

Farming Yesterday and Today

Grade: 4-7

Purpose/Objective: Students will compare and contrast agriculture in Cache Valley today and in 1917. Students will understand how farming has changed and how technology has influenced farming.

Activity:

1. Introduction: Provide some background information on farming in Cache Valley and how the role of the farm was changing by 1917. [See Teacher Resource Information: Farming]
2. Have students read selected accounts of farming in Cache Valley around 1900. Have students explain in their own words what farming was like. Have students focus on all aspects of farming, but they all must talk about harvesting and the fall specifically in their report. Have them use the following questions to guide their research.
 - a) What is the time of the year?
 - b) What are they doing on the farm?
 - c) How did they do this particular work?
 - d) What machinery, if any, did they use?
 - e) What other resources (horses, etc.) did they use and how did they use them?
 - f) What was harvest time like on the farm?
3. Discussion: Discuss what farming is like today.
 - a) What are farms like? (Example: Does everyone in the family work on the farm? Do farms only grow one crop? Are there a lot of farmers in this area today?)
 - b) What types of machinery do we use?
 - c) Do farms usually have animals? What are the animals used for?
 - d) What is harvest time like on the farm?
4. Compare and Contrast: Have students use a comparison/contrast chart to show the differences and/or similarities between farming today and in 1917. Students may want to use a format such as a Venn diagram.
5. Possible Extension Activity (Older Students): Have students interview a farmer in their community to see what it is like to run a farm. Alternate interview—have students interview an older farmer in the community to have them explain what farming was like at their time. Half of the students may want to interview a farmer to explain how farming is done today and the other half of the class may want to interview a farmer about farming in the past.

Standards: SS 4.1.1; 4.2.2; SS 7.4.2

Use in Classroom: Social Studies (Comparison/Contrast); Agriculture

Marjorie Seely Reeve
Educational Outreach Program

Harvest Time
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Where Does Our Bread Come From?

Grade: Elementary/Middle School

Purpose/Objective: Students will understand the process from growing wheat to making bread. Students will recognize the grains that they eat in different foods.

Activity:

1. Introduction/Discussion: Bring a loaf of bread to class. When we buy food from the store, do we often think about where that food comes from? What goes into making a loaf of bread? Discuss the ingredients such as flour. Where does the flour come from?

2. Discussion: You may want to have students bring in examples of food items—or pictures of food items from advertisements/catalogs—that have grains in them, specifically wheat grains (this could be white bread too!). Talk about the whole process of getting the grain from the field to making bread. [See Teacher Resource Information: Where Does Our Bread Come From?].

3. Have students create their own explanation of how wheat goes from being planted in the field to a loaf of bread at the store. Students may want to create a flowchart with pictures, a story with pictures illustrating the process, a song about the process, or a technical manual telling about the process (other possibilities: a brochure, a newspaper/television report, essay, or any other medium the student desires to use).

4. Possible Extension Activity: If you want to eat the bread after you talk about how it is made, you could also make butter by shaking whipping cream in a jar. You can use small jars so each student can have their little bit of butter. Rinse off the excess liquid in the jar and add salt.

Standards: 1.3.1

Use in Classroom: Agriculture; Language Arts; Arts

Working Together to Get the Job Done

Community Cooperation Activity

Grade: 4-7

Purpose/Objective: Students will understand how communities came together to get work done faster. Students will understand the process of examining different types of historical documents and learning from the past.

Activity: (This may be a multi-day lesson or you may choose elements of the lesson you would like to focus on)

1. Introduction. Introduce the value of community cooperation with this activity using paper cups. Give each student one cup. Ask students to place their cup upside down on the floor and stand on it. Observe results. Give each student another cup. Ask students to make a square with the cups approximately five rows wide and five rows deep. The cups should be upside down and their rims should touch. Ask students what they think will happen if someone stands on the cups now. Ask for a volunteer to stand on the cups and observe the results. Explain that this activity is an analogy for the value of cooperation. The cups represent individual people. The students standing on them represent a big, difficult job. If one person tries to do the job alone, he/she might get squashed. But if a group of people work together (like the cups placed in rows), they can support the weight of the big job.
2. Explain that cooperation was an important part of survival for early American settlers and pioneers, as well as in 1917. Share the following **quote** from Charles Latrobe, an Englishman who visited American frontier settlements in 1835: “A life in the woods teaches many lessons, and this among the rest, that you must both give assistance to your neighbor and receive it in return, without either grudging or pouting.” Ask students to share their ideas on what Latrobe means.
3. Explain that there were many different activities that communities came together on to work on. Discuss threshing, corn husking, barn raising, and quilting bees. [See Teacher Resource Information: Work Bees and Community Cooperation]
4. (For older students) Have students look at and **read the community cooperation packet** of information. Explain to students that this is what historians do—they look at different types of information to find out what life was like.
5. After they are done, have them write a letter, pretending like they live on a farm around 1917, and are writing a letter to a cousin that lives in New York City. Have your students explain in the letter what they are doing at

fall time, focusing specifically on the harvest. They should address the following:

- a. What things are going on during the fall? Explain in some detail what each task is.
 - b. How does the work get done? Do you have to do it all yourself?
 - c. Talk about how the community works together in something like a husking bee or threshing.
 - d. What do you do to make the work more fun?
6. (For younger students) What do you do for fun now? What kind of chores do you do? Draw a picture for each different activity. Discuss the information in the community packet and how people worked together to get things done quickly. Explain that they made work fun and how they did that. Students may want to draw a picture of the things they learned about work and fun back in 1917.
 7. Discussion. Ask students: Do people still come together to get a big job done today? Brainstorm a list of ideas. The list might include events like a community park clean-up or organizations like Habitat for Humanity. Ask students: Do you think cooperation is still important in our communities today? Why or why not? Allow students to share ideas.
 8. Possible Class Project. Have the class work on a humanitarian project together that can be shared with the community.

Source: Adapted from *Museum on Main Street: Barn Again* lesson plans (www.museumonmainstreet.org)

Standards: SS 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 4.2.2; SS 7.4.2; 7.2.3

Use in Classroom: Social Studies; Language Arts; Agriculture

Community Cooperation Packet



Corn Husking Frolic, about 1828
Alvan Fisher (1792-1863), American
Oil on panel
70.8 x 62.23 cm (27-7/8 x 24-1/2 in.)
©Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Gift of Maxim Karolik for the M. and M. Karolik
Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865

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CORN HUSKING INTERVIEW

from Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection

This interview was recorded in 1939 as part of the Works Progress Administration Federal Writers' Project. The man being interviewed is M.T. Cragg. His family has farmed in Massachusetts for generations. The interviewer tried to capture the way Cragg spoke by spelling words the way Cragg pronounced them.

Course in the old days a farm was a pretty tough place. It's a lot better now than it was as far as amusement is concerned. What with the radio and the automobile the farm isn't half bad. But we had fun in our day, too. We didn't go through life with no fun at all, you can bet.

Prob'ly the best fun we had that the young people don't have now was husking bees. You know about them? Well, the big idea was to get somebody's corn husked. Instead of working at it, we played at it. But the work got done just the same. The idea of the game was simple enough. A bushel of the unhusked ears were dumped before each player and an empty basket was provided to place the husked ears in. 'Course, the bee was held in the barn, which was all lighted up with lanterns hanging from the beams, and the place made extry neat. If a feller found a red ear when he was husking his pile, it was a ticket that allowed him to go down the line and kiss all the girls. If a girl found one, she could go and kiss all the fellers—but she didn't. No sir, she hid it, or tucked it under some feller's pile. 'Twas dumb funny how many red ears they was in just ordinary corn. 'Course, what happened was that the fellers would save the red ears from other huskings—even kept 'em from other years—and would arrive at a husking with a bag full. The feller that was giving the husking would see to it that they was plenty of red ears in his corn, too.

I don't remember as we each went and got our girls as we did when they was a dance. Most generally we took a big wagon and put hay, or straw, in the bottom of it, with plenty of buffeler robes on top, and then drove around and got everybody. The robes come from the West. Lots of us had buffeler coats, too. Wore 'em 'til the hair was all gone in patches, and holes got worn clean through the hide. You don't see any of 'em nowadays, but they was cheap then.

After we got the corn all husked we was invited into the house to have a bite to eat. And they was always plenty—regular church sociable layout. I don't remember much what 'twas, 'cept pies and cakes and nuts and cider afterwards when we played games.

**“HUSKING CORN” BY E.E. TODD (MUSIC)
AND W.H. PARSONS (LYRICS), 1879**

from Library of Congress, Music Division, Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music,
1870-1885

You can see a copy of this sheet music on the Library of Congress web site at <http://memory.loc.gov>. Once at the site, click on “Search” and then enter “Husking Corn.” When the search results appear, click on “Gallery View,” and then click on the fourth “Husking Corn” that appears. Click to view images of the item using the page image viewer, and then “turn” to pages three and four.

When autumn winds and hoary frosts
Have stript [sic] the leaves from trees,
And country boys and girls begin
To fix for husking bees;
‘Tis then the fitting time to go
From city life forlorn,
And join the merry country lads
In husking out the corn.
The old barn floor is polished white,
The haymow richly gleams
In radiant light, of lanterns hung
From overhanging beams;
There meet the lads and lassies, who
An idle life would scorn;
No lighter hearts on earth than theirs,
When husking out the corn.
The fun begins in earnest, when
A rosy, blushing miss
Comes on a deep red ear of corn,
And pays for it—a kiss;
Each time a ringing blast is blown
Upon the dinner horn,
And oh, how fast the blasts do come
While husking out the corn.
‘Tis twelve o’clock, the work is done;
Hurrah! now for the dance!
The floor is quickly cleared away,
And in the fiddlers prance.
“All promenade!” and “Balance four!”
Is heard till early morn,
And then, in pairs they homeward go
From husking out the corn.

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Threshing Whistle Signals

Originally printed in a 1906 magazine

Source: Volunteer Manual and Research Files—American West Heritage Center

_____ (one long continuous whistle) Work begins soon; this code used in the morning and after dinner

• • Start threshing

• Stop threshing

• • • Bring more grain

_____ • • (one long, repeated short blasts) Hurry, more water needed

_____ Work done for the day

_____ • • Moving to the next farm

• • • • (repeated short whistles) Distress