

# **Historical Change**

**Lesson Video: Grades K-2**

# Overview

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**Teacher:** David Kitts  
**Grade:** 1  
**School:** Santo Domingo Elementary School  
**Location:** Santo Domingo, New Mexico

**NCSS Standards-Based Themes: Time, Continuity, and Change**

**Content Standards: History**

## Video Summary

In this lesson, David Kitts uses children’s literature and the local region’s agricultural heritage to introduce his first-grade class to the concept of historical change.

Mr. Kitts begins with a timeline from a previous unit on the family. The timeline defines periods of time based on events that students can relate to, such as when their great-great-grandparents lived, for example. Then Mr. Kitts reviews a book the class had read titled *Heartland*, a story about modern farming. Since all of his students live on a reservation with extended family members who farm, Mr. Kitts uses these concrete examples—family and farming—to help explain abstract ideas like change and the passage of time.

Next, Mr. Kitts reads *Ox-Cart Man*, which provides a glimpse of what life was like on a farm 200 years ago. Working together, students write comparison statements about farming tools and techniques past and present. Then they record those statements on time wheels that illustrate the similar and distinctive farming practices from each story and period in time. As the lesson concludes, students present their time wheels to the class.

## Standards

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*Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* defines what students should know and be able to do in social studies at each educational level. This lesson correlates to the following standards for elementary school students:

### **II. Time, Continuity, and Change**

Demonstrate an ability to use correctly vocabulary associated with time such as past, present, future, and long ago; read and construct simple timelines; identify examples of change; and recognize examples of cause and effect relationships; compare and contrast different stories or accounts about past events, people, places, or situations, identifying how they contribute to our understanding of the past; demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently.

**Content Standards: History**

# About the Class

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## Classroom Profile

“When I teach a social studies concept or unit, I like to weave in a lot of other subjects. I often teach it using children’s literature, which brings literature and literacy into it. I always have them write, I always have them draw, and I’ll bring math concepts in whenever I can.” —David Kitts

David Kitts teaches first grade at the Santo Domingo Elementary School in Santo Domingo, New Mexico. Situated halfway between Albuquerque and Santa Fe and surrounded by a reservation, the school is named for the local Native American tribe, the Santo Domingo Pueblo. (*Pueblo* is Spanish for “village,” named for the communal adobe/stone homes. Some Santo Domingos commute to Albuquerque or Santa Fe; many farm their land, make jewelry, or work at local schools. All of the students at Santo Domingo Elementary School speak their native language—Keres—an oral, still-unwritten language; English is their second language. Mr. Kitts has a Santo Domingo teacher’s aide who helps translate when necessary.

Throughout the year, Mr. Kitts used examples from students’ lives to teach them social studies concepts. For example, because many of his students’ extended families live near them on the reservation, Mr. Kitts began the year with a unit on the family, in which students explored their ancestry by interviewing family members. Units on the harvest and preparing for winter connected the agricultural life many students know well with science and social studies. In a unit on non-Pueblo tribes, the class explored similarities and differences between themselves and people of other cultures.

Prior to the lesson shown in “Historical Change,” Mr. Kitts had introduced the concept of “long ago” by inviting students’ older family members to speak to the class about what life was like when they were growing up. Farming was and continues to be a way of life for the Santo Domingos, making agriculture a natural focus of the lesson. Then the class created a timeline that helped illustrate the passage of time by marking events the class had studied or had learned about in family interviews.

In this lesson, Mr. Kitts focused on changes in farming practices to teach about the passage of time. Because many of his students are still learning English, Mr. Kitts often used children’s literature to reinforce their literacy skills while teaching social studies concepts. Here, he used two children’s stories to give the students a sense of how something can change (or stay the same) over a period of 200 years. Students then created time wheels and used them to compare the two stories. The time wheels identified important elements of each time period in farming history, and the similarities and differences over time. The time wheels incorporated art and writing, new vocabulary words, and Venn diagrams. They also gave Mr. Kitts a means of assessing his students’ understanding of an abstract concept like historical change.

This lesson helped segue into the next unit on Japan, giving students a foundation for understanding historical change in Japanese culture and history. Mr. Kitts used his own experience as a Fulbright Fellow in Japan to teach his students about countries and cultures beyond the reservation.

Year at a Glance
The Family
The Harvest
Non-Pueblo Tribes
Humans and Animals Get Ready for Winter
Change Through Time
Japan
Planting

## Lesson Background

Read this information to better understand the lesson shown in the video.

### Content: A Brief History of American Farming

At the time of the Revolution, approximately 95 percent of the American population was involved in farming. Today, according to government statistics, only two percent of the population farms as an occupation, marking a significant shift over the past two centuries in the way Americans live and work.

# About the Class, cont'd.

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The small farms of the colonial period and early republic were mainly subsistence farms. Any surplus was used to barter for other needed goods. Work was accomplished with simple tools powered by human and animal labor. Tilling, planting, and harvesting were done by hand, without the benefit of machines.

But that began to change by the early 1800s. The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 stimulated the development of large plantations in the South, so that by 1880, there were close to 1 million farms across the country. In addition, higher food prices—largely caused by the economic deprivation of the South after the Civil War—stimulated the development of farming technology. For example, in 1831, Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper, and in 1837, John Deere and Leonard Andrus invented the steel plow.

Two legislative acts in the mid-nineteenth century further promoted farming in the United States. The Homestead Act of 1862 granted 160 acres of land to settlers, and the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862 promoted the teaching of agriculture; both encouraged the establishment of new farms and led to the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Railroad companies even recruited immigrants to farm land on the Great Plains.

Farming continued to grow and change in the early twentieth century, with the invention or improvement of tractors, combines, milking machines, crop dusters, and irrigation systems. Increasingly, animal labor was being replaced by steam, gasoline, and diesel engines, which in turn affected the kinds of crops that were grown. For example, between 1910 and 1960, 90,000 acres were transformed from land needed to grow hay for horses to crop land. Agricultural production also increased to meet the food demands of warring European nations during World War I.

After World War I ended, the demand for U.S. farm goods fell. Farmers suffered, as did most others, during the Great Depression—especially as world trade declined. Farmers began to receive government support in the forms of credit, electrification, and soil conservation programs. The programs worked, because by the end of 1940, the United States was the world's leading producer of wheat, corn, and soybeans. Farmers continued to increase their yields during World War II, but because of the rising cost of new machinery and the decrease in necessity of human labor, the number of poor farmers increased.

After WWII, crop production increased even more with the invention of new machines, the replacement of horses with tractors, the use of ammonia as a fertilizer, and the creation of hybrid plants that were better able to withstand harsh weather and disease. Between 1950 and 1980, farm production in the United States doubled. The United States, it seemed, was feeding the world, so that by the 1970s, one U.S. farmer could feed 75.8 people.

Since 1960, however, the nature of farming has changed. Farms have become more productive and efficient, but the number of farms and farmers has declined. The family farm has been replaced by large agribusinesses owned by corporations. As a result, farms have become highly specialized—growing or producing what is best suited to the soil and climate, and what the market demands. And while competition has increased worldwide, the United States is still the leader, exporting more than \$50 billion a year in agricultural products—with about half going to Asia.

## **Teaching Strategy: Cooperative Learning and Graphic Organizers**

Cooperative learning involves having students work with others—in a formal or informal setting—to enhance their learning. Elements that make this teaching strategy so effective are the interdependence of the group members as they work toward a common goal, face-to-face interactions in which students get to practice their interpersonal skills while promoting one another's learning, and individual and group accountability. Debriefing the groups to determine how well they functioned improves the effectiveness of cooperative learning experiences over time.

Graphic organizers are visual images that help organize thinking and learning. Some graphic organizers, like timelines, are used to show the chronology of important events. Others, like time wheels, are used to compare and contrast. Still others are used to illustrate cause-effect relationships. Having students organize information graphically helps them focus on the most important points, clarify relationships, and understand and remember important content.

# Watching the Video

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As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

## Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions:

- How do you teach young students abstract concepts like change and the passage of time?
- What types of visuals do you use to help students learn? What determines the type of visuals that you use?
- When do you use small groups to enhance student learning? How do you organize the student groups? What factors make using small groups a successful teaching strategy?

## Watch the Video

As you watch “Historical Change,” take notes on Mr. Kitts’s instructional strategies, particularly how he helps students comprehend change over time. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning in this lesson.

## Reflecting on the Video

Review your notes, then respond to the following questions:

- What struck you about the classroom climate, background, preparation, strategies, and materials used in this lesson?
- How did Mr. Kitts integrate his students’ culture with a lesson about other people and eras?
- What strategies did Mr. Kitts use to engage his students? Which strategies helped students retain information and use knowledge in new settings?
- How did this lesson build on students’ sense of history?
- What did Mr. Kitts do to make the concepts in this lesson easier for students to understand? How did he assess students’ understanding?
- How is this class different from yours? What are some concrete examples from your students’ lives that you might use to illustrate historical change?

# Watching the Video, cont'd.

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## Looking Closer

Here's an opportunity to take a closer look at interesting aspects of Mr. Kitts's lesson.



### Learning How To Read a Timeline: Video Segment

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You'll find this segment approximately three minutes into the video. Watch for about five minutes.

As the lesson begins, Mr. Kitts uses a timeline to help students visualize the passage of time and understand the order of events they've studied, such as family history.

- How does Mr. Kitts make reading the timeline meaningful to his students?
- How does he use the Keres language of his students in this part of the lesson?
- How does he integrate other subjects with this social studies lesson?



### Agricultural Changes Over Time: Video Segment

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You'll find this segment approximately 12 minutes into the video. Watch for about eight minutes.

Mr. Kitts's students have already read *Heartland*, a story of modern farming, and are now going to hear a story about what farming was like 200 years ago, called *Ox-Cart Man*. Students use these two books to create and present a time wheel comparing past and present farming techniques.

- Why did Mr. Kitts select books about farming for this lesson?
- Why did Mr. Kitts choose the time wheel as a way for students to compare the two books?
- How does Mr. Kitts plan the lesson to accommodate his students' needs and preferences?
- How are students supported while making and presenting the time wheel?

# Connecting to Your Teaching

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## Reflecting on Your Practice

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

- What are some specific ways that you incorporate the different cultural backgrounds represented in your class to introduce a topic or teach a lesson?
- What are the challenges and benefits of incorporating the cultural diversity in your class to teach social studies lessons?
- What other strategies do you use to teach abstract concepts like historical change?
- How can other subject areas be integrated to teach about historical change?
- How do you assess your students' understanding during the lesson and again at the end of the lesson?

## Taking It Back to Your Classroom

- Have each student make a personal pictorial timeline. Ask students to interview family members or friends who can help them recall four major events in the student's life. Give students a piece of 8-by-11-inch paper divided into four parts. Instruct students to draw pictures of the four events, one in each quadrant. Using larger sheets of paper, help students draw a timeline that represents the years of their life. Then tell them to cut out the illustrations and paste them on the timeline.
- Ask students to record on a classroom calendar important events in your classroom or school for a one-month period. At the end of the month, ask students to choose the five most important events to go on a classroom timeline, and make drawings to represent each event. To make the timeline, attach a long piece of string horizontally to a bulletin board. Use construction paper to label the name of the month and mark off the days or weeks. Use clothespins to attach the five events to the timeline. Repeat the activity for the next several months to reinforce the concept of timelines.
- Select two pieces of literature about the same topic but from different historical perspectives. Ask students to write sentences comparing the topic past and present. Have students make a timeline and a time wheel to show how aspects of the topic have changed over time. Then have the class discuss the benefits of each type of graphic organizer.
- Ask students to find a calendar that has pictures showing the change of seasons month by month. Have them use these pictures or pictures they've drawn to make a timeline of the school year.

# Resources

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## Print Resources for Students

Hall, Donald. *Ox-Cart Man*. New York: Viking Press, 1983.

Hall, Donald. *The Milkman's Boy*. New York: Walker & Co., 1997.

Siebert, Diane. *Heartland*. New York: HarperCollins Juvenile Books, 1992.

## Print Resources for Teachers

Brandt, Ron. "On Educating and Diversity: A Conversation with James A. Banks." *Educational Leadership* 51, no. 8 (1994).

Cooper, Hilary. *History in the Early Years: Teaching and Learning in the First Three Years of School*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Nevarez, Sandra, Racquel C. Mireles, and Norma Ramirez. *Experiences With Literature: A Thematic Whole-Language Model for the K-3 Bilingual Classroom*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall College Division, 1989.

Ovando, Carlos J. and Virginia P. Collier. *Bilingual and ESL Classrooms: Teaching in Multicultural Contexts*. 2d ed. Columbus, Ohio: WCB/McGraw-Hill, 1997.

## Web Resources for Students

Food Service Agency for Kids: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ca/agforkids.htm>

This FSA site offers kids many features, including agricultural quizzes, coloring pages, and facts about farms.

George Washington Pioneer Farmer: <http://www.mountvernon.org/pioneer/>

This site uses vivid pictures to lead kids through a virtual tour of a farm in George Washington's day.

Kids Farm: <http://www.kidsfarm.com/wheredo.htm>

Kids Farm lets young children explore agricultural history through coloring, music, and pictures.

## Web Resources for Teachers

The Center for Multicultural Education: <http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/home.htm>

The University of Washington's CME focuses on research projects and activities for multicultural K-12 programs.

The Center for Multicultural Multilingual Research: <http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~cmmr/BEResources.html>

This site offers many articles on bilingual/ESL classrooms as well as links to other multicultural research sites.

U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov/nass/pubs/trends/index.htm>

The USDA and National Agricultural Statistics Service provides a history of American farms and agricultural trends.



# Resources, cont'd.

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The History of American Agriculture: A Timeline: <http://www.usda.gov/history2/back.htm>

Another USDA site, this colorful timeline includes data on farm technology, farm life, crops, and livestock.

Mid-continent Research for Educational Learning: <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark>

McREL gives grade-level national standards for teaching historical change, including how to understand and analyze chronological relationships, for K–2.

# Notes

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