

PATRICIA L. ROBERTS

Literature-Based History Activities *for* Children, Grades 1-3

*Contains
over 250
simulation
activities,
strategies,
and themes for
lesson
planning*

B.C.H.S. (Before Christ)		A.D. (After Christ)	
4.0 MILLION - 19,000		B.C.	
19,000 - 1200		B.C.	
1200 - 500		B.C.	
1 - 1399		A.D.	
1400 - 1499		A.D.	
1500 - 1599		A.D.	
1600 - 1699		A.D.	
1700 - 1799		A.D.	
1800 - 1899		A.D.	
1900 - PRESENT		A.D.	

Literature-Based History Activities for Children, Grades 1-3

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*Dedicated to James E. Roberts,
who has a wonderful memory
and a keen sense of history*

Preface

America, remember . . .
We are the ones fighting for freedom;
We are your daughters and sons;
We stand together tall and proud,
Not afraid to say out loud,
We love you . . . the red, white, and blue . . .
America. America, remember . . .

—America's Army National Guard

Gather the children together for a time of history storytelling and studying in which the children hear, read, and dramatize stories; interpret poetry selections about historical figures through choral reading; and present brief reports with their ideas in written compositions about their reflections of places and faces from prehistory to the present.

To assist you as you present history's ideas and usefulness and add new and different dimensions to your students' lives, *Literature-Based History Activities for Children, Grades 1–3* is a guide that offers historical views through quality children's books with various perspectives. Using this guide will enable pre-service and in-service teachers, classroom aides, resource teachers, principals, curriculum directors, parents, and others to locate children's books that will enrich students' knowledge of the people, places, and events in the past.

How to Use This Book

This book provides you with some background and practical ideas for a history program related to children's literature in which children actively think and communicate. The emphasis is on teaching views of history through carefully selected children's books for grades 1 through 3. A strong focus is placed on children's books, related activities, and charts of multicultural perspectives for each time period as well as ways to extend children's experiences with the books that reflect topics in history. Though group size is suggested for the activities, you will decide when the activities are best suited for the whole group, small group, partnerships, and individual inquiry according to your teaching needs.

Generally, with the book's chronological arrangement and multicultural perspectives charts,

you will have flexibility in organizing focused lessons. For example, you can select not only a topic in history by using the books and activities for a certain time period but you may also select additional literature from other time periods that reflect on the topic. This feature provides you with sources to give children a horizontal look at a selected time period as well as a chronological sequence. Specifically, the features in this book include the following:

- *Multicultural Charts.* This book begins each time period with a multicultural chart that focuses on perspectives that are interpreted by children's books that reflect people and their actions in the time period. The books are views of different people related to African American, Asian American, Latino and Hispanic American, original Native American, and European American heritages as well as women and girls, religious groups, and those who are developmentally different. The perspectives are included so children can listen to the heritage of each other's voices and recognize that as society becomes larger, individuals seem to require not only the larger identity of being Americans but also the smaller identities of their heritages. The books are suggested so children can share their heritages with one another and foster an understanding of a healthy diversity that acknowledges the varied sources of the American people.

Each multicultural chart can be used as a reference to views about a particular period and to related children's books. With the chart, an interested child can focus on an overall view of the heritage of different people in the time period. Also, a child can follow a selected perspective from a chart in one time period to a chart in another to gain information about the similarities, differences, conflicts, or changes related to a perspective over time. Tracking a perspective through time periods can develop children's insights into the feelings, emotions, and problems that are universal even though the specifics of a time period are different.

- *Topics, Themes, Units.* Topics and themes related to history are identified for teachers by state and district curriculum materials. The children's books in this resource can support a school's history

curriculum recommendations. For example, the documents in one western state indicate the following topics to guide teachers:

Grade 1: Learning to Work Together; Exploring, Creating, and Communicating; Reaching Out to Times Past; Developing Social Skills and Responsibilities; Expanding Children's Geographic and Economic Worlds; and Developing Awareness of Cultural Diversity, Now and Long Ago

Grade 2: People Who Supply Our Needs; Our Parents, Grandparents, and Ancestors of Long Ago; and People from Many Cultures, Now and Long Ago

Grade 3: Continuity and Change; Our Local History; Discovering Our Past and Our Traditions; Our Nation's History; and Meeting People, Ordinary and Extraordinary, through Biography, Story, Folktale and Legend

- *Thematic Book Lists, Topics, and Activities.* Beginning with a chapter entitled 2.0 Million–1.0 Million B.C., this book suggests children's informational books, folk literature, historical fiction, and realistic stories with settings in sequential centuries. The activities are described as an integral part of a chapter covering a given time period but many can be adapted to almost any period of study. Some of

the activities will be most useful for the whole class, whereas others are more appropriate for small groups, partnerships, or individualized inquiry.

- *History Master Reproducibles.* Many of the reproducibles in the book have thematic book lists and support the book-related activities for classroom use that are easily adapted for a selected grade level.

- *Differing Points of View.* Whenever possible, differing points of view about the exciting people and meaningful events as seen by parallel cultures are included to reflect America's rich diversity. Children can hear or read about the ways different books express the values of specific time periods and diverse cultures and reflect about how the views in some stories present views different from their own. Children can explore stories written in different periods and realize that any "ism" (i.e., racism, sexism, ageism, etc.) of the period does not have to be supported or shared by the reader.

With these features, this book will assist you as you get firsthand experience with children's literature related to history—an opportunity that will be both a reading adventure and a creative project you will long remember. This is an opportunity that, as you suspect, will have no end.

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2.0 Million–1.0 Million B.C.

What was going on in prehistory?

Multicultural Perspectives

Our history class goes back in time,
back in time, back in time, back in time;
Our history class goes back in time,
so we can learn what happened.

Sing these words to the tune of “This Is the Way We Wash Our Clothes” and have the children clap their hands with the beat. The musical coaxing will help the children focus on history at a certain time during the school day. Of course, different words can be suggested by the children (e.g., “This is the day we study our state, study our state, study our state,” etc.) to initiate various topics of history, culture, and heritage during the academic year.

Related to a study of prehistory, a study can be concerned not only with the children’s state of long ago but also with the singing poems of Arctic-dwelling Eskimos, the stories of creation told by Africa’s early people, America’s Native People, the resilient inhabitants in Europe and Asia, and young people’s lives of the differently abled, women and girls, and others who were the ancestors of many of us in the United States today. The children can prepare colorful bulletin boards and feature sketches of people and their first encounters with others, as well as family scenes, artifacts, and titles of stories they have read or heard about early people and their beliefs about the origins of the earth, skies, living things, and the seasons. Regardless of the topic of study, the class environment and lessons can be carefully planned to help the children develop concepts and generalizations as they learn about others

through the vehicle of thought-provoking children’s books related to prehistory. Some of the perspectives of people living in parallel cultures and recorded in stories suitable for this time period are shown in Figure 1–1.

First Encounter of People

“I wonder/ If on some far hillside/ There is a boy who sits alone,” are the thoughts of a boy in prehistory who keeps his responsibilities in Byrd Baylor’s *One Small Blue Bead* (Scribner’s, 1992, Grades 1–3). Read aloud to the children some excerpts from the story about the people who think *they* are the only humans and discuss the boy’s first encounter with another boy, a stranger from another group who offers a turquoise bead, a sign of friendship and material exchanges. Encourage the children to team up in pairs and play the roles of the young boy and the stranger who gives him the blue bead. Ask them to answer the question, “What would happen or change in your way of life after you met the stranger-boy for the first time?” Ask the children what questions could be asked by the two boys and what each boy would feel, say, and do in the situation when the bead is offered and accepted. Have children reverse their roles and then replay the situation. Ask them to transform the role-playing into an artwork and draw, paint, or sketch how the encounter might have happened. Make transparencies of some of the sketches and encourage children to use them for background scenery during additional role-playing.