

Unit 1 How are our toys different from those in the past?

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit looks at similarities and differences between toys today and toys in the past. It introduces children to the concepts of 'old' and 'new', and encourages them to think about the changes in their own lives and in those of their family or adults around them. The approach used in this unit could be applied to the study of other everyday things from the past, *eg clothes, games*. It provides a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This is an introductory unit. All other key stage 1 and 2 units develop from this one, particularly those that focus on developing chronological understanding.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- listened to, and told, stories about what has happened to them and/or their families in the past
- asked and answered questions of visitors to the classroom
- described the characteristics of objects, *eg in the classroom*
- carried out sorting tasks

VOCABULARY

In this unit, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with the passing of time, *eg modern, new, old, before, after, when parents/carers were young, when grandparents were young*
- a range of adjectives, *eg dirty, clean, broken, rusty*

RESOURCES

- a selection of toys dating from the 1950s to the present day
- picture books and/or story books about toys
- word cards showing adjectives suitable for describing old and new toys, *eg shiny, rusty, dirty, clean*

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

use words and phrases about the passing of time; recognise some characteristics of toys in the past; ask and answer questions about toys in the past; use oral sources and/or museum displays to find out about toys in the past; identify differences between old and new toys; communicate what they know about old and new toys through talk, play and writing

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

identify old and new objects; handle and talk about their own toys and toys in the past; identify some differences between old toys and new toys

some children will have progressed further and will:

identify a wide range of differences between old and new toys; give some reasons for these differences; extend their ability to use everyday words connected with the passage of time

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- to describe an artefact
- how to find out about aspects of the past

- to use everyday words and phrases to describe an artefact
- to speak about everyday objects in the past

- that oral sources and museum displays can be used to find out about the past

- how to decide whether an object is old or new
- to describe the characteristics of old and new objects

- to identify similarities and differences between old toys and new toys
- to speak about how they have found out about old and new toys

- how museum exhibits are organised
- to sort objects in different ways
- to sequence objects in time
- to communicate what they have learned about toys in a variety of ways

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

What are our toys like?

Ask the children to bring a favourite toy to school. Let the children look at each other's toys and talk about them. Lead a discussion and encourage children to describe their toys.

Introduce the idea that they will find out about 'new' and 'old' toys. Ask the children who they might ask about 'old' toys.

What were our parents' and grandparents' toys like?

Encourage the children to talk to a parent/carer/grandparent about the toys they had when they were small. Ask them to bring one of these toys to school if they can. *How are they different from toys today? How are they similar to toys today? Why are there differences?*

Ask the children to describe the toy they are holding or 'tell its story'. *Who did it belong to? Has it had any adventures?* etc.

What were other people's toys like?

Ask a visitor to speak about, and show, some toys from when he or she was small. Encourage the children to ask questions.

Or, visit a toy museum. Ask the children to make a 'picture list' of old toys, babies' toys, metal toys, wooden toys, etc.

How do we know that some toys are old?

Make a mixed collection of old and new toys and ask the children to sort them into two sets.

Talk about the characteristics of each set. Encourage the children to use adjectives.

Make a set of cards with adjectives written on them, *eg broken, shiny, rusty, clean*. Read a word and discuss its meaning. Ask the children to match the cards to the sets of toys.

Help children to generalise about how we know a toy is old.

What is the same and what is different about these toys?

Show old and new toys of a similar type, *eg two bears, two trains*. Ask the children to talk about what is the same and what is different. Draw their attention to design, materials and how the toys move, as well as to what the toys look like.

Ask the children to draw a picture of each toy and help them to label it.

How can we show visitors what we have found out?

Suggest that the children make a class toy museum.

Talk about how the toys should be displayed. Explore different ways of organising the 'exhibits' *eg by type, by age*. Make a three-dimensional time line by arranging toys on a shelf or unit top. Ask the children to label exhibits, make a pictorial guidebook and give visitors guided tours.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- describe the characteristics of a selection of modern toys
- suggest who might be able to tell them about toys in the past

- describe the characteristics of old toys
- speak about toys that belonged to their parents and grandparents

- ask questions about toys in the past
- infer information about toys in the past by studying old toys

- sort objects into 'old' and 'new' sets
- explain why they have grouped objects in a particular way
- match adjectives to the appropriate set of artefacts

- show understanding that design, materials, and technology can indicate whether a toy is old or new
- recognise similarities and differences between old and new toys

- arrange toys in a classroom museum
- produce labels for the toys on display
- construct a time line

POINTS TO NOTE

Suggest that children who cannot bring a toy from home choose something from a classroom collection.

Teachers might need to supplement this collection with a selection of toys, for instance from a museum's loan service.

Old children's books and reading schemes can provide useful visual sources of toys from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The pictures can be cut out and mounted on cards.

Prepare the children before the visitor arrives by helping them to choose suitable questions to ask.

The Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green, London, may be a good source of information and resources.

Picture lists are an accessible record of what the children find out. They form a useful starting point for discussions about the visit.

This activity is to encourage the children to apply the knowledge they have learnt in the first three activities, and to help them avoid common misunderstandings, *eg all broken toys are old, all shiny toys are new*.

This is also a chance to introduce unfamiliar vocabulary, *eg the names of toys no longer used*.

This activity could be extended by asking the children to represent these ideas in a Venn diagram.

This activity enables children to consolidate what they have learnt. There is also an emphasis on helping them communicate their awareness and understanding of history in a variety of ways.

A class museum set up in the corner of a room can also be used for role play. Provide a ticket office and museum shop to encourage more diverse and structured play.

Encourage visitors to come to the classroom by writing invitations.

A link can be made to writing by discussing the different purposes of labelling, *eg to identify an object or to give further details about it*.

Establish the distinction between a short label or caption and a sentence.

