

Understanding the World: Past and Present- Reception Curriculum Framework

Educational Purpose

We develop children's understanding that the past is different from the present and that people, places and ways of life change over time. Through their own experiences, family stories, familiar events, significant people and carefully chosen stories and sources, children begin to sequence events, notice similarities and differences, recognise change and talk about what they know about the past.

Golden Threads

Past, Present & Chronology	Change & Continuity	Stories, People & Evidence
Children develop an understanding of past and present, use time-related language and increasingly sequence experiences, events and periods of time.	Children notice and describe how people, places, objects and ways of life can change over time, while recognising that some things may stay the same.	Children find out about the past through their own experiences, family stories, significant people, stories, photographs, objects and other sources, beginning to understand how these help us know about the past.

Knowledge = what children are taught to know and understand. Skills = how children increasingly apply that knowledge.

Strand	Typical Starting Points	DP1	DP2	DP3	Statutory ELG
PAST & PRESENT KNOWLEDGE	• Talk about themselves and people who are familiar to them. • Recognise themselves and familiar people in photographs. • Talk about things they have done or experienced. • Remember and talk about a recent event.	• I know i have changed since I was a baby. • I know people in my family and community have different roles. • I know some things happened before now.	• I know people grow and change over time. • I know stories can help us understand the past. • I know some things change and some things stay the same.	• I know the past is different from the present. • I know photographs and objects can help us remember and find out about the past. • I know stories, photographs, objects and people's memories can help us find out about the past.	Past and Present • 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.
PAST & PRESENT SKILLS	• Recognise familiar people at different ages in photographs. • Talk about familiar routines and what usually happens. • Listen to stories about people, families and familiar experiences. • Show interest in photographs and objects connected with themselves or familiar people.	• I can talk about something that happened to me in the past. • I can talk about people who are familiar to me and what they do. • I can begin to put familiar events in order. • I can notice a simple difference between then and now.	• I can sequence familiar events using words such as before, after, then and now. • I can talk about how I or someone familiar has changed over time. • I can compare something from the past with something from the present, noticing what has changed and what has stayed the same. • I can use a familiar story, photograph or object to talk about something from the past.	• I can sequence events and experiences using increasingly accurate time language. • I can describe some similarities and differences between the past and the present. • I can talk about how people's lives or roles may have changed over time. • I can use stories, photographs, objects or people's memories to find out and talk about the past. • I can explain something I know about the past and how I found out about it.	
ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY	now – at this time then – at another time old – from a time before now	past – a time before now change – when something becomes different role – the job or part someone has	before – happening earlier than something else after – happening later than something else remember – to think about something that happened before	present – the time we are living in now evidence – something that helps us find out about the past sequence – to put events in the order they happened	

Typical Starting Points describe possible prior experiences, not entry expectations. Children may demonstrate aspects from different Development Points at the same time.

Core Texts, Stories & Sources Entitlement

Past and Present is revisited across the year through six purposeful anchor encounters. These are not isolated history units; each encounter revisits the Golden Threads through talk, play, stories, photographs, objects, memories and first-hand experiences.

Half term	Anchor encounter	Historical purpose	Supporting sources/experience
Autumn 1	Once There Were Giants – Martin Waddell & Penny Dale + Peepo! – Janet & Allan Ahlberg	Personal past; growing and changing; first encounters with everyday life in the past.	Stories + photographs of familiar adults/people at different ages. Use Peepo! lightly to notice that family life in the past could look different from life now.
Autumn 2	Community oral-history encounter	People, roles and memories.	A familiar or local person + photographs/memories; explore their role now and aspects of their past.
Spring 1	Toys: Then and Now	Everyday life: then and now; change and continuity; using evidence to find out about the past.	Old and modern toys + carefully selected photographs/objects + family or community memories. Revisit Peepo! where useful to retrieve prior learning about everyday life in the past.
Spring 2	Revisit & Apply	Consolidate chronology, change/continuity and evidence through meaningful experiences without introducing another major history encounter.	Revisit familiar stories, photographs, objects and memories where they support current learning and children's experiences.
Summer 1	Our School & Local Area: Then and Now + Mae Among the Stars – Roda Ahmed / Mae Jemison	Local change and continuity; a real person's life across past and present; roles and possibilities changing over time.	Old/recent local photographs and first-hand observation/local walk + biographical story, photographs and information about Mae Jemison. Avoid pre-teaching the KS1 Brunel/railway unit.
Summer 2	Beside the Seaside: Seaside Holidays Then and Now – Clare Hibbert + beach visit	Apply past/present, change/continuity and evidence to a meaningful first-hand experience.	Book + historical seaside photographs/postcards + children's own present-day beach experience.

Past and Present Entitlement

- Children have regular opportunities to talk about their own past and changes over time, without assuming all children have the same family experiences or access to family photographs and artefacts.
- Children explore the lives and roles of familiar people in their family, school and community.
- Children hear carefully chosen stories and non-fiction that introduce people, places, events and ways of life from the past.
- Children explore photographs, objects, memories and other accessible sources that help them find out about the past.
- Children hear and use meaningful time language in everyday contexts and have opportunities to sequence familiar experiences and events.
- Children compare aspects of past and present, noticing change as well as things that remain the same.

- Children revisit ideas about the past through conversation, play, books, provision, visitors, local observation and first-hand experiences.
- Children encounter different tellings or representations of an event or story and notice simple similarities and differences between them.

Assessment

Assessment should arise primarily through children's talk, play and responses to stories, photographs, objects, memories and first-hand experiences rather than through isolated recall tasks.

Practitioners should notice over time how children increasingly:

- talk about past experiences and the lives and roles of people around them;
- use time language meaningfully and sequence familiar events;
- recognise that the past is different from the present;
- notice and describe change and continuity;
- use stories, photographs, objects and memories to find out about the past;
- compare past and present using what they have experienced and read;
- explain something they know about the past and how they found out about it.

Assessment should focus on children's developing historical understanding, not on the amount of family information or historical factual knowledge they happen to bring from home.

Transition into KS1 History

Reception establishes the foundations identified in the school's History progression: personal chronology, past and present, sequencing, comparison, time/change vocabulary and beginning to use pictures and objects to find out about the past. KS1 then develops these foundations through significant people and events, simple timelines, a wider range of sources, historical questions, cause and consequence, and impact.