

A Scheme for a first course in general history (suitable for elementary schools).

Numéro d'inventaire : 1979.17259

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Type de document : imprimé divers

Éditeur : The Educational Publishing Company, Ltd. (Cardiff)

Description : Couverture en carton souple bleu.

Mesures : hauteur : 245 mm ; largeur : 152 mm

Notes : Grande-Bretagne.

Mots-clés : Systèmes éducatifs étrangers

Histoire et mythologie

Filière : École primaire élémentaire

Niveau : Élémentaire

Autres descriptions : Langue : Anglais

Nombre de pages : 31

Sommaire : With an introduction by Professor R.L. Archer, M.A., professor of education, University College of North Wales, Bangor

A SCHEME
FOR A
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IN
GENERAL HISTORY

(SUITABLE FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS)

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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THE EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY, LTD., CARDIFF

FOREWORD

WE would recommend to all teachers of History the study of the following Memoranda :—

- i. Board of Education Memorandum on "The Teaching of History." Educational pamphlet No. 37.
- ii. The History section in the "Suggestions for the consideration of Teachers in Public Elementary Schools."

The purpose of this Scheme is not to dogmatise, but to suggest a line of thought and to give a sequence of material from which teachers may select what, according to their interests and opportunities, may form a reasonable course of instruction.

The term "General History" is used to express the idea that History in its widest sense is something more than National History, and this Scheme aims to teach British History as part of, and in the light of World History in general. Thus only can a right perspective be obtained of the great movements which have led mankind up to the present stage of social evolution. It is important also to emphasise Imperial History, because the British Empire is a fact of great moment in world affairs and it is also an outstanding example of the co-operation which can exist between some modern nations of the world. It may be, however, convenient in practice for the teacher to divide each stage in his scheme into (a) General or World History ; (b) National and Imperial History ; (c) Local History.

To teach the general idea he would proceed from the facts in National or Local History to the wider movement of which they are the local expression. For instance, in a lesson on the Normans, in a school in the county of Glamorgan, note would obviously first be made of Cardiff Castle. This would lead to a general discussion of the Norman influence in Britain and Europe, and of the evolution of castles. Thus it is clear that there are, strictly speaking, no separate subjects of Local History, British History, Imperial History and World History. They are but narrower or wider views of the one great subject—the general history of the progress and development of mankind from primitive stages to the complexity of modern times. Such a treatment of History makes for

the development of a sense of continuity in History, and prepares our future citizens more surely for those responsibilities of government which fall upon them in these democratic times.

The Scheme detailed is based upon a chronological or periodic rather than upon a purely concentric plan. It is felt that an attempt to cover in one year the whole stretch of History in each class—however sketchily—is not the best method. It does not make for maintenance of interest and often results in teaching over and over again, year by year, the same list of well-worn stories dealing with the more outstanding personages and events of History. Such a yearly repetition must tend to kill interest in the pupils and initiative in the teacher. The Scheme attempts to deal appropriately with each great advance in the development of civilisation, the treatment at each stage being adapted to the age and interests of the child.

It is not suggested that no mention should be made of events outside a particular period set in the Scheme for study—any thoughtful teacher will always revise, refer to past periods, and use the previous work as a foundation upon which to build his new lessons. Then, again, each class should have a History section in its own class library, and many of the books in this would cover particularly the periods studied in the previous classes. The actual oral History lessons would deal, however, with the period suggested for that stage, the correlative History being covered mainly by suitable exercises in general reading, as shown above. Revision of the previous year's work should be generally done before beginning on the new period, and this is especially necessary at Stage V, and in this case for all the previous periods.

A Scheme for the teaching of citizenship is given in addition to the History, and we have felt it necessary to show separately in the Scheme the particular aspect of Civics considered appropriate for each stage, since it may be thought more satisfactory to allocate a special lesson each week to Civics than to treat it as incidental to the History teaching.

This Scheme of History teaching has been drawn out to be suitable for correlation, as far as possible, with the "Scheme for a First Course in Geography," published (at 1s.) by the Geographical Association, Aberystwyth. In the early stages, especially, much of the History is repeated in this Geography Scheme, and there often will be very little differentiation except in time between the History and Geography lesson where the Geography lesson is of the human or historic type. It is clear that in all the History lessons it will be essential to bear in mind continually the influences of geographical conditions upon historical events and movements, and to use as occasion demands one subject to supplement the other. Full use should be made of maps, both physical and political, while

