

Toys

Curriculum links

The resource can contribute - either explicitly or implicitly - to the study of History, Maths (pounds and pence), Science (materials) and Design and Technology (toys) at KS1.

Overview

Archive section

This episode explores the changes in toys which have happened within living memory in the UK, ie within about the last 75 years. It covers:

- changes in the materials used to make toys - older toys being made from metal, wood and fabric whereas newer toys are often made from plastic
- the variety of toys since plastic became widespread
- that some toys become popular because they are characters from popular TV series and films
- changes in technology and how these have influenced toys - eg batteries allowing movement / computer chips offering a huge range of opportunities
- the popularity of computer consoles which can connect players using the internet.

The quiz

The quiz shows toys from three contrasting decades and invites the children to use what they have learned in the archive section to identify the toy from the 1950s.

The interview

The interview is with toy enthusiast, Tracy Martin.



Tracy recalls the toys she played with when she was a child. She remembers playing with small figures and metal cars in the 1970s. When she was a bit older, in the 1980s, she played with fashion dolls because she loved to change their clothes.

Tracy considers old and new toys. She explains that older toys were made from wood, metal and fabric and were not powered by batteries. Newer toys are more likely to be made of plastic and are more interactive, with games consoles being very popular in the current day.

Tracy explains that we can find out about toys from the past by visiting museums that have toy collections and by asking adults about toys from their childhood.

Follow-up activities

Questions sheet

Use the [questions sheet](#) and invite some parents or grandparents to visit your classroom. Practise the questions with the children before the interview day and ask the visitors about their memories of toys from their childhood.

You might be able to ask the visitors to bring a toy from their childhood to show to the class. You could use this to identify the features that reveal they are older toys - eg they might not have parts that move, they might be made from metal, fabric or wood, they may not be electronic.

Sorting worksheet

Use the [sorting worksheet](#) to match the toys to the correct decade in the timeline.

Talk about old toys that are still popular in the 2020s, like teddy bears and small toy cars – you might want to talk about being able to match some toys with lots of different decades and not just one.

Ask the children to compare old and modern toys. Use images of toys and ask children to choose one that is from the past and one that is new. Ask children to talk to a partner to explain how they know one is older and one is newer. Write key words next to each picture, like the material or whether it uses batteries or is electronic or portable.

If you are fortunate enough to have a local museum, you could contact them to see if they have a toy collection or any toys that could be brought into school to show to the children.

This is a great opportunity to understand how museums look after artefacts and, if your class are motivated by this experience, you could create a class toy museum display with each child bringing a toy in and labelling them with the decade they are from, the material they are made of and the company that makes that toy. But ensure the children do not bring anything too valuable!

Other areas of the curriculum

Maths (Key Stage 1)

Recognise and know the value of different denominations of coins and notes; recognise and use symbols for pounds (£) and pence (p); combine amounts to make a particular value.

This is a great opportunity to link the topic of toys to maths and to the cost of items.

Prepare a collection of toys with price stickers which show pounds and pence. Use play money or pictures of money to count out the amounts for each of the items, looking at the pounds and pence separately and the different denominations of coins and notes.

Maths (Key Stage 1 - Year 2)

Compare and order numbers from 0 up to 100; use <, > and = signs; read and write numbers to at least 100 in numerals and in words.

If you create prices less than £1, Year 2 learners can order the prices of toys where they are between 0 and 100 pence. They can also practise writing the prices in numerals and words. Choose two items to compare the price. Use the correct symbols to compare which item is more expensive. This will involve using the mathematical language of comparison.

Science (Year 2)

Distinguish between an object and the material from which it is made; identify and name a variety of everyday materials, including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water, and rock; describe the simple physical properties of a variety of everyday materials; compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties.

Create a box full of a variety of toys, checking there are no safety issues with any of them. Ask children, ideally in groups and in a large space supported by an adult, to sort the toys by the materials that they are made from. This is an excellent opportunity to separate the object name from the name of the material and to discuss what makes the material suitable for this purpose. You could use large plastic hoops from your PE equipment to sort the toys and write labels on card to show the material. This is also a good task to do as a foundation for how Venn diagrams work. Take photographs of the sorted toys.

Design and Technology (Key Stage 1)

Make a simple fabric hand puppet, stuffed animal, or doll. This could link to technical knowledge and the process of designing, making and evaluating.