

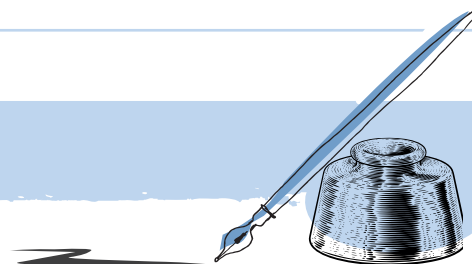
Learning in 1921

Life in the
1920s

Activities

Activity 1:	Learning Times Tables
Activity 2:	Penmanship (Handwriting)
Activity 3:	Physical Drill

See individual activities for resources required.



Suggested Learning Intentions

Pupils will:

- understand and engage in learning experiences from the past such as activities and methods used;
- appreciate how pupils learned 100 years ago and how learning experiences have changed over time;
- become more self-aware of their own learning style; and
- appreciate how methods used in the past were of their time.

Teacher Notes:

The activities focus on what it was like for pupils to learn in a 1921 classroom.

Pupils will have the opportunity to experience, first-hand, typical activities from that era with themselves and/or the teacher 'in role'.

The activities are supported by the CCEA video: 1921 – A Day in the Schoolroom where pupils and teachers are 'transported' back in time.

The activities centre around the 3 'Rs': Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, as well as Physical Drill. Pupils will have the opportunity to experience key learning strategies of that time – instruction, repetition, memorisation, and drill.

Pupils may choose to record each other participating in some of the learning activities. These could be assembled to create a mini documentary of school in 1921. These activities could also be used as an integral part of a whole-school themed day based on 'School in 1921'.

Pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on the 1921 learning experiences and compare them with learning today.

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 activities lend themselves to shared working; pupils from partner schools can jointly participate in the activities and share review and reflection. A shared trip to a museum to experience first-hand a school/classroom from the past would also support the theme of the lesson.

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Activity 1: Learning Times Tables

You will need:

- Learning in 1921 PowerPoint slides 1 to 4
- Resource 1: Review and Reflection
- Resource 2: Times Tables 1 to 12 (optional)
- Resource 3: Learning in 1921 – Chanting Tables
- Stopwatches
- Digital devices (optional)



Use PowerPoint slides 1 to 4.

- Introduce the activity by asking the pupils to think about all the subjects/topics they learn about in school in 2021 – *What subjects do you learn in school? What topics do you learn about? What daily activities do you do? What do you enjoy most?* Give pupils a few minutes to discuss in pairs or groups and feedback to class.
- Explain to the pupils that they are going to experience what it was like to learn 100 years ago, in a 1921 classroom. Elicit from the pupils what they know about learning in 1921 (reflect on previous 1921 lessons/activities, if appropriate) – *What subjects did pupils learn? What activities did they do? and so on.*
- Share with the class, subjects taught in schools in 1921. Show slide 3 and discuss. *Reading, Writing, Arithmetic were known as the 3 Rs – tables were rote-learned and chanted aloud; poems were memorised and recited; formal ‘sums’ and writing were completed individually in copybooks or slates; handwriting (penmanship) was formally taught (there were no computers); PE was called Physical Drill. Boys and girls were separated for some subjects in the afternoon – boys did woodwork or science; girls learned sewing, knitting and cooking. Sometimes boys and girls were separated for Physical Drill.*
- Focus on Arithmetic and chanting tables: show slide 4 and watch the BBC Bitesize clip – [‘What was school like 100 years ago?’](#) – *How long was spent on chanting tables activity? (9.10 – 11.00am). Would pupils have enjoyed this? Do you do this as an activity in 2021? What helps you learn your tables?*
- Let the pupils work in groups to chant tables and time how long it takes. They may wish to record their chanting using a digital device.
- Decide with the class which set of tables they are going to focus on. Pupils can organise themselves into groups. They can assign roles: timer – one child times using a stopwatch; recorder – one child films the group; the rest of the group chant the tables. *(If necessary, use Resource 2: Times Tables 1 to 12 or an alternative class resource as support).* Use Resource 3: Learning in 1921 – Chanting Tables to record results.
- Collate, discuss and order results with the whole class. *Which group was the quickest? Did you enjoy the experience? Would this exercise help you remember times tables?*

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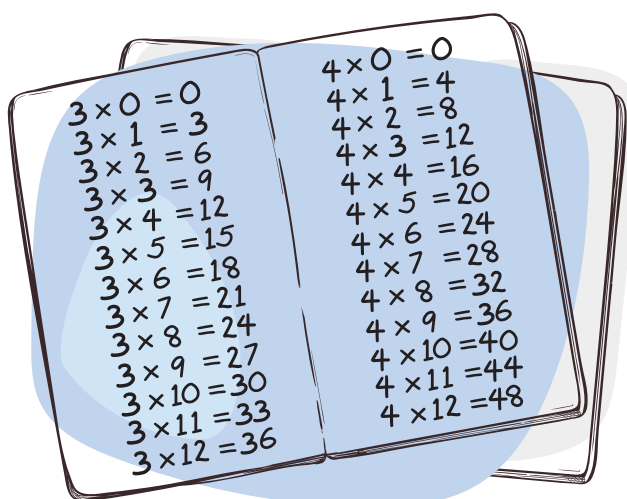
Activity 1: Learning Times Tables (continued)

Reflection:

- Use Resource 1: Review and Reflection. Individually or in pairs, pupils review and reflect on the activity and take feedback.

Extension:

- Repeat the chanting tables exercise from a modern perspective – pupils rap or chant the tables to the melody and rhythm of a popular song that they all know.
- Discuss the fairness/ethics of separating boys and girls for different subjects (slide 3) – *Do you agree with this? Why did this happen then? Is it the 'right' thing to do? What about school in 2021 – does this happen? Why?* Discuss equality/equity issues.



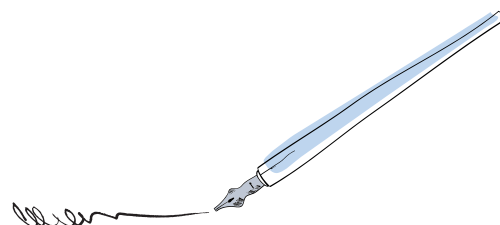
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Activity 2: Penmanship (Handwriting)

You will need:

- Learning in 1921 PowerPoint slides 6 to 8
- Resource 1: Review and Reflection
- Resource 4: Copybook Page
- Handwriting Pens
- Resource 5: He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven (optional)



Use PowerPoint slides 6 to 8.

- Explain to the pupils that they are going to experience what it was like to learn Penmanship (handwriting) 100 years ago in a 1921 classroom.
- Use slide 6 to discuss the similarities and differences between handwriting then and now. Ask the class if they can read it. Read the letter together and discuss. *What do you notice about how the letters are formed? How is it different from how you write?*
- Show slide 7 (a blackboard image with handwriting). Read together. Notice how the letters are formed and how some are different from the handwritten letter on slide 6.
- Explain to the class that penmanship (handwriting) was an important part of the curriculum, it was formally taught and that different cursive (joined-up) styles were used.
- Invite the class to experience what it was like for pupils 100 years ago by watching the video of a 1921 penmanship activity. Explain that Miss Acheson is the class teacher, and she is teaching penmanship using Roman style lettering.
- Watch the penmanship lesson on slide 8. Discuss to elicit key points:
 - » *Pupils are using Roman style letters, ink pens, and inkwells.*
 - » *They are writing in copybooks and blotting the ink with a cloth.*
 - » *Letters must be neat, regular and clearly formed.*
 - » *They must sit upright; their backs must not touch the back of the seat.*
 - » *They must write with their right hand (naturally left-handed pupils have to learn to write with their right hand).*
- Invite the pupils to the 1921 schoolroom and explain that Miss Acheson is their teacher. They must follow her instructions. Distribute Resource 4: Copybook Page and handwriting pens (*you may choose to use ink pens/fountain pens or to use pens that the pupils normally use for handwriting*). Play the video clip again: pupils act as Miss Acheson's class and complete the task.

Review/Reflection:

- Use Resource 1: Review and Reflection. Individually or in pairs, pupils review and reflect on the activity, and take feedback.

Extension:

- Suggest further handwriting practice using Resource 5: He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven, by the WB Yeats (Irish poet, 1865-1939). Pupils can use their best '1921 cursive handwriting' to write out the poem.

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Activity 3: Physical Drill

You will need:

- Learning in 1921 PowerPoint slides 9 to 11
- Resource 1: Review and Reflection
- Digital devices (optional)

Use PowerPoint slides 9 to 11.

- Explain to the pupils that they are going to experience what it was like to learn Physical Drill, now known as Physical Education (PE), in a 1921 classroom.
- Show slide 10 (a photograph of Physical Drill) and discuss to elicit key points:
 - » *No change of uniform, normal school uniform is worn.*
 - » *Pupils are spaced equidistant from each other.*
 - » *They are all doing exactly the same movement; they follow the teacher's instructions, and so on.*
- Invite the class to experience what Physical Drill was like for pupils 100 years ago. Explain that Miss Acheson is the class teacher, and she is teaching Physical Drill in 1921.
- Watch the Physical Drill lesson on slide 11.
- Tell the pupils they are going to be Miss Acheson's class. They will need some space to do the activity indoors. Play the video clip again: pupils act as Miss Acheson's class and complete the Physical Drill. Alternatively take the class outside to do the activity in the playground, with the class teacher taking on the role of Miss Acheson.
- Divide the class into two or three groups and repeat the activity: groups can organise themselves so that one child takes on the role of Miss Acheson. Pupils can also devise their own Physical Drill routine. They may wish to record the activity. (*Recordings could become a part of a mini documentary of school in 1921, form part of a whole-school display about school in 1921, or they could be uploaded to the school website).*

Reflection:

- Use Resource 1: Review and Reflection. Individually or in pairs, pupils review and reflect on the activity, and take feedback.

Extension:

- Sometimes boys and girls did Physical Drill separately. Discuss the fairness/ethics of separating boys and girls for Physical Drill – *Do you agree with this? Why did this happen then? Is it the 'right' thing to do? What about school in 2021 – does this happen? Why? Discuss equality/equity issues. This could lead to how sport has changed over the years. Do we have any mixed teams in sport?*

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Curriculum Links

Language and Literacy

Talking and Listening

- Participate in a range of drama activities across the curriculum
- Participate in group and class discussions
- Use appropriate quality of speech and voice, speaking audibly and varying register according to the purpose and audience

Reading

- Read, explore and understand a wide range of traditional texts

Writing

- Develop a swift and legible style of handwriting

Mathematics and Numeracy

Number

- Know the multiplication facts up to 10x10

Physical Education

Athletics and Gymnastics

- Participate in activities and physical challenges
- Extend their body management skills and improve the variety and quality of movement

The World Around Us - Change over Time and Place

History

- Compare an aspect of the community over a long period of time
- Understand places then and now and how our identity, way of life and culture has been shaped by influences from the local and wider world

The Arts

Drama

- Develop their understanding of the world by engaging in a range of creative and imaginative role-play situations

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

- Examining options, weighing up pros and cons
- Focusing, sustaining attention and persisting with tasks
- Making connections between learning in different contexts

Working with Others

- Listening actively and sharing opinions
- Respecting the views and opinions of others
- Understanding how actions and words affect others

Self-Management

- Being aware of personal strengths, limitations and interests
- Organising and planning how to go about a task

Being Creative

- Experimenting with ideas and questions
- Learning from and valuing other people's opinions

Cross-Curricular Skills

Communication

- Listen to and take part in discussions, explanations and role-plays
- Adapt ways of speaking to audience and situation
- Contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view

Using ICT

- Create, develop, present ideas and information using a range of digital media

Resource 1: Review and Reflection

Pupil Instruction:

Compare and contrast learning in 1921 with learning in 2021.

In pairs or in groups, reflect on and review the activity you have experienced.

Activity

What did you experience in this activity?

Is it different from or the same as how you would learn this today? In what way(s)?

Did you learn something new? What did you learn?

Did you enjoy it? Why?

Resource 2: Times Tables 1 to 12

1x

$1 \times 1 = 1$
 $2 \times 1 = 2$
 $3 \times 1 = 3$
 $4 \times 1 = 4$
 $5 \times 1 = 5$
 $6 \times 1 = 6$
 $7 \times 1 = 7$
 $8 \times 1 = 8$
 $9 \times 1 = 9$
 $10 \times 1 = 10$
 $11 \times 1 = 11$
 $12 \times 1 = 12$

2x

$1 \times 2 = 2$
 $2 \times 2 = 4$
 $3 \times 2 = 6$
 $4 \times 2 = 8$
 $5 \times 2 = 10$
 $6 \times 2 = 12$
 $7 \times 2 = 14$
 $8 \times 2 = 16$
 $9 \times 2 = 18$
 $10 \times 2 = 20$
 $11 \times 2 = 22$
 $12 \times 2 = 24$

3x

$1 \times 3 = 3$
 $2 \times 3 = 6$
 $3 \times 3 = 9$
 $4 \times 3 = 12$
 $5 \times 3 = 15$
 $6 \times 3 = 18$
 $7 \times 3 = 21$
 $8 \times 3 = 24$
 $9 \times 3 = 27$
 $10 \times 3 = 30$
 $11 \times 3 = 33$
 $12 \times 3 = 36$

4x

$1 \times 4 = 4$
 $2 \times 4 = 8$
 $3 \times 4 = 12$
 $4 \times 4 = 16$
 $5 \times 4 = 20$
 $6 \times 4 = 24$
 $7 \times 4 = 28$
 $8 \times 4 = 32$
 $9 \times 4 = 36$
 $10 \times 4 = 40$
 $11 \times 4 = 44$
 $12 \times 4 = 48$

5x

$1 \times 5 = 5$
 $2 \times 5 = 10$
 $3 \times 5 = 15$
 $4 \times 5 = 20$
 $5 \times 5 = 25$
 $6 \times 5 = 30$
 $7 \times 5 = 35$
 $8 \times 5 = 40$
 $9 \times 5 = 45$
 $10 \times 5 = 50$
 $11 \times 5 = 55$
 $12 \times 5 = 60$

6x

$1 \times 6 = 6$
 $2 \times 6 = 12$
 $3 \times 6 = 18$
 $4 \times 6 = 24$
 $5 \times 6 = 30$
 $6 \times 6 = 36$
 $7 \times 6 = 42$
 $8 \times 6 = 48$
 $9 \times 6 = 54$
 $10 \times 6 = 60$
 $11 \times 6 = 66$
 $12 \times 6 = 72$

7x

$1 \times 7 = 7$
 $2 \times 7 = 14$
 $3 \times 7 = 21$
 $4 \times 7 = 28$
 $5 \times 7 = 35$
 $6 \times 7 = 42$
 $7 \times 7 = 49$
 $8 \times 7 = 56$
 $9 \times 7 = 63$
 $10 \times 7 = 70$
 $11 \times 7 = 77$
 $12 \times 7 = 84$

8x

$1 \times 8 = 8$
 $2 \times 8 = 16$
 $3 \times 8 = 24$
 $4 \times 8 = 32$
 $5 \times 8 = 40$
 $6 \times 8 = 48$
 $7 \times 8 = 56$
 $8 \times 8 = 64$
 $9 \times 8 = 72$
 $10 \times 8 = 80$
 $11 \times 8 = 88$
 $12 \times 8 = 96$

9x

$1 \times 9 = 9$
 $2 \times 9 = 18$
 $3 \times 9 = 27$
 $4 \times 9 = 36$
 $5 \times 9 = 45$
 $6 \times 9 = 54$
 $7 \times 9 = 63$
 $8 \times 9 = 72$
 $9 \times 9 = 81$
 $10 \times 9 = 90$
 $11 \times 9 = 99$
 $12 \times 9 = 108$

10x

$1 \times 10 = 10$
 $2 \times 10 = 20$
 $3 \times 10 = 30$
 $4 \times 10 = 40$
 $5 \times 10 = 50$
 $6 \times 10 = 60$
 $7 \times 10 = 70$
 $8 \times 10 = 80$
 $9 \times 10 = 90$
 $10 \times 10 = 100$
 $11 \times 10 = 110$
 $12 \times 10 = 120$

11x

$1 \times 11 = 11$
 $2 \times 11 = 22$
 $3 \times 11 = 33$
 $4 \times 11 = 44$
 $5 \times 11 = 55$
 $6 \times 11 = 66$
 $7 \times 11 = 77$
 $8 \times 11 = 88$
 $9 \times 11 = 99$
 $10 \times 11 = 110$
 $11 \times 11 = 121$
 $12 \times 11 = 132$

12x

$1 \times 12 = 12$
 $2 \times 12 = 24$
 $3 \times 12 = 36$
 $4 \times 12 = 48$
 $5 \times 12 = 60$
 $6 \times 12 = 72$
 $7 \times 12 = 84$
 $8 \times 12 = 96$
 $9 \times 12 = 108$
 $10 \times 12 = 120$
 $11 \times 12 = 132$
 $12 \times 12 = 144$

Resource 3: Learning in 1921 – Chanting Tables

Teacher Instruction:

Ask pupils to get into groups. Record how long it takes each group to chant the tables.

Chanting tables: how long did it take us? We are chanting out loud the _____ times tables.		
	Groups (record names of pupils)	Time taken (minutes and seconds)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Resource 4: Copybook Page

ITALIC

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

ROMAN

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Resource 5: He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven by WB Yeats

He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

by William Butler Yeats

*Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,*

*I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

Poem from *The Wind Among the Reeds* by WB Yeats. London: Elkin Matthews, 1899. First edition, first printing. © Public Domain