

Voices of the Waterways Lesson Plan 1

Introduction to Oral History

Subject

History, SESE, Geography

Grade level

5th & 6th Class ROI/P6 & P7 NI

Overview

Oral history is 'the recording of people's memories and experiences and using those oral sources to better understand the past. The use of oral sources in the classroom will create a stronger connection with local history and heritage as well as a deeper understanding of the past.

Objective

This Lesson Plan will introduce students to the idea of oral history and will encourage them to engage with story and memory. It will also familiarize students with sites such as the Learning Zone Website and help them develop a better understanding of Waterways heritage.



What you Need

Internet Connection, Whiteboard/Computer, amplification and printout paper.

Preparation

Teachers should make sure that Waterways Ireland's Archive Website is accessible within the classroom and that the oral history selections are playing through your speaker system/whiteboard.

Getting Started

Teachers should ask students to write down topics they think of when they hear the term 'Oral History.'

In his/her own words, the teacher should then point out the different ways that oral history can benefit the student. For example, oral evidence can:

- Provide a sense of experience and help students better understand people in the past and older people.
- Focuses on the importance of 'ordinary' people across the island of Ireland.
- Relates to the everyday lives of people in YOUR community.

Learning Outcomes

This exercise encourages all modes of communication including talking and listening, reading and writing. Also, it directly assists in the required development of the pupil's ability to 'listen to and take part in discussions, explanations and presentations ... contribute comments, ask questions ... communicate information, ideas, opinions, feelings and using an expanding vocabulary.'



Activity 1

- ✓ Break the class into groups of at least three.
- ✓ Hand out transcripts of segments/stories from Waterways Ireland Learning Zone to read, allowing about 10 minutes for reading and discussion.
- ✓ As they finish their reading, ask groups to discuss and explain three ways the segments were important/informative.

Activity 2

The groups listen to the audio segments connecting to their transcript and will then compare and discuss how the aural version differed from the written account and identify two key ways that this helped to explain the meaning of the memory.

Assessment

- The students will be asked to demonstrate the key learning outcome from their engagement with the memory and explain how they would tell others (outside the classroom context) about it.
- Assessment of the student presentations, eg. delivery, understanding of oral history as a distinct learning platform etc.



Note: Teachers should expect students to identify how the recording shows emotion, emphasis etc.

George Brierley



Here, George Brierley from Dublin recalls various jobs he had as a young boy.

Brian Cassells



Historian Brian Cassells from Lurgan discussing the tradition of the Banshee.

George Morrissey



George Morrissey from Belturbet reflecting on the importance of waterways heritage.

Tommy Holland



Tommy Holland from County Clare, remembers physical work as young man.

