

# an old fashioned schoolday



from  
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# an old-fashioned school day

Contents of this notebook:

*A One-Room School* by Bobbie Kalman (front pocket)

General Outline and instructions

1. "Country School" section:

Teaching suggestions, discussion Questions, and Activities

Schoolroom Details Questions

Other School-House Images (back pocket)

2. Early Schools

Mahoning Valley School Descriptions

"Snowbound" from *Singing Wheels* (a 1940s reader)

Pioneer Education

3. Fictional School-Rooms

"A Schoolroom Battle"

"Betsy Goes to School"

"Wagon Pie"

"School"

"Game of Graces"

4. Things to Do

Research: Poland, Boardman, Salem School Histories

To Make: Greased Paper, Ink Recipes & Handwriting Samples, Make a

Hornbook, Make a Chalk Slate, Make a 16-Fold Country Schoolhouse,

Teacher's Shade Hat, Fold a Sanitary Drinking Cup, Sundial

To Play: Nine Men's Morris, Tangram, Marbles, Hopscotch, Fox & Geese

5. Classroom

"America" to sing

12 Laminated Pages from 19<sup>th</sup> Century Textbooks

6. Evaluation and Resources

Evaluation Questions (students' and teacher's)

Annotated Bibliography

Web Resources (including transcripts of primary documents about growing up and schooling in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and downloadable 19<sup>th</sup> century textbooks)

Other Materials Included:

Laminated poster of Winslow Homer's *The Country School*

One McGuffey's Primer, six McGuffey's Readers and three McGuffey's

Spelling Books

12 slates, slate pencils, rag erasers

Packed in a wooden bucket with gourd dipper

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This classroom kit contains suggestions, directions, and some materials for several days' worth of activities to culminate in the creation of an old-fashioned one-room school in the classroom. Please choose the elements that are appropriate for your class. The five areas are:

- Work with *The Country School*, a painting by Winslow Homer from 1871
- Factual descriptions of early classrooms
- Book excerpts of schoolroom adventures
- Projects related to classroom activities
- Recreation of a one-room school

The instructional and performance objectives are based on Ohio's Model Competency-Based Program.

**Instructional Objectives:** the students will explore historical and fictional information about learning experiences in old-fashioned classrooms:

- Examine an art work for the details and meaning it communicates
- Learn about real 19<sup>th</sup> century schoolhouses in the Mahoning Valley
- Read a fictional account of a 19<sup>th</sup> century school day and summarize details
- Experience the re-creation of a 19<sup>th</sup> century schoolroom
- Use the books and learning tools available more than a century ago

**Performance Objectives:** The students will participate in several learning activities related to school life a century or more ago. They will then

- plan the arrangement of their classroom and
- create roles for activities

to re-create the experience of an old-fashioned one-room school in the classroom.

**Subjects:** Social Studies, Language Arts, Math, Arts Education

**Teacher Preparation:**

- Look over the materials and instructions provided.
- Post the copy of Homer Winslow's *The Country School, 1871* (and the other reproductions) in a prominent place in the classroom. Choose activities for your class from those suggested.
- Reproduce enough copies of the book excerpts for each student, or use the copy provided for small group work. If desired, reproduce the "Schoolroom Details Questions" to answer to help focus their work.
- Reproduce geography and math textbook pages, or print others from web site. Many schools made do with few books which were passed from one student to another as needed.
- Choose the projects, games, and crafts from those suggested. You, as the teacher, know which suggested activities are most appropriate for your group of students
- Collect all the materials needed for each activity (etchings, photos, ink wells/bottles, sharpened dowels or pens, stiff paper to fold a paper cup, etc.)

- As students work through the projects, maintain a list of their suggestions for creating their own old-fashioned classroom. List specific ways your classroom can be changed to resemble a one-room school. Include lighting, desk arrangement, time keeping, lunch possibilities, recess activities, and resources (available books and tools).
- Reproduce the evaluation sheet for each student to review and summarize the experience.

**Procedure/Project Description:**

While working on these activities, have each student prepare descriptive cards to determine how each he or she could portray a pioneer scholar. For example, “I am 5 years old. I am learning my alphabet from my hornbook. I use a slate to copy the letters,” or “I am 9 years old. I borrow my sister’s Spelling Book to learn new words. I’m better at math than reading.”

- 1) Post the pictures of old-fashioned schoolrooms around your classroom. Encourage your students to study these pictures, especially Winslow Homer’s 1871 *The Country School*. Use *The Country School* teaching suggestions, discussion questions, and activities. Begin your class’ list of “suggestions for the re-creation of a one-room school.” **Use the “Schoolroom Details” list of questions throughout these activities.**
- 2) Read descriptions of early Mahoning Valley classrooms to your students. Then read the chapter on schooling from *Singing Wheels*, and the ‘Pioneer Education’ sheet from that book. Discuss how those schoolhouses are the same as or different from *The Country School* and from your students’ school. Add to your one-room school list.
- 3) Have the students individually or in small groups read the fiction excerpts describing 19<sup>th</sup> century school experiences. Use the “Schoolroom Details Questions” to stimulate discussion of details of school life, and similarities and differences from their own classroom. Add to your one-room school list.
- 4) Choose other activities and projects to familiarize students with classrooms a century ago. Both in-school and extra-curricular activities are included. As your students do these activities, they should also be working on their ‘historic re-enactment profiles’ to role-play on the last day of this unit.
- 5) Spend a day or half of a day in your re-creation of an old-fashioned one-room school. Include opening exercises, assignments and recitations, playground games or indoor amusements, even having the students bring their lunches and dress like children from a century or more ago.
- 6) After the unit is finished, have children fill out the evaluation sheet to review and summarize their experiences.