

Understanding the World - History (Development Matters 2021)

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

3 – 4 Years Old

Continue developing positive attitudes about the differences between people.	Ensure that resources reflect the diversity of life in modern Britain. Encourage children to talk about the differences they notice between people, whilst also drawing their attention to similarities between different families and communities. Answer their questions and encourage discussion. Suggestion: talk positively about different appearances, skin colours and hair types. Celebrate and value cultural, religious and community events and experiences. Help children to learn each other’s names, modelling correct pronunciation.
Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family’s history.	Spend time with children talking about photos and memories. Encourage children to retell what their parents told them about their life-story and family.

Children in Reception

Comment on images of familiar situations in the past.	Present children with pictures, stories, artefacts and accounts from the past, explaining similarities and differences. Offer hands-on experiences that deepen children’s understanding, such as visiting a local area that has historical importance. Include a focus on the lives of both women and men. Show images of familiar situations in the past, such as homes, schools, and transport. Look for opportunities to observe children talking about experiences that are familiar to them and how these may have differed in the past. Offer opportunities for children to begin to organise events using basic chronology, recognising that things happened before they were born.
Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.	Frequently share texts, images, and tell oral stories that help children begin to develop an understanding of the past and present. Feature fictional and non-fictional characters from a range of cultures and times in storytelling. Listen to what children say about them. Draw out common themes from stories, such as bravery, difficult choices and kindness, and talk about children’s experiences with these themes. In addition to storytelling, introduce characters, including those from the past using songs, poems, puppets, role play and other storytelling methods.

ELG: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will: - Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society; - Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; - Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will: - Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps; - Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; - Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.