Making it in Middle School: Preparing 3-6 Graders to be Successful

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We know that teaching elementary school can be challenging with everything that is thrown on your plate and that social studies can be pushed aside, and we think you are doing a great job no matter what!

**Simulation Activities**

* Fun ways to start a unit and get away from the textbook.
* Barter System- This is a great way to introduce students to the concept of trading and build collaborating skills.

<https://asn.am/_access/united-states/01-growing-pains/barter-system/barter-system.php>

* Easy to find more online. Google something along the lines of “(historical content) simulation activity for the classroom) and search away.

**Map Skills**

Students need to be able to read a basic map, using the main components such as orientation, a key/legend, and understand the concept of scale. Then once student can read a map, using maps to explain relative location of major parts of their world.

* Components of a Map- make maps and analyze maps
* Map connect content with geography
* Scale is math!
* Coordinate Plane crosses over with maps
* http://www.airpano.com/
* <https://thenextweb.com/google/2011/01/20/how-teachers-are-using-google-earth-in-the-classroom/>

**Timeline Skills**

This is a great way to integrate math within social studies. Builds on their number line skills and spatial reasoning. The purpose should not be to memorize dates, but to reinforce the sequence of events.

If there is space in your room create a living timeline throughout the year for your subject. Then have students create smaller timelines on paper for the individual unit you are studying.

Fun timeline activities to start reinforcing the idea of using timelines in the classroom

* Human Timeline- Students get up and create the timeline by giving them an event and making them put it in order from first to last.
* Students day of birth (just 1-31) Create a timeline with 1 being the start and 30 being the end so you can split in half easily. Add 31 to the end.
* Students birthday and month. (Start by years then split each year into the 12 months).
* Students create a timeline of their lives of important events that have happened in their lives.

**Research Skill**

Some fun websites to teach students source reliability, explain a search engine vs a website, and help them to analyze and use sources rather than copy and paste information.

* <https://www.allaboutexplorers.com/>
* <https://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>
* [www.nortonbcs.weebly.com/uploads/1/6/0/0/16007664/pacificnorthwesttreeoctopus-lessonplan.pdf](http://www.nortonbcs.weebly.com/uploads/1/6/0/0/16007664/pacificnorthwesttreeoctopus-lessonplan.pdf)
* <https://www.kiddle.co/> A kid friendly search engine, better for younger grades

**Historical Thinking Skills**

Historical Thinking Project (historicalthinking.ca)

Stanford History Education Group SHEG (sheg.stanford.edu/history-lessons)

* **Observation:** Scanning and parsing the document, observing details
* **Sourcing:** Considering who made the document and what their motives are
* **Inferencing:** Making inferences, speculating, guessing about meaning
* **Evidence:** Citing evidence when making inferences or drawing conclusions
* **Question Posing:** Cultivating puzzlement, keeping track of one’s questions
* **Corroboration:** Comparing what is found to what one already knows other documents, etc. (Stearns et al., 2000)