miss from their own classroom?*



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Activity 2: Rewards and Punishments

You will need:

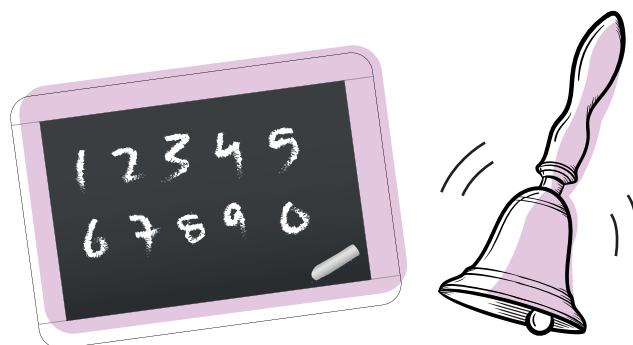
- Going to School in 1921 PowerPoint slides 5 to 8
- Resource 1: Rewards and Punishments

Use PowerPoint slides 5 to 8.

- Recap on the video clips from Activity 1 and ask the pupils if they can remember the punishments that Miss Acheson mentioned to the class. (*The Teacher's Expectations video clip mentions punishments.*)
- Explain that pupils were treated very differently in schools compared to today. There was a greater focus on punishments and few rewards. Wearing the dunce's hat was one punishment. Other punishments are shown on slide 6, **but** there is an odd one out – can pupils spot it? One of them is not a punishment but a reward. Discuss which one it is (*it is the bell*). Discuss all the images – *what are they, why/when would they have been used?*
- Ask the pupils to look around their own classroom – are class or school rules displayed? How are pupils rewarded for good work and good behaviour? Discuss 'punishments' and rewards in school today.
- Show slide 7 to illustrate that schools in 2021 focus on rewards like star charts and stickers. Discuss how the pupils feel about these.
- Explain that in 1921 there were some rewards for pupils who behaved and performed well. Pupils were given jobs as rewards! Show slide 8 - rewards included ink monitor (filling the ink wells); blackboard monitor (cleaning the blackboard); and bell ringer. Ask pupils if they like to be given jobs to do.
- Invite the pupils to complete the rewards and punishments sorting activity – Resource 1: Rewards and Punishments.

Reflection:

- Provide pupils with an opportunity to discuss which rewards they enjoy. *Do they have any other suggestions for rewards? How do they feel about school and classroom rules?*



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Activity 3: The School Day

You will need:

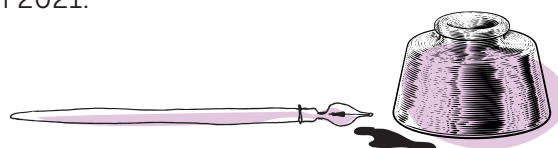
- Going to School in 1921 PowerPoint slides 9 to 11
- Resource 2: Mary's School Day – 1921
- Resource 3: School in 1921 – Walking Debate Statements
- Resource 4: Word Bingo (Extension)
- Resource 4a: Word Bingo – Teacher Guidance (Extension)

Use PowerPoint slides 9 to 11.

- Tell the pupils that they are going to hear a story of a little girl Mary, who wrote about her school day in 1921. Show slide 10 (a picture of Mary). Discuss how she looks – her clothes; she is barefoot; what is she carrying?
- Read the story – Resource 2: Mary's School Day – 1921.
- Discuss Mary's school day with the pupils. Use slides 11 and 12 as prompts and discuss the aspects of Mary's school that are the same, or different to theirs. Some pointers are given below:
 - » *Slate and chalk: the young pupils used these for writing; they spat on them to clean them.*
 - » *Copybooks and dip pens: the older pupils used these for writing.*
 - » *Ink bottle or ink well: these slotted into the wooden desks and were filled with ink. Pupils dipped their pens in them to get enough ink to write.*
 - » *Logbook: the teacher recorded daily events in this, for example the fire drill.*
 - » *Coal stove: the only source of heat, usually positioned near the teacher. Pupils at the back of the room were often cold.*
 - » *Abacus: used to teach mathematics (arithmetic).*
 - » *Teachers: they dressed differently. Female teachers were called 'Miss'. Male teachers were called 'Sir'.*
 - » *The school bell: it was rung to mark the beginning and end of lessons, and breaks. Pupils were rewarded for good work or behaviour by being the bell ringer.*
 - » *Blackboard at the front of the room: the teacher wrote on this with chalk.*
 - » *Pupils' desks: they were wooden, and had slots for the ink wells. Some pupils had a single desk, and some pupils sat in pairs or threes.*
- Invite the pupils to take part in a walking debate. Use Resource 3: School in 1921 – Walking Debate Statements.

Extension:

- Encourage the pupils to play word bingo. Pupils play in groups of six. Use Resource 4: Word Bingo and Resource 4a: Word Bingo – Teacher Guidance.
- Invite the pupils to write a story about their school day in 2021.



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Curriculum Links

Language and Literacy

Talking and Listening

- Express thoughts, and feelings in response to curricular topics and activities
- Listen to and respond to and explore stories and media texts through the use of traditional and digital resources
- Take turns at talking and listening in group and paired activities

Reading

- Use a range of comprehension skills, both oral and written, to interpret and discuss text
- Read, explore, understand and make use of a wide range of digital texts
- Consider, interpret and discuss texts
- Explore and interpret a range of visual texts

Writing

- Create, organise, refine and present ideas using traditional and digital means

The World Around Us

Place – History

- Differences between my life now and lives of people in the past
- Stories about people from the past

Change over time – History

- How the community (schools) has changed over time

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding: Strand 2

- Being aware of how the school community interacts; how they listen and respond to each other and how they treat each other
- Beginning to understand why and how rules are made in class, in the playground and at school
- Understanding that rules are essential in an ordered community

Cross-Curricular Skills

Communication

- Listen to and take part in discussions, explanations and presentations
- Contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view
- Read a range of texts for information, ideas and enjoyment
- Find, select and use information from a range of sources
- Develop, express and present ideas in a variety of forms and formats

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

- Examining options, weighing up pros and cons
- Making connections between learning in different contexts

Working with Others

- Listening actively and sharing opinions
- Understanding how actions and words affect others

Managing Information

- Selecting, classifying, comparing and evaluating information
- Using a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information

Resource 1: Rewards and Punishments

Pupil Instruction:

Cut out the pictures and sort into rewards and punishments.

Rewards	Punishments



Resource 2: Mary's School Day – 1921

Teacher Instruction:

Show the pupils slide 10 (the image of Mary) and read the following story aloud.

Hello, my name is Mary. I am eight years old. I was born in 1913 and I live and go to school in Northern Ireland. Each day I walk to school. From home it is about three miles to school, and it takes me about one hour to walk there. School starts at 9 o'clock in the morning, so I leave home at 8 o'clock to make sure I get there before the bell rings. I don't want to be late. If I am late, I will get hit across the knuckles with a wooden ruler.

My classroom is a very big room with a hard floor. There is a big coal stove near the front of the room to give us heat. If you sit near the coal stove you feel warm, but the back of the room is cold most of the time, especially in winter. I sit at the back of the room at a wooden desk with a lid. I keep my books inside the desk. My desk has a seat attached and a little hole where the china ink well slots in. I dip my pen in the ink well to get enough ink to practise my handwriting in my copybook.

There are 50 pupils in my class! We all sit at wooden desks facing the front and are not allowed to talk unless the teacher asks us a question. My teacher sits at a desk at the front of the class, sometimes she stands and walks around at the front. We call the teacher 'Miss' and if an adult enters the room we must stand up. The teacher can see all the pupils in the class and watches in case anyone is breaking the school rules or talking. Bad behaviour or poor work is punished. Sometimes pupils get the cane across the hand. If they are not doing their work or are not paying attention, they have to sit in the corner and wear the dunce hat. If they talk a lot they have to stay after school and write lines – I must not talk in class 100 times. I am glad that I have never had to do that. I try to do my best and sometimes the teacher allows me to do a special job like bell ringer or ink monitor. I like to do well and get a special job.

The teacher writes on a huge blackboard with white chalk. The pupils sitting at the front cough and sneeze a lot because the dust gets up their noses. The teacher teaches us facts and figures. In the morning our lessons are Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. We memorise our tables and poems and recite them in front of the class. If someone gets too many wrong, they have to wear the dunce hat. We use an abacus to help us with counting and we practise handwriting in our copybooks. The younger pupils use a slate and chalk to write. They spit on them to clean them. The very young pupils practise writing in the sand with a stick. In the afternoon the boys learn woodwork and the girls learn how to sew, knit and cook. We learn traditional folk songs and country dancing as well. Sometimes we do drills outside. They are exercises like marching on the spot, star jumps or simple stretches.

At dinnertime we eat in the classroom. All the pupils bring something from home to eat, like a piece of bread with jam or a potato that is baked in the coal stove. They carve their initial on to it so that they know which one is theirs. There is a big logbook kept in school. Each day the teacher records important things that have happened, like if there was a fire drill or if the dentist came to check our teeth.

Resource 3: School in 1921 – Walking Debate Statements

Teacher Instruction:

- Invite pupils to take part in a walking debate.
- Choose three areas of the classroom or playground and label with 'Agree', 'Not Sure' or 'Disagree'.
- Read statements about school in the past. If pupils 'agree', 'disagree' or are 'not sure' they can position themselves in the correct area of the classroom or playground.
- Ask a number of pupils to give reasons for their position.

School in 1921: Statements

- 1 Pupils enjoyed school.
- 2 Wearing the dunce hat was awful.
- 3 It was easy to learn in a class of 50 pupils.
- 4 It is fair to hit pupils with a cane if they break school rules.
- 5 It is fair to give well-behaved pupils special jobs like 'bell ringer'.
- 6 The classroom was lovely and warm.
- 7 I would like to have gone to school 100 years ago.



Resource 4: Word Bingo Cards

Teacher Instruction:

- Photocopy onto card and distribute among the pupils.
- Provide each pupil with six counters.

Cane	Logbook
Slate and chalk	Coal stove
Abacus	Ink bottle

Coal stove	Slate and chalk
Teacher	Dunce's cap
Bell	Dip pen

Copy books	Dip pen
Dunce's cap	Abacus
Teacher	Ink bottle

Log book	Ink bottle
Abacus	Black board
Copy books	Dip pen

Log book	Cane
Bell	Slate and chalk
Copy books	Black board



Resource 4a: Word Bingo Cards

Teacher Instruction:

- Pupils play in groups of six.
- One child is the caller and has a copy of the items and definitions given below.
- The other five pupils have a bingo card.
- The caller chooses an item, at random, from the list below and **reads out the definition only**.
- If pupils have the item that matches the definition, they cover it with a counter.
- First to cover all items calls 'bingo' and wins.

Teacher:

the person who sat on a tall chair or stood at the front of the room so they could easily see all the pupils.

Blackboard:

this had a smooth dark surface, was attached to the wall and teachers wrote on it with chalk.

Cane:

if pupils broke the rules they were hit on the hand or legs with this.

Bell:

this was rung at the beginning or ending of class, break or lunch.

Logbook:

the teacher kept daily records of events in this.

Dunce's cap:

this was used as a punishment – a pointed hat with the letter 'D' on it.

Slate and chalk:

pupils used this to write, it sounded squeaky when they wrote and they had to spit on it to rub out mistakes.

Dip pen:

these had metal nibs, pupils had to keep dipping them into china pots of ink to get enough ink to write.

Copy books:

older pupils wrote in these.

Coal stove:

this heated the room, but pupils at the back were very cold.

Abacus:

a counting frame with rows of beads.

Ink bottle:

a pot that held ink and slotted into the desk.

