

All About Our Town

Grades 3-5

A good place for children to begin to develop an interest in history is to find out the history of where they live.

What You Need

Guides and histories of your town or city

What to Do

* With your child, research the history of the town, city or area in which you live. Begin by asking your child what he already knows, then ask him to make some predictions about what you will find out regarding when your area was first settled, who the first settlers were, where they came from, and why they chose to settle in the area. Help him to record these predictions in his history log.

—Go with your child to the local library, or sit with him at a computer, and look for historical reference materials—local histories and guidebooks, articles in regional historical magazines, and so forth (your librarian can direct you to good sources of information). As you work, talk with your child about what you're finding.

—Afterwards, talk with your child about what you found out.

* As part of this activity, focus your child's attention on your area's geography as it played a part in its history. Was it settled because it's on a waterway? Did it grow into a large town because of its location? its climate? Did industry develop there because coal, oil or copper deposits were nearby?

Let's Talk About It

Ask your child:

What is the most surprising thing you learned about our town's history?

What's the most interesting old building that you found?

Were there any historical markers or monuments that you discovered in our town?

Who is your favorite person to talk to for stories about our town's past?