Evaluations

Evaluation of teaching
What worked well in terms of developing pupils' understanding of history? What didn't work so well, why, and what would I do differently?

Evaluation of some of the children's responses
Why did they respond differently, in work or attitude? What does this tell me about their understanding of history?
What could I/did I do about it?

This will inform both plans for future activities and pupil assessments.

5 Examples from PGCE trainee teachers' work with children

5.1 Using oral history in a year 1 class topic on the Second World War

Children listened to a pre-recorded tape on which a woman described her experiences as a trainee nurse during the London blitz. In a later session, they talked to a retired dinner lady (referred to as Mrs I. in the transcripts) who told them that, at that time, she had lived in a country town in Scotland. She spoke of the 'war effort' and of her marriage to a soldier, and showed them photographs. They also examined a gas mask, a hooded torch used during the black-out, and two identity cards.

Chronology/similarity/difference

Assessment objectives

- place in sequence events in a story about the past;
- identify differences between past and present times.

In discussing both accounts, children used time vocabulary in order to sequence events and to describe differences between past and present. Here is a transcript of part of a conversation held by three pupils.

J. The war's over now.
A. That's a long time ago ...
Ja. (looking at photographs) That was when you were young.
J. Not old like you are now ...
Ja. Is he [her son] grown up now?
A. He's a man now.
D. It was a very long time ago.
Ja. We don't have bombs because we are not in a war are we?
J. It's peaceful now.
A. We don't have ration books ... gas masks ... tin hats.
D. We don't have to go somewhere else [evacuation].
Evaluation of evidence

Assessment objectives

- communicate information acquired from an historical source;
- recognise that historical sources can stimulate and help to answer questions about the past.

Children understood far more from talking to a person than from the tape, because they were able to interject with frequent questions in order to gain new information, to clarify, and to determine validity.

Mrs I. If there was a bomber coming over, the sirens used to sound so that everyone could take cover.
J. What? They make a noise so that everyone knows they run somewhere?
Mrs I. So there were anxious times, when our men folk were away at war ...
J. When did the war finish? How long did it go on?
Mrs I. told them of an incident when the ambulance her husband was driving in France went over a land mine.
J a. Did the other people in the van - were they killed?
Mrs I. I daresay quite a number were. I don't know exactly. I wasn't there.
J a. But how do you know if you weren't there? Did he tell you?
Mrs I. I didn't know until I received a letter from him.
J a. He wrote a letter telling you he weren't dead? ...

Interpretations of history

Assessment objective

- show an awareness that different stories about the past can give different versions of what happened.

In the following conversation, three pupils compare the taped account of the war given by the trainee nurse (Mrs W) with the spoken account given by Mrs I.

D. They both spoke about 'rations' and 'gas masks'.
J. Yeah ... They both lived in World War II.
J a. So why didn't Mrs W. say all about the war like Mrs I. did?
J. Because it would be boring.
D. No. Because she was a different part of the war. She was living in Scotland.
J a. Oh yeah ... They lived in different countries.
5.2 Investigating historical sources in a year 4 class topic on the Victorian times

Sources

Written sources


Pictorial sources

Postcard reconstructions of Victorian street scenes and interiors and copies of contemporary photographs.

Artefacts

(a warming pan, candle-holder and snuffer, poker, scrubbing board and sampler)

Evaluation of evidence

Assessment objectives

- make deductions from historical sources;
- put together information drawn from historical sources.

Children were able to make deductions, and to recognise the need to put together information from different sources in order to find out about childhood in Victorian times.

Eva (the twelve-year-old Kentish girl) had expensive birthday presents, 'a silver locket and ermine for her dolls', and she played with her 'beautiful dolls' dinner service' and 'went on a steamer to Dungeness'. Mabel Ashby's (from Ordinary Lives) time was spent differently; she had to care for younger children and 'stagger 50 yards with pails of water from the tap'. George Noakes, aged 7, (from Ordinary Lives) had to 'milk the cows and help with the harvest'. Eva's education consisted of a 'singing class at Lady Salisbury's', 'catechising classes at St Peters', and 'home tutors in German and drawing', while to Mabel Ashby, education meant 'chanting the alphabet and the numbers one to a hundred' with 'eighty pupils in a class'. Children also deduced that the milk boy was not at school because his parents were poor and identified the function of a chamber pot from the play by Roald Dahl Charlie and the Chocolate Factory!

Interpretations of history

Assessment objectives

- distinguish between a fact and a point of view;
- show an understanding that deficiencies in evidence may lead to different interpretations of the past.

Children immediately distinguished between the photographs and the reconstructions. They made the following comments: the postcard scenes 'don't look quite real', 'The street is too empty ... too clean', 'Judging
from the photographs, there would be rotten doors’, ‘animals in the street’, and ‘clothes on a line’, ‘The streets would get muddy when it rained’, ‘The houses in the postcard look made of wood, but in the photograph they are stone’.

*Change/continuity*

*Assessment objectives*

- describe changes over a period of time;
- recognise that over time some things changed and others stayed the same.

Children used the collection of artefacts to describe and explain changes over time and features of Victorian life.

5.3 *Investigating historical sources in a year 6 class topic on the Victorian times*

*Sources*

Children were shown a photograph of a tea party at the local vicarage in 1890, a census return for the vicarage and a newspaper account of a party at the vicarage on 21 June 1887 to celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee. They were later shown the first episode of the television serial drama *Upstairs, Downstairs*, which is set in a wealthy Victorian household and follows the lives of characters above and below stairs.

*Evaluation of evidence*

*Assessment objectives*

- comment on the usefulness of an historical source, by reference to its content, as evidence for a particular enquiry;
- compare the usefulness of different historical sources as evidence for a particular enquiry.

In two columns, each child listed what the photograph of the vicarage tea party did and did not tell them. Here is one of the lists produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the photograph tells me</th>
<th>What questions are still not answered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The people are in the garden.</td>
<td>Who are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They look posh.</td>
<td>What professions do they do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are enjoying themselves.</td>
<td>Where do they live?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are they related?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then the pupils discussed the vicarage census return. Here is a transcript of H., K. and S.’s conversation.

*H.*  William Wilks ... he was the vicar.
*K.*  He must have been quite rich.
*H.*  Why?
*K.*  He was head of the household. It was a big house. He had a lot of servants, so he must have had to pay them.
S. He was the vicar. Perhaps the church paid them. He probably didn’t have to buy his house.

H. Albert Norman’s come all the way from Cambridge. That was a long way.

K. Does it mean that? It only says he was born in Cambridge …

H. He might have moved to be the schoolmaster of the school …

S. I wonder what the housekeeper did …

K. Do you think she was in charge of the housemaid?

H. Probably … She comes before her on the list.

S. And she’s older …

Interpretations of history

Assessment objective

• show an awareness that different stories about the past can give different versions of what happened.

The children each wrote a letter describing the Jubilee party on 21 June 1887 based on the sources (the photograph, census return and newspaper account) as if they were one of the occupants of the vicarage. Here are two of their letters:

Letter of Reverend Wilks (unmarried, 37)

... I think the festival went very well. Everyone liked the food and songs, especially the roast beef, as nearly everyone had a couple of slices … I must say, I got worried when the acrobat had a glass of beer … The game of cricket went well … The only disappointment was the church warden was seen leaving with a girl from the village …

Letter of Emily Dumbrell, housemaid (unmarried, 20)

... I woke up much earlier than I should have. I went into the kitchen to help cook put a cake into the oven, but she wasn’t there so I went on without her. When she came in, she told me to ‘shoo’ …

Based on these characters, the children made a play about the Jubilee party.

Interpretations of history

Assessment objective

• recognise that interpretations of the past, including popular accounts, may differ from what is known to have happened.

Finally, the children watched a video of the first episode of Upstairs, Downstairs. They were asked:

1 Was domestic life in the programme as you thought it would be having studied Victorian life? Was anything portrayed differently?

2 Do you think you or the programme is correct?

3 Why do you think the programme was made? How did the programme makers get their ideas?
The children found their interpretation differed from that of the programme. When asked which interpretation they thought was more accurate, they at first said, 'The TV must be right. They'd know'. But S. went on to ask, 'How do they know?':

_H_. They got books and papers to look at ... and the census and things.
_S_. We looked at the census ... they might have made some up ... to fill in the story.
_M_. Wouldn't have been a story otherwise, unless _everything_ was written down.
_S_. We looked at the census. And we made bits up.
_K_. No we didn't; we got it from a newspaper.
_S_. I had to think of some things to put in ...

The children concluded that the 'concrete' things in the video - clothes, furniture and equipment - were well-documented and in some cases still exist and so were probably accurately depicted. However, evidence for more abstract areas, such as relationships between servants or between servants and employers, did not exist or was incomplete.

### 6 History for subject specialists

In order to complete the assignment at the end of this section you should:

- Explore the further reading for subject specialists.
- Familiarise yourself with the national curriculum Orders, non-statutory guidance and NCC Inset resources for history.
- Identify the content areas of the history study units that you are unfamiliar with and read up on those periods/topics which are new to you.
- Explore available opportunities to discover more about children's thinking in history, for example conceptual understanding.
- Talk to colleagues with responsibility for history about assessment, planning at class and whole-school levels, effective teaching approaches, resources and implications of the national curriculum history documentation for teachers and schools, for example how do teachers ensure children gain a local, national and global perspective in primary history?
- Build up a 'History in the News' file of newspaper and journal articles and advertising materials relating to primary history, such as _The Times Educational Supplement_ (TES) which produces twice-yearly history supplements.

The NCC Resource List in this Resource Box provides some useful starting points.