



Our Approach to Teaching History

At Whitehall Junior School, we are committed to providing our pupils with a well-rounded education. Our curriculum is planned in a logical and well-considered way, to enable pupils to build upon their skills and have a secure knowledge base from which connections in learning are made. We use 'beautiful' resources from credible sources to enrich our lessons.

What is the big picture for history?

History is the knowledge and study of the past. It is the story of what has gone before and a form of collective memory. History explores who we are, where we come from, and it can give us valuable insights on our future.

Through history, pupils are able to understand the history of Britain and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world. Pupils also learn about the significant aspects of the history of the wider world. Pupils gain a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation' and 'parliament'.

In lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to understand historical concepts, such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses. They can also learn about the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.

Pupils gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

What is magical about it?

Learning about people who have faced and overcome adversity inspires our pupils. By studying the great and ordinary people of history, pupils learn to evaluate their own morals and values.

Why is history an important subject to learn?

History is an important subject to study because it helps pupils to understand themselves and the world around them. There is a history of every field, from medicine, to music, to art. History gives pupils a picture of how the various aspects of society, such as technology, worked in the past so they understand how it came to work the way it is now. Studying history allows pupils to understand how people and societies behaved. Our pupils come to understand that history provides us with the data that is used to create laws and theories. History can provide pupils with a sense of identity. History helps pupils to understand present-day issues, by asking questions as to why things are the way they are. History can help pupils to become better informed citizens. It shows who we are as a collective group.

Pupils enjoy studying their own family's history and sharing the experiences with their peers. This also helps them to appreciate how their families interacted with larger historical changes. History lessons provide an environment to debate historical issues.

'The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.' Theodore Roosevelt

What do we love about history?

- The rich stories - the conquests of leaders, the explorations of travellers, the intrigue in royal courts, the courage and honour shown in battles, the devastation and tragedy of the World Wars, the rise and fall of dictators, and the fight for rights and liberties.
- Learning about history through art, architecture, music and language.
- Examining and discussing photographs, artefacts and other sources.
- Visiting places of historical significance.
- Class debates and drama/role play.

How do we want our pupils to talk about history?

- To demonstrate their **substantive knowledge** (knowledge of the past: people, events, ideas and so on).
- To demonstrate their **disciplinary knowledge** developed over time (knowledge of history as a discipline: the methods of historians, their epistemological assumptions (the philosophical study of knowledge), their conceptual frameworks, and so on).
- To demonstrate their **chronological knowledge** and 'finger-tip' knowledge of facts and dates.
- To challenge the history texts that they have read or heard read to them.
- To ask and answer **questions** using relevant historical **vocabulary**.
- To use primary and secondary **sources** to retrieve and infer findings about the past and to analyse the reliability of these sources.
- To **enquire**, with enthusiasm and interest, about the past and discuss the impact of past events on the modern world.

Our approach to teaching history

Lesson 1

- 1) Begin history unit with a '**Knowledge Harvest**' - Ask pupils to write sentences, independently, of the knowledge they already have about that unit. Reassure pupils that any errors/misconceptions will be addressed when we begin our study of the unit. The Knowledge Harvest sheet can provide pupils with a carefully selected visual prompt(s) to facilitate writing. These can be adapted to meet the needs of our pupils e.g. providing more question prompts for some pupils.
- 2) After completing the knowledge harvest, provide pupils with a **tiered list of essential vocabulary** for the unit. Use school-produced vocabulary/etymology lists to generate 15 study-specific words (five per tier).

Highlight red – Words that most pupils will not know due to less exposure or complexity.

Highlight amber - Words that most pupils are less likely to be familiar with.

Highlight green - Words that most pupils are likely to know already and have been exposed to.

These words must be incorporated into lessons and explicitly taught. They should be included in quizzes to check pupils' understanding throughout the unit and ensure 'stickability'.

Ask pupils to write simple definitions for the words they know without teacher input/any resources to support them. This will provide useful assessment information.

- 3) Lots of reading and discussion next.

Ask pupils to read '**Our Sense of Time**' sheet for the unit and discuss as a class.

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| | <p>Ask pupils to read through the associated 'Knowledge Map' for the unit. Explain that we will be referring to the Our Sense of Time/Knowledge Map throughout the unit.</p> <p>Possible questions to ask about both resources: What information interested you? What do you want to find out more about? Think of at least three enquiry questions that you would like answered.</p> |
| Lesson 2 | <p>Begin lesson 2 by asking pupils to complete a short retrieval quiz to test their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts explored in the previous lesson. Three or four questions will suffice. The quiz must be recorded in the pupils' books. Go through the answers as a class. Ask pupils to mark their own work and write in corrections using their purple pens. This will help to track pupils that have understood and retained the essential knowledge.</p> <p>Revisit 'Our Sense of Time'. Make it explicit to pupils which concept they will focus upon within this historical study, e.g. dictatorship.</p> |
| Lesson 3+ | <p>Begin every subsequent lesson with a short quiz with questions testing knowledge of the previous lesson/s. Focus on the key concepts you wish pupils to recall, along with any necessary 'finger-tip' knowledge of facts and dates.</p> <p>Ask pupils to present work in their books like this:</p> <p><u>Monday 25th April 2022</u></p> <p><u>I am learning to examine sources that provide different interpretations of an event.</u></p> <p>(Focus on a skill, pupils to write in books) Handy Historian Skill: Sources (Share the skill with pupils; this needs to be included in the planning. Every classroom needs to display a 'Handy Historian' poster for pupils to become familiar with the skills).</p> <p>Key Question: Was rationing a fair response to managing supplies during WWII? (Focus on knowledge, share with pupils, write in books).</p> |
| Lesson Y | <p>At the end of a unit, ask pupils to plan and complete an unaided writing task to showcase all their knowledge. Provide planning frameworks/'structure slips'/images, etc. as appropriate, to meet the needs of individual pupils. The Knowledge Harvest and the End of Unit Writing Task can then be compared to assess pupils' progress, both in terms of knowledge and historical skills.</p> |
| Lesson Z | <p>Within the very last lesson, ask pupils to write definitions again for the same tiered words they were presented with at the beginning of the unit. The goal is that pupils will now be more accurate with their definitions. They will also now be able to demonstrate their understanding of a larger quantity of subject-specific vocabulary.</p> |