

Once Upon a Time: A Unit Comparing “The Present” to “The Past”

Special Area: Preschool
Written by: Cristy West, Portland Elementary Pre-K
Length of Unit: Four Lessons

I. **ABSTRACT**

- A. Travel back in time to discover how life was different in “The Past” through books, nursery rhymes, works of art, pictures, antiques, and music. Be prepared to participate in dramatic play, singing, and games.

II. **OVERVIEW**

- A. Goals and Objectives:
1. Demonstrate an Awareness of the Passage of Time and of Periods of Time, as “The Past,” “The Present,” “The Future.” Page 75 of the *Preschool Sequence*, Level II: Match images of contemporary objects with like objects from the past, indicating whether the objects belong to the “present” or “past” (clocks, telephones, cars, clothing, etc.)
 2. Listen to Stories Read Aloud - Page 48 of the *Preschool Sequence*, Level II: Attend and listen to picture books with storylines (30 minutes), as well as books of other genres, such as informational books (15 minutes).
 3. Listen to and Sing Songs - Page 92 of the *Preschool Sequence*, Level II: Listen to, sing, and perform children’s songs and fingerplays individually or with others.
 4. Develop an Appreciation for Art - Page 98 of the *Preschool Sequence*, Level II: Look at and talk about works of art, describing the details and “story” depicted, such as, objects, people, activities, setting, time of day/year, long ago-contemporary, etc., as well as the mood/feeling that certain pieces of art elicit.
 5. Listen to Nursery Rhymes, Poems, Fingerplays and Songs and Respond with Appropriate Gestures - Page 42 of the *Preschool Sequence*, Level II: Interpret and act out through pantomime a nursery rhyme, poem, or fingerplay, using one’s own gestures and movements (as compared to those which have been previously demonstrated and taught).

III. **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

- A. References and Resources
1. Amery, H. *Then and Now*. London: Usborne Publishing Ltd., 1985. ISBN 0-7460-0794-9.
 2. Berger, S. and Moreton, D. *Then & Now*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1999. ISBN 0-439-04602-5.
 3. Rylant, C. *When I Was Young in the Mountains*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1982.
- B. Prerequisite Knowledge for Students
1. Listen to stories read aloud.
 2. Play group games.
 3. Use the body expressively.
 4. Act out a simple pantomime (a person performing a single activity, an animal, etc.)
 5. Move to music.

6. Function and work constructively in a group setting, using appropriate social skills.

IV. RESOURCES

1. *100 Years Ago* by Donna Marriott
2. *Long Ago and Today* by Rozanne Lanczak Williams
3. *In Times Long Ago* by Renee Keeler
4. *Then and Now: An Usborne Talkabout Book* by Heather Amery
5. *Always Room for One More* by Sorche Nic Leodhas
6. *The Itsy Bitsy Spider: Classic Verse and Rhymes* compiled and illustrated by Jenny Press
7. *Hush, Little Baby: A Folk Song with Pictures* by Marla Frazee
8. *The Old Stagecoach* - work of art by Jonathan Eastman Johnson
9. *When I Was Young in the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant
10. *Special Moment* - work of art by Munier
11. Period clothing- pantaloons, bonnet, parasol, overalls, knickers
12. Pictures of people dressed in clothing from different periods in the past
13. Items used in the past - quill & ink bottle, die-cast toy vehicles depicting an earlier period, lantern, school bell, metal pail
14. Music – “She’ll Be Coming Around the Mountain”

V. LESSONS OUTLINE

Lesson One: Explore the Artwork *The Old Stagecoach*

- A. Daily Objective
 1. Look at and talk about works of art, describing the details and “story” depicted, such as objects, people, activities, setting, time of day/year, long ago-contemporary, etc., as well as the mood/feeling that certain pieces of art elicit.
- B. Grouping
 1. Whole group instruction
- C. Materials & Preparation
 1. Jonathan Eastman Johnson’s work of art *The Old Stagecoach* should be displayed in plain view.
- D. Language of Instruction
 1. Teacher: artist, painter, painting, title, original, print, present, past, stagecoach
 2. Students: artist, painter, painting, title, present, past, stagecoach
- E. Procedures/Activities
 1. Have Jonathan Eastman Johnson’s work of art, *The Old Stagecoach*, displayed in plain view and call the children’s attention to it.
 2. Ask the children to look at it for a moment and then to guess what the artist may have named it. Ask, “What title would you give it?”
 3. Have individual children tell something that they see in the painting.
 4. Ask, “Do you think he was painting a picture of something happening today in the present or a long time ago in the past? Why?” (If the children do not come up with it on their own, point out the period clothing and the stagecoach. Say, “You may see an old car without tires in someone’s yard, but would you see one of these? Are the children in the painting dressed like you dress today in the present?”)
 5. Close the discussion with, “Jonathan Eastman Johnson painted a picture of children a long time ago in the past playing on an old stagecoach.”

- F. Go a Little Further
 - 1. For students who have difficulty: Complete the procedures and activities listed above in a small group or with the individual who has difficulty.
 - 2. For students who excel: Ask, “What else could the artist have put in the painting that would let us know it was a picture of long ago in the past? What could he have changed to make it a picture of today, the present? What if he painted the children playing on an airplane, a four wheeler, an eighteen wheeler, a bass boat?”
- G. Assessment/Evaluation
 - 1. Direct observation using focus questions and a participation chart

Lesson Two: Read *Then & Now* by Samantha Berger

- A. Daily Objective
 - 1. Attend and listen to picture books with storylines (30 minutes), as well as books of other genres, such as informational books (15 minutes).
- B. Grouping
 - 1. Whole group instruction
- C. Materials & Preparation
 - 1. *Then & Now* by Samantha Berger and Daniel Moreton
- D. Language of Instruction
 - 1. Teacher: author, title, photographs, present, now, past, long ago
 - 2. Students: title, present, past, then, now
- E. Procedures/Activities
 - 1. Read *Then & Now* using Core Knowledge’s “STORY” technique (Appendix A).
- F. Go a Little Further
 - 1. For students who have difficulty, read the story to them individually.
 - 2. For students who excel, ask them to think of things that look really different now from the same things from long ago. (Buildings, illustrations in books, clothes, etc.)
- G. Assessment/Evaluation
 - 1. Direct Observation using a participation chart

Lesson Three: Sing “The Past” and “The Present”

- A. Daily Objectives
 - 1. Listen to, sing, and perform children’s songs and fingerplays individually or with others.
 - 2. Match images of contemporary objects with like objects from the past, indicating whether the objects belong to the “present” or “past” (clocks, telephones, cars, clothing, etc.)
- B. Grouping
 - 1. Whole group instruction
- C. Materials & Preparation
 - 1. Record, tape, or CD player
 - 2. Recorded song “She’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain” (If you don’t have access to these two recorded versions, you can sing the two different versions.)
 - a. Version 1: Driving six white horses
 - b. Version 2: Driving in a hotrod
 - 3. Pictures of stagecoach pulled by six white horses and hot rod
- D. Language of Instruction
 - 1. Teacher: past, present, version, hotrod, different
 - 2. Student: past, present, hotrod, different

- E. Procedures/Activities
1. Say, "I'm going to play a song, and we are going to sing along and think about what the girl in the song is doing."
 2. Play the version with she'll be driving six white horses. Ask, "What do you think the six white horses were pulling?" If the children need prompting, ask, "Could it be a stagecoach? A wagon? A Sleigh? If she is driving a stagecoach, wagon, or sleigh, do you think this version of the song is about long ago in the past or today in the present?"
 3. "Now I'm going to play the same song, but this is a different version. It may sound a little different. Let's listen for what is different."
 4. Play the version with she'll be driving in a hotrod. "Did you hear something different? What was she driving this time in this version of the song? What is a hotrod? If she is driving in a hotrod, do you think this version of the song is about long ago in the past or today in the present?"
 5. Close the discussion with "So, we've decided that if she was driving six white horses, the song was about the past. If she was driving in a hotrod, the song was about the present." (If a child has a logical and different opinion, like she could be driving six white horses in a rodeo in the present, compliment him/her on his/her good thinking.)
- F. Go a Little Further
1. For students who have difficulty: After the whole group activity, discuss it individually with the student having difficulty. Give more examples or versions that make it more obvious that it is either in the past or present. (Ex. She'll be flying in an airplane, spaceship, racecar, tugboat, etc.)
 2. For students who excel: After the whole group activity, let the students who excel get in a small group to brainstorm versions that would fit "The Past" or "The Present."
- G. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Direct observation of responses to focus questions

Lesson Four: Jack & Jill Nursery Rhyme Action/ Past or Present?

- A. Daily Objective
1. Interpret and act out through pantomime a nursery rhyme, poem, or fingerplay, using one's own gestures and movements
- B. Grouping
1. Whole group instruction
- C. Materials & Preparation
1. Jack & Jill rhyme poster
 2. Recorded rhyme to music (if you have access)
 3. Props for pantomime (pail, period clothing)
- D. Language of Instruction
1. Teacher: artist, illustration, title, present, past, rhyme, well, pail, fetch
 2. Students: rhyme, title, present, past, fetch, pail, well
- E. Procedures/Activities
1. Have a rhyme poster of Jack and Jill displayed in plain view and call the children's attention to it. Ask the children to look at it for a moment and then to guess what the rhyme is about.
 2. Read the rhyme to the children.
 3. Have the children say the rhyme with you.
 4. Play a recording of the rhyme with music (if you have access).

5. Ask the children to act out what's happening in the rhyme, and then let groups of two children act it out using props.
 6. Discuss why the rhyme is about something that happened in the past (fetching water in a pail from the well).
- F. Go a Little Further
1. For students who have difficulty: The teacher should be that child's partner when acting out the rhyme.
 2. For students who excel: Let them come up with other objects that Jack and Jill could have fetched and then help them make up variations for the rhyme. (Ex. Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a basket of eggs. Jack, he tripped and busted his lip, and Jill, she bruised her legs. Jack and Jill went up the hill to churn a bit of butter. Jack spilt the cream and started to scream, and Jill's voice began to sputter.)
- G. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Direct observation to responses of focal questions and of pantomime actions

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY (Optional)

- A. Have visitors bring items from the past to share with the students (Ex. Clothes irons you heat in the fire, school bell, lunch pail, lantern, oil lamp, butter mold, butter churn, etc.). Have visitors share crafts or chores from the past with the children. (Ex. Needlework, basket making, whittling, washing clothes on a washboard, etc.)

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A - The "STORY" technique

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. Amery, H. *Then and Now*. London: Usborne Publishing Ltd., 1985. ISBN 0-7460-0794-9.
- B. Frazee, M. *Hush, Little Baby*. New York: Browndeer Press, 1999. ISBN 0-15-201429-2.
- C. Keeler, R. *In Times Long Ago*. Cypress: Creative Teaching Press, Inc. 1996. ISBN 1-57471-133-4.
- D. Leodhas, S. *Always Room for One More*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1965.
- E. Marriott, D. *100 Years Ago*. Cypress: Creative Teaching Press, Inc., 1998. ISBN 1-57471-339-6.
- F. Press, J. *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*. Newmarket: Brimax Books, Ltd., 1998. ISBN 1-85854-695-8.
- G. Rylant, C. *When I Was Young in the Mountains*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1982.
- H. Williams, R. *Long Ago and Today*. Cypress: Creative Teaching Press, Inc., 1996. ISBN 1-57471-138-5.

Appendix A

When reading books to children, use this STORY technique.

S	Start with the cover, title, author
T	Tell the story as you read. (Use different voices for different characters.
O	Offer information about unknown words or objects in the story.
R	Recall & review (Discuss and ask questions)
Y	Your turn! Have the child tell about the story.