



Olden Days, School Ways (K – 3)

Classroom Activities

From this list, select some activities that are suitable for the age and ability of your students:

- **Fun and games:** Students can explore some old-fashioned games or make up some of their own, just as children in the 'olden days' would have done:
 - Make up a skipping rhyme to sing while they skip rope.
 - Have a competition to see who can make the most interesting thing out of a sheet of newspaper.
 - Find or make a sack and have a sack-race on the grass.
 - Play the game of hopscotch by using chalk to draw the grid on the pavement.
 - Make up a card game from a deck of cards, or play some old favourites like *Snap* and *Old Maid*.
 - Make a spinning top and see how long they can keep it spinning.
 - Bring in some marbles and make up some games.
 - Have a hula-hoop competition.
 - Research some old-fashioned parlour games and have the children play them in the playground or classroom, for example *Blind Man's Bluff*, *Marco Polo*, *Follow the Leader*, *Chinese Whispers*, *Cat's Cradle* and other string games.
 - Look online and find patterns to make a range of old fashioned toys like jumping jacks, paper dolls and more.
- **Go nuts:** Collect gum nuts from the school playground or have students bring them in from their gardens or parks. Have students create toys or games from them in as many different ways as they can, such as making patterns on play-dough, stencilling patterns or pictures on to paper with paint, creating their own gum nut figures.
- **Puppet play:** Make olden day characters from old socks, wooden spoons, cardboard, or anything else they can find and put on a puppet show to entertain the class. Use found materials to make a puppet theatre, and use this and the puppets to re-create life in the olden days. Students could also make shadow puppets with paper or use their hands and fingers to make shadow figures on the wall.
- **A stitch in time:** Have the students learn to sew, embroider, weave, knit or crochet and let them experience these time-honoured traditions by creating an old fashioned 'sampler' featuring their name, some clothes for a favourite toy, a knitted scarf, an embroidered placemat or a teddy bear from fabric and yarn scraps.



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- **Rugged up:** Make a rag-rug as a class project or create something smaller such as a placemat. This activity will demonstrate how materials were re-used to make other useful objects, with little waste. Look online to find many useful sites with instructions and techniques.
- **School days:** Research what schools were like in the olden days and draw up a table comparing today's classroom with the past. For example, headings could include:
 - School rules
 - Punishments / consequences
 - Subjects studied
 - Games played in the playground
 - How students got to and from school
 - Old-fashioned names
 - Clothes children wore to school
 - Heating / cooling in the classroom
- **Time travel:** Using ideas from the above activity, role-play a day in an olden days school. Allocate old-fashioned names, and dress up for the day!
- **Colonial cooking:** Research what foods were available in the olden days and find some recipes from these times to try. Students could make their own butter and bake bread, damper, biscuits or cakes.
- **Show and tell:** Students could bring in historical items from a grandparent or great-grandparent, and present the class with a story about what the item is and what it was used for. These items could be made into a mini museum display with students creating their own interpretive signage.
- **A picture tells a thousand words:** Students could bring in an old family photograph and write a simple biography about that person.
- **Family tree:** As a take-home project, students could work with their parents on creating a family tree that shows how all the members of their family are connected, and how many generations they can trace back.
- **Local history:** The class could research the history of the school or other local historical landmark and present their findings to the rest of the school at an assembly. They could find old school photos or pictures of the grounds, and compare how things have changed or stayed the same (for example, the architecture, clothing worn).
- **Personal histories:** Invite one of the class members' grandparents or great-grandparents to come in and share stories with the class about what it was like to grow up long ago.