

The Past Anew

Grades 3-5

Reenactments of historical battles or periods, such as colonial times, make our nation's history come alive— and get children involved.

What You Need

A library card

Local newspapers

Phone book

What to Do

* Explain to your child what reenactments are—people dressing in the costumes of and acting out what life was like at some earlier time. With him, find out whether and where local reenactments are held by looking in your local newspaper or calling your local historical society, a state park or the National Park Service. If possible, choose a reenactment to visit. Prepare your child by taking him to a local museum or historical site that relates to the reenactment, by watching a TV program about the event or period or by searching for information about it on the Internet.

—Attend the reenactment and participate.

—Ask—and encourage your child to ask—the re-enactors questions about anything, from why they wear particular kinds of hats to the meanings of the event or period for the development or transformation of America.

Let's Talk About It

Ask your child:

What was unusual or interesting about the reenactment?

What role did each of the re-enactors play?

If there was conflict, what was shown or said about its causes and effects?

What obstacles did the characters face?

How did they overcome them?

What is the difference between the "real thing" and a performance of it?

What did you learn from the performance?