

Rub Against History

Grades 1-3

Younger children find making rubbings great fun. Cornerstones and plaques are interesting, and even coins will do.

What You Need

Tracing paper or other lightweight paper

Large crayons with the paper removed, fat lead pencil, colored pencils, or artists' charcoal

Coins

What to Do

- * Use the list above to help your child make a kit to do rubbings. Choose paper that does not tear easily, but also is light enough so that the details of the rubbing will be visible.
- * Begin by having your child make a rubbing of a quarter or half dollar (large coins from other countries or commemorative coins can be interesting to use, too). Tape the coin to a surface to make it stable.

Double the tape so that it sticks on both sides and place it on the bottom of the coin. Attach the coin to a piece of wood or to some surface that can't be harmed by the tape. Lay the paper on top of the coin, and have your child rub across it with a pencil, crayon or charcoal. Tell him not to rub too hard and to keep rubbing until the coin's marks show up on the paper. Talk with him about what the rubbing shows.



- * Take your child on a walk around the neighborhood. Look for objects that he can use for rubbings, such as dates in the sidewalk, words on cornerstones and plaques on buildings or interesting designs on bricks or other materials used on buildings. Once home, ask family members to view the rubbings and guess what each represents. Ask your child to tell the story behind the rubbings and why he chose to make them.
- * Consider taking your older child to cemeteries or memorial sites around town and make rubbings of old gravestones or markers. Talk with him about each rubbing. Tell him to look for designs and dates and ask him questions to make sure that he knows how old the objects are.
- * Encourage your child to cut out some of his rubbings and include them in his history log.

Let's Talk About It

Ask your child:

What showed up in your rubbings?

What did the date and designs commemorate?

Historical preservation groups in America have worked to preserve old buildings and to install plaques on public historical places. Do you think that this is important work?

Why have humans left their marks on the world from early cave drawings to today's monuments, such as the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial?

If you made a monument, what would it be?

Who or what would it help people to remember or honor?