Activities using Extracts and Pictures from the School Histories Collection

Using the Extracts and Pictures

In this part, we have developed some activities that can be used with the extracts and pictures from books on school’s histories. The extracts can be found in the next section, and the pictures are in the form of postcards. Both are available on the accompanying CD, and can be photocopied.

Each extract is marked with an X and the pictures are identified with a P, with a number following, enabling identification of their source in the reference section at the end of the pack.

General activities are suggested for working with the different themes. Some extra information is provided about some of the schools.

Several of the extracts were written centuries ago, and therefore use unfamiliar words and sentence construction. Some are quite lengthy. Key Factsheet 4 provides a glossary of the wide range of schools in the past and some other terms.


Most of the activities would be enhanced by pictures and newspaper or newsletter cuttings from your school in the past. (These can be obtained from your school archive or local records office.)

It is suggested that pupils work their way through individual extracts, collaboratively, sharing and writing down significant ideas.

General suggestions for working with extracts and pictures
1. Identify any previous pupils known to the current pupils of the school, and the dates they attended the school. Issues for further investigation about the school’s past, arising out of the activities below can then be noted and addressed to the previous pupils.
2. Ascertain where the records or archives are held for your school — e.g. photographs, old newspaper articles, school bulletins or newsletters, etc. (See Factsheet 1)
3. Remove or cover up the details of dates and source from the extract and pictures.
4. Organise class into groups, and allocate your chosen extracts/pictures per table, ideally with a copy for each pupil.
5. Ask them to discuss and write down when they think the extract was written/photo taken and to justify their decisions in writing.
6. They could sort the extracts and pictures into specific categories, or chronology, justifying their reasons in writing.
7. Once they have done the above, gradually give them a little bit more information about the extract/picture — e.g. the date, the place, the sort of school, etc. Allow them to discuss if and why their responses tallied with the new information.
Discipline

**School rules X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X37**

Over the centuries there were various types of schools, for different social classes of pupils. This range of schools reflected a range of political and religious beliefs about education. On the whole, until the 1870’s pupils came from predominantly middle and upper class backgrounds, because schooling incurred the payment of fees — some schools which were run on a charitable basis, or as a part of an industrial organisation were cheaper than those very expensive ones for the (few young ladies and) young gentlemen of the day.

The behavioural standards varied from school to school and across history. Disciplinary codes of practice were particularly stringent in many Tudor and some Victorian schools.

**General activities relating to school rules**

It would be helpful if you have a copy of the current rules of your school or Code of Conduct, and any previous rules from the school that you can find.

The rules below should be discussed in two contexts: one in terms of the period that they refer to, what life was like for pupils, rich or poor, and what the school was like. In addition, pupils could compare their rules of today with those in previous periods.

**Using all the rule extracts**

Make a landscape-orientated chart with the school names (and dates) at the side and the following headings:

- to what the rule refers (e.g. noise-making, swearing, cleanliness)
- what the rule tells us about the school
- what the rule tells us about education or society at that time
- whether they agree with the rule
- similar rules in current school

**Rules at Hazelwood School X5**

In 1817, Hazelwood School, in Birmingham, became a pioneer for progressive education. Corporal punishment was banned. The main aim of the proprietors was ‘to leave as much as possible, all power in the hands of the boys themselves’ ‘for the welfare of the school’. The school intended that boys’ education there would equip them for life, socially and educationally. A constitution of law, with police, a court and jury system, drawn from staff and pupils, was established by the boys and their teachers, which included an extensive list of school rules, rewards – payments (of tokens to pupils) and privileges for excellence and punishments, in the form of fines (payment of tokens to the school court) and loss of privileges.

(For more detail see Hazelwood School (Birmingham) (1827) Laws of Hazelwood School London: C. Knight)

**Activity**

In the extract you will find some of Hazelwood School’s many and complex school rules. They appear to be extremely tough. Ask the pupils to discuss responses to the rules, without telling them the context. Once they have fed back, explain that this was actually a form of progressive education (see above).

This could create a debate about why rules are required, and what sort of rules, rewards and sanctions they would expect in a school a hundred years ago, and would want to establish in their school today.
Friends’ School, in Wigton, Cumberland X2
This Quaker school for boys and girls opened in 1815.

Activity
• How harsh are the rules?
• How is the Quaker religion reflected in these rules?

Sanctions  X5, X6, X11, X12, X13, X14, X18,
Corporal punishment in state-funded schools was legal in the UK until 1986 and in private schools until 1999 (although many schools stopped before then). Local LEAs laid down guidelines for the use of corporal punishments in local state schools.

Caning was quite prevalent in most schools. The impact of this is to found in the reminiscences. Similar references can be found on the internet. Humiliation and brutality seem to be a recurring theme.

General activities relating to sanctions
Please adapt any current school sanctions documentation for comparative use in the classroom. Early versions of punishments would also be useful.

Like school rules, the sanctions should be discussed in terms of the period that they refer to – what life was like for pupils, rich or poor, and what the school was like.

Prior to using the extracts it is important to have a discussion about corporal punishment.

You could ask pupils to interview their parents or carers about what they remember of school punishments, using questions from the interview sheet. They should record the responses.

You could organise a debate, where groups of pupils have to argue the case for or against. The extracts and interview response could be used to make big and little points. Some of the previous rules could be used. They should note the key points made and return to them after completing the activity(ies) below.

Using all the sanctions extracts, (including the Rules of Hazelwood, X5, which include punishments) reminiscences and Busbridge Log Book, X18

Make a landscape-orientated chart with the school names (and dates) at the side and the following headings:
• source — reminiscence, rule-book, etc
• to what “offence” and degree of seriousness of the offence the sanction refers (e.g. interrupting the teacher, rudeness, etc)
• what the sanction tells us about the school
• what the sanction tells us about education or society at that time
• whether they agree with the sanction
• similar sanctions in current school
Punishing truancy  X9, X10, X11  P6, P17
Truancy from school was treated severely especially where schooling had been made compulsory for children at risk of or who had been involved in criminal activity. Schooling was compulsory from 1880, and in some cases earlier. Persistent truants were sent to authoritarian Truant Schools from the late 1880's) (See the Glossary for more information.) Like today, pupils were rewarded for being present and on time – see P6

School log books may give details of non-attendance and ensuing punishments.

Some of the poorest pupils were unable to attend school before it became compulsory because of the fees, poverty and the demands by some local employers.

General activities relating to truancy
Discuss and investigate the issues below:
• Why did pupils truant in the past, and truant today?
• What was it like in a Truants School?
• What sanctions are applied to truants today? Why?
• Importance of school attendance now and in the past – to pupils, families, local farmers/industrialists?
• The current legal position regarding school attendance
• How did schools in the past reward good attendance, compared with what your school does today?

School log books  X17, X18
It would be helpful if you could locate some extracts from log books previously used in your school. (These will be held in your school or in the local school records office.)

X17 provides an account of events in a school in 1863. In common with other log books, this comments on the impact of the weather.
X18 shows the attitude of a headmaster in 181-2 to corporal punishment.

General activities based on log books
Both extracts, in addition to some from your own school, provide opportunities for creative writing – embellishing what might have happened on the days on which these extracts were written.

Pupils could be encouraged to write their own log books for a week from their school experiences. These could be used as comparative material to what might have occurred to pupils in the school at an earlier period. This could also be a blog book activity, using blog pages on the internet.
Complaints and Protest  X19, X20
These extracts, from pamphlets published in 1834, are written by a parent.

The term colleger refers to pupils who had gained a free place at Eton College through a scholarship.

A fag was a younger student who performed tasks for an older boy. They were often subjected to beatings from the older boys. (This practice was abolished in the 1970’s).

Tom Brown’s Schooldays gives vivid accounts of this sort of practice, based on the author’s experience at Rugby School in the 1830’s)

Activities relating to school life in Eton or Rugby in 1830’s
These extracts could be used, together with some excerpts from Tom Brown’s schooldays to provide background material for a discussion or piece of writing about a day in the life of a pupil at Eton or Rugby in 1830’s.

Rebellions in public schools 1780 – 1880  X21, X22, X23, X24, X25
(See also the website of Rugby School which describes a rebellion by the boys in 1797)

The excerpts show who was involved and the reasons for the rebellions. The international political context in terms of revolutions is referred to in X23.

Activity relating to public school riots
Explain what a public school is (referring to the information in the Glossary).

Pupils could work on this in groups, with each group having a different extract. Their responses could be recorded on a chart with headings.

Questions for the groups:
• Why did the pupils rebel?
• Who was involved, as rebels or as targets for rebellion?
• What form did their rebellion take?
• What do you think about their rebellion? Were they justified?
• Would a similar situation occur to day? Why or why not?
• What might prevent such a rebellion?
Rebellions by pupils at Burston School X16
Ten year old Emily provides a lucid account of the reasons for the strike. The BBC interviewed her 60 years later for their documentary. For details and further background information see references page 66.

Activities relating to Burston Strike School account
(i) A series of role plays, improvising the conversations that happened:
   a. Between the Parson and the Governess
   b. Among the children when they decide to strike
   c. Between children and parents
   d. Between the Attendance Officer and some of the parents
   e. Between the Police Officer and a parent
   f. Between the children and Mrs Boulton
   g. ... and so on ...

(ii) Making some of the documents in the case:
   a. The notice of dismissal
   b. The cards round the children’s necks
   c. The summonses
   d. Letters to other children, telling them about the strike
   e. Letters from the parson to his bishop ...
   f. ... and so on...

Learning in the Strike School
• What did they learn in the lessons on the green or in the carpenter’s shop? (In other words, what kind of lessons did they have? )
• How were they organised?
• What kind of curriculum – what subjects were they taught? Who decided?
• Again, this would be worth improvising first, then writing up – as a plan, and/or as an account of a lesson.
School Uniforms

**School uniform**

- Detail and prices of boys school uniforms in 17th and 18th century  
  X26, X27
- Details of girls uniform in 1797  
  X28
- Details of boys uniform in 1830  
  X29
- Details of girls uniform in 1830  
  X30
- Details of girls uniform in 1917  
  X31
- Haircuts  
  X32

Most of the photos provide pictures of uniforms, between 1704 to the present day.

You can also download details of school uniforms (and sometimes their prices) from the websites of exclusive public schools and local comprehensives.

Try to get hold of old photographs of school pupils from your school (from school archives or local records office).

Ask ex-pupils for reminiscences about their school uniforms and hair styles.

**Activities relating to school uniforms**

Cover the dates on the postcards, and ask the pupils to put them into a chronological order. Ask pupils to give reasons for their chronology.

Compare the following and record the responses:

**Style, fashion and textiles** used in the past with current day – explain the differences.

**Hairstyles** can indicate when a picture was taken. Choose a selection of the images and looking at the hairstyles and cuts, guess when the picture was taken, justifying the answer. The range (and prices) of uniforms worn in different types of school (private, state, elementary, religious) etc – today and in the past.

**Girls’ and boys’ uniforms** – how these have changed over the past?

Compare the reminiscences of ex-pupils from your school with the reminiscences about uniform in X31, X32, X46 and images in P8, P19.

When and why were girls first allowed to wear trousers in school?

Compare costs of uniforms in the past with today’s uniforms.

How do school uniforms represent a school and what the school stands for – in the past and today? Include discussions about mottos and logos, multicultural/multi faith intake.

Discuss whether schools should have uniforms and why.

What a uniform should comprise of. How much should it cost?

An extended piece of writing accounting for the changes in school uniforms.

The responses to the above questions would need to be sorted into big and little points as part of the planning for this essay (see section on big and little questions and Zone of Relevance).
Schools, Classrooms, Lessons

The pictures and extracts in this section illustrate the extensive changes in UK schools. However, as with today’s schools, at specific moments in history, schools differed in pupil intake, in what was taught and how, in attitudes and range of pupils.

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And relevant documentation you can obtain about your school in the past.

Issues and activities relating to schools, classrooms and learning

What’s in a name?

Pupils should investigate previous names of the school, and the type of school that it was – elementary, grammar, technical, etc.

What was the nature of the pupil intake in terms of age, social class, gender and ethnicity?

How does the name of the school reflect the period in which the school was named?

Identify and explain the differences in the pupils in your school now compared to those in your or other English schools in the past, using many of the pictures in the pack, and especially P9, and if possible your own school photographs.

(You could also use some of the uniform questions here.)

Making friends is a vital aspect of schooling.

Photo P7 was taken on the boys’ first day in secondary school.

What does this photo show about the friendship?

What do your pupils remember about their first day at school, in terms of other pupils? – did they know other pupils in their class/year? How did they know them? How did it help having friends at the beginning of their new school?
Investigating your school’s past

SECTION 3

Teaching Activities

Teachers, pupils and classrooms
In many schools for poorer pupils, class sizes were significantly higher than today.
P10 shows mealtime in a Ragged School (see later in this section and in the Glossary). This room also doubled up as a classroom.
P11 shows a Wesleyan school classroom. Between 1812 and the 1920’s, this Methodist school operated a Spartan regime, in terms of food and accommodation. Ex-pupils write of their constant hunger pangs and fear of beatings. One describes the fear of being caned in front of the whole school at morning prayers.

Activities relating to teachers and pupils
Pupils should examine the faces of the pupils in this picture and the demeanour of the teacher at the front. What sort of teacher was he? What effect did he have on his pupils? How does with compare to the teacher in P13 and to their current teachers?
What impact does the size of the Victorian class have on the teaching?
Pupils should imagine themselves in this size of classroom, being taught by the teacher at the front of the Wesleyan class. What would be different? The way the lesson was taught, the topics they learnt about, the things they had to do, the discipline, the way the work was marked, what happened if pupils had difficulties with their work.

Classrooms and learning tools
P12 Depicts an open-plan classroom, which was popularised in the 1960’s and 1970’s, following the Plowden Report, which recommended activity-based learning.
This image can be used in contrast to the formalised classroom in P11, the teacher at the blackboard in P13 and the pupils at their computers in P14.
The more recent pictures are also dated.

Activities relating to classrooms and learning tools
In what way have classroom activities and classroom learning tools (slates, blackboard/overhead projector/interactive whiteboard) changed for our pupils since these photographs were taken.
Pupils could construct a time-line from the above information showing the changes in classrooms since the 1900’s. They could choose headings relating to the above information.
Investigating your school’s past

SECTION 3  
Teaching Activities

The curriculum and learning – what’s taught and how it’s taught

William Petty’s verse shows the sort of learning that took place in 1600’s. Formal grammar – learning the different parts of speech, learning about verbs and sentences by rote, and analysing poetry – was the mainstay of the English curriculum at the time.

In Victorian times, lessons in most schools focussed on drilling in the three R’s – reading, (w)riting and (a)rithmetic. Teaching took place through rote learning, whereby children had to copy learn things by heart. Geography was often taught through learning lists of countries, capitals, rivers and coastlines. A large globe was used frequently in this lesson. Science was taught through objects like stuffed animals, or pictures of animals, insects, etc. Children had to observe and to talk or write about what they had seen, or teachers wrote lists on the board for children to copy. Children were also taught needlework, cookery (towards the end of the 1800’s) and woodwork. (See Dickens’ *Hard Times*, Book 1, chapter 2 where the teacher asks for a definition of a horse.)

But not all schools used equally formal teaching methods. X35 and P22 depict a classroom in the 1880’s doing activities that might be taking place in today’s classrooms. This was highly unusual at this time, where pupils in most other schools were still learning English through formal grammar.

Activities relating to curriculum and learning

Pupils could use the picture to guess what the pupils are doing, make judgements about what these techniques would help pupils to learn, and whether they are effective. They could make a comparison with their own experiences of learning to read.

Girls and boys education  X33, X36, X38  P20, P21, P23, P24

In mixed schools girls and boys received their education in the main schools subject together. In many cases it was not until the last 20 or 30 years that they were integrated for subjects like woodwork/technology and domestic subjects like needlework/textiles or cookery and PE (although this is sometimes still taught separately).

While all girls’ schools tended to teach cookery or domestic science, and most mixed schools provided this subject for girls, fewer schools provide this subject in today’s schools. It does not have a specific place in the National Curriculum.

Activities relating to girls’ education

X36  In what ways was the girls’ schooling different to the boys at St Anne’s School in London, 1704? Why do you think that was the case?
The Girls’ Public Day School Company was founded in 1872, and provided “excellent and affordable day schooling for middle – and upper-class girls”. It also provided scholarships (free education) for “exceptional girls from elementary or middle schools who gain scholarships” (93 in 1899). Girls in the schools were educated to university level and many went on to Oxford, Cambridge or London Universities.

In 1944 schools in the Girls Public Day School Trust joined the Direct Grant School scheme, to keep their fees lower. This DG scheme was abolished as part of the 1976 Education Act, when schools in the Trust has to decide whether become privately funded through fees, or join the state-funded comprehensive system.

P20 Highbury Hill School, (now Highbury Fields School) was a GPDSC girls’ school that chose to become comprehensive.

Why was the motto of the Girls Public Day School Company knowledge is no more a fountain sealed?

P21, P23, P24 these pictures show mixed and single sex classes.
In the mixed classes, to what extent are boys and girls mixed?
How similar/different are the activities that they are doing?

P21 What were the boys and the girls in the Industrial school doing in the laundry? Why do you think they were doing different tasks?

Special needs – the language of special educational needs   P2

This photograph shows physically disabled pupils with their school transport.

Many pupils with special educational needs, particularly blindness, deafness and some with physical impairments were educated in boarding schools (and still are in a few cases). In the early 1900’s they were described as “defective”. Children, who would now be described as “physically disabled”, were called “crippled”. In all such schools, children were trained in trade skills so that they would be able to work.

Were these descriptions a slur or a sign of the times?

Over the years departments for pupils with special needs in mainstream schools were called remedial (i.e. in need of remediating or correcting, or helping to get better). In 1910 such pupils were also described as being in need of special education.

Question on the language of special educational needs

Were these descriptions a slur or a sign of the times?
Is the current terminology an improvement?

Activities relating to school transport   P1, P2

P2 Does your school have a “lollipop” person? What does this person do in this job? How is this similar or different to the role of the women in the picture?

How do pupils at your school travel to school? A chart could be drawn up to show the different forms of transport used?
What adults are involved in this process – drivers of cars, buses, police, traffic controllers.
Ask ex-pupils to describe their journeys to school, and the distances travelled?
Ragged schools X39, X40, X41 P3, P10

Ragged schools were established at the end of the eighteenth century to educate the poorest and most destitute children, of which there were many. The 1844 Ragged School Union further encouraged the growth of such schools. In addition to basic education, children were fed and provided with shelter. Some offered skills and work training. Some offered treats, clubs and outings. Several were very religious. Dr Barnardo played a key role in the development of ragged schools.

X40, X41 However, the quality of such schools varied, and Dickens highlighted some of the appalling problems to be found in them.

P3 shows the East End Juvenile Mission, which Dr Barnardo founded in 1868, and which, in 1870 provided a hostel – housing – to accommodate homeless children. Above the entrance to the hostel, a notice read ‘No destitute boy or girl ever refused admission’. This was the first of Dr Barnardo children’s homes, which were later established across the country. He also played a significant role in the development of ragged schools.

Questions relating to ragged schools

Why were ragged schools set up?

X41 Ragged school timetable
How does the timetable of the ragged school depict the way the school attempts to educate and to care for very poor children?
X39, X40, X41, P10 Why did the room have to be “ventilated” so frequently?
Ask pupils to give descriptions of the pupils in the ragged school.

Find out from your local history centre if there was ever a ragged school in your area and if there is any documentation about it, or if you can organise a visit.

Meal-times P10
This drawing depicts meal-time in a ragged school classroom.
Feeding pupils (with free school dinners) was a crucial aspect of education in the early schools that educated the poor and destitute young people.

Activities relating to school dinners
Investigate how dinners have changed in your school, in terms of payments (free to some or all, how much did pupils have to pay), where they were served, and who cooked them, where were they prepared, and what they ate?
School Sports

School sports  X42, X43, X44, X45, X46  P15, P16, P17, P18, P19,

Sports can reflect the ethos of the school. The competitive nature of games is celebrated by many schools, but not by others.

While the National Curriculum identifies the skills and range of PE competences that pupils should gain, individual schools have an element of choice as to which sports they particularly promote in their school.

Local and school newspapers, prospectuses and newsletters, etc, might show pictures of sports teams and report on matches played. Information and trophies could be displayed in the school. These will be useful sources.

In Victorian times, urban schools, in poorer areas, had little space for sports, while those in the country were able to use the fields. Richer schools had extensive playing fields.

Collate all available information about sports in your school, today and in the past.

Teaching drill
X44, P17 Drill was the main physical activity taught to boys in the nineteenth century. This extract refers to drill teaching and display in London Board schools in at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

Horizontal bars
X45 This extract shows the attempts to provide PE facilities in playgrounds.

Activities relating to sports
Investigate what equipment or facilities were kept in the playground and find out about playground games, such as skipping or hopscotch, which have long histories.

Investigate the history of sports in your school. What games were played at different periods? What significance was placed on sport over the years? What trophies were won? What facilities — equipment and gymnasias, playing fields—were provided by the school? What sorts of games kit did the school have over the years?

Create a History of sports at our School webpage or display for the school.
**X42, P15 Eton College wall game**
Eton College has developed its own form of football for a select group of pupils. This was quite an aggressive sport, where participants frequently got hurt.
There is more information about this game on Eton College’s web pages.

**X43 Fagging on the cricket field at Winchester**
Like X42, this extract informs us of the game and the practices in the school at the time. (A fag was a younger student who performed tasks for an older boy. This practice was abolished in the 1970’s).

**Activities relating to sports and school identity**
Look up the history of rugby football and its association with Rugby School. (You might like to refer to *Tom Brown’s School Days*).

**X42, X43, P15, P18** How do the descriptions and images of the games and people in them, inform the reader about the school, itself? This involves an examination of the language used, the images portrayed, as well as the sort of game that is being played.

**Activities relating to gender and sport**
**X46 P16, P19** What sports activities are these girls doing? What are they wearing? Where are they doing it?
What do the girls think of their PE kit in the extract. What do pupils think of their current kit?

What issues arise from studying these images and reminiscence? – fashion (clothes and artefacts, actions),
effects of women at the time

How do the sports and kit worn in the images compare with the PE and games activities and kit used in your school today?