

Going to School



Bennington Museum is looking forward to your class visit! You may wish to make connections in your classroom to the things your students experience at the museum. Below are just a few ideas for pre- and post-visit activities that you could do with your class. If you have a great activity idea, and would like to share it with us, please contact Deana Mallory at dmallory@benningtonmuseum.org, or call (802) 447-1571.

Pre-visit activities

Rules

Talk with your students about what rules they might be expected to follow when they get to the museum. We will go over these with them, of course, but they could make predictions about what rules we will ask them to follow and why, based on what they expect to see and do while they are at the museum.

Life Long Ago

The Going to School program focuses on the early to middle 19th century. Encourage your students to think about what life was like during that time period. Especially think about how school may have been different before such inventions as cars, computers, electricity, etc.

Rules for Students and Teachers

During the program, we will talk about some of the rules students had to obey in school during the 19th century. Prepare students by making a list of your classroom rules and the consequences for breaking them. Talk about what rules teachers have to follow, too!

What Do You Learn?

Make a list of the sorts of things your students learn in school. Have students predict whether or not the same things would have been learned by students in the 1800s. Are there things that students might have learned in school then that are not a part of a standard education now?

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Post-visit activities

Quill and Ink

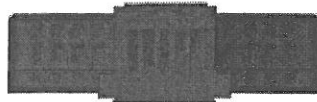
Use the attached instructions to make quills and ink. Students can practice writing using old-fashioned technology.

Interviews

Have students interview a parent, grandparent, older neighbor, etc. about what it was like to go to school when they were children. Encourage them to interview people from different generations (for example, a parent and a grandparent) and to look for similarities and differences. Have them find out what classes were like, what kinds of rules they had to follow and what happened when they broke the rules, and what they did for fun during recess or after school. You can use the attached "Going to School" interview sheet or create your own.

Old Fashioned School Day

Hold an old fashioned school day. Make boys and girls sit on opposite sides of the room. Line up desks in rows. Practice learning through repetition and rote. Get lots of other ideas through a little research on the Internet!



Enjoy



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Of Pen And Ink

Grade Level: 4 - 6

Purpose:

For students to learn about the writing tools used by colonists who utilized the local plant materials, before the invention of pencils and pens.

Materials:

Large feathers (peacock or pheasant feathers are the best)
Scissors or pen knife
10 walnut shells
1 cup water
1/2 teaspoon vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt
Hammer
Old cloth/rag
Saucepan
Small jar with lid
Strainer

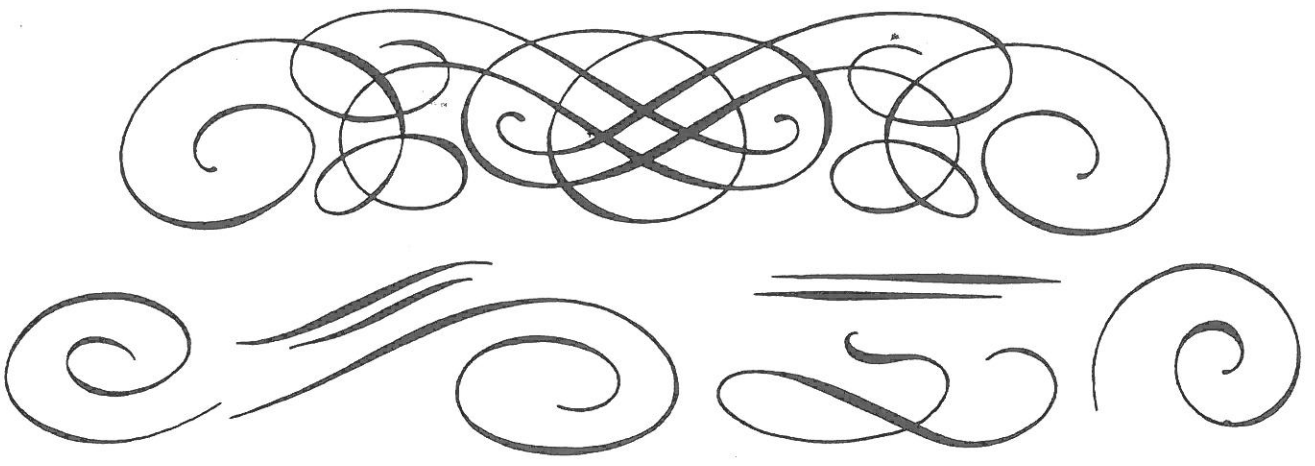
Lab Procedure:

1. Using hammer, crush the shells in the cloth
2. Add the shells and water to the saucepan. Bring to a boil, simmer 45 minutes or until dark brown. (Much of the water will evaporate.)
3. Remove the ink from the burner and let it cool.
4. Strain it into the jar and add vinegar and salt (this preserves the ink).
5. Use scissors or pen knife to cut the end of the feather so it's on an angle (/).
6. Write away!

This activity is used by permission from Science is Elementary, by Museum Institute for Teaching Science. It appeared in their June 1989 (Vol. 3, No. 3) issue. For more information on MITS, write them c/o New England Aquarium, Central Wharf, Boston, MA 02110; tel. 617-973-6587.

Fig. 6

A B C D E F G
H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T
U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j
k l m n o p q r
s t u v w x y z



Going to School



What year was it when you started 1st grade?

How did you get to school?

What was your teacher like?

What was/is your favorite thing to learn in elementary school? Why?

What was/is your least favorite thing to learn in elementary school? Why?

What kinds of things did/do you do during recess time?

Describe a typical classroom in your elementary school. How many students were/are there? Where did/do they sit? What kinds of materials did/does your classroom have? How was it decorated?



Mr. Hartley reminds his students to "make their manners" to their parents when they reach home. Boys were expected to bow and girls to curtsy. Children were taught to respect their elders.

Rules for students

Good students in early schools were expected to earn more than high marks. There were many rules to follow and duties to perform. The schoolmaster really was the "master" of his pupils. Children were told to obey the master of the school even if obedience meant having to stand still while being strapped. Here are some rules for students.

1. Respect your schoolmaster. Obey him and accept his punishments.
2. Do not call your classmates names or fight with them. Love and help each other.
3. Never make noises or disturb your neighbors as they work.

4. Be silent during classes. Do not talk unless it is absolutely necessary.
5. Do not leave your seat without permission.
6. No more than one student at a time may go to the washroom.
7. At the end of the class, wash your hands and face. Wash your feet if they are bare.
8. Bring firewood into the classroom for the stove whenever the teacher tells you to.
9. Go quietly in and out of the classroom.
10. If the master calls your name after class, straighten the benches and tables. Sweep the room, dust, and leave everything tidy.



Mr. Cosgrove spends his evening whittling pens for the students in his class. He lives with the Richards family. Mrs. Richards approves of the way the teacher spends his extra time.

Rules for teachers

There were strict rules about what duties a teacher had to fulfill. A teacher was expected to behave properly at all times. Here are some rules that teachers had to obey in the year 1872.

1. Teachers will fill the lamps and clean the chimney each day.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual tastes of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in improper conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each day's pay a goodly sum of his earnings. He should use his savings during his retirement years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, visits pool halls or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop, will give good reasons for people to suspect his worth, intentions, and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay.