

It's in the Cards

Grades 4-5

Many children don't like to study history in school because they are asked to memorize so many dates and names. Parents can help—and make learning more enjoyable—by using games to reinforce what their children are learning in history class.

What You Need

Your child's history book

Index cards or sheets of heavy paper cut into cards

What to Do

* Find out what events your child is currently studying in school. Use information from her textbook to make a set of cards. On one card, write the name of a historical figure; on a second card, write the events for which that figure is known in history; and on a third card, write the date(s) for the event. Do this for four or five figures from the time being studied.

—Use the cards to review with your child, helping her to name each figure and match it with the events and dates.

—When your child is comfortable with the cards, shuffle them and deal an equal number to your child and to yourself. Choose one of your cards and read it aloud. Say, for example, "Harriet Tubman." If your child has the event ("Underground Railroad") or date ("1863"—the year she freed more than 700 slaves in a raid), she must give you the card. If she has the card, she must give it to you, and you continue asking for cards. If she doesn't have the card, the turn goes to her, and she asks you for a card. Continue until one of you has no cards left.

* Ask your child to think of other ways to use card games to learn more about history.

Let's Talk About It

Ask your child:

Why is it important to know when things happened?

Why could some things not have happened any earlier than they did?

What would happen to the story of times past if our cards got all mixed up and out of order?