



# Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan

## What Ought To Rot

**School:** Waybright School

**Contributors:** Kristin Shipulski &  
Adele Winocour Kirby

**Subject:** Social Studies

**Grade:** 3-5

### Introduction:

Help children understand how life (for children in particular) has changed over the past two hundred years.

### Objectives:

- The students will be able to explain how objects or artifacts of everyday life in the past tell us how ordinary people lived and how everyday life has changed.
- The students will be able to compare and contrast life in modern times to life in the past.
- The students will be able to discuss and write about a day in the life of a child approximately two hundred years ago.

### Materials:

- Plastic cups
- Soil & water
- Plastic wrap
- Freezer
- Pottery clay
- Lamp
- Masking tape
- Rubber bands
- Wood chips
- Banana peel
- Work gloves
- Pottery shards and broken glass
- Student journals
- Library, encyclopedias, & Internet



The Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm.



# Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan

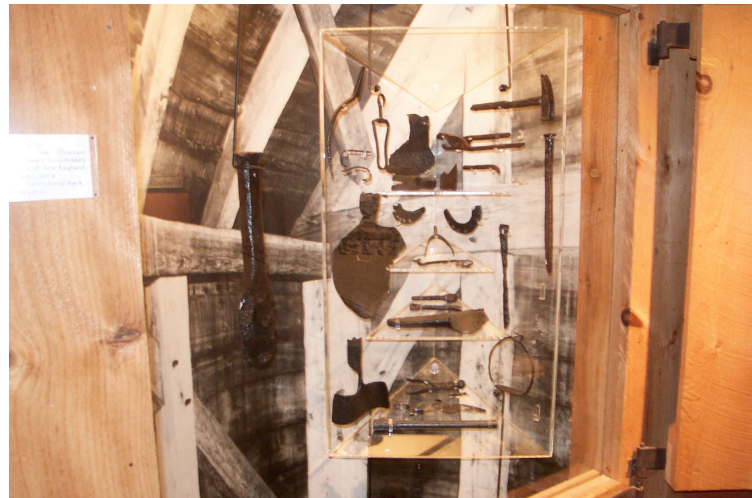
## Initiating Activity:

Have students participate in a “What Ought to Rot” experiment as follows:

- Divide students into four (4) groups. Each group will have a different item. Group 1 will have wood chips, Group 2 – banana peels, Group 3 – pottery shards, and Group 4 – broken glass.
- Each group will put their items in 3 plastic cups – one with soil, one with water, and in the last cup have the children insert their items which they have wrapped in pottery clay. Seal all cups with plastic wrap and masking tape. Put the cups with soil under lamps and the cups with water in the freezer.
- Have students predict what will happen to each item in each condition and list on chart paper.
- Have students keep a log or journal of the changes to their items over a two-week period.
- Have students discuss and present what happened to the items under each condition and how it compared to their predictions.

## Secondary Activity:

Have students research and participate in class discussions on life within the past two hundred years, highlighting children's jobs / chores, activities, toys, foods, and clothing.



A collection of artifacts at the Saugus Iron Works.

## Culminating Activity:

Visit the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. Have the children participate in a tour with artifact activities.

## Assessment:

1. The students will write journal entries describing what they've learned about artifacts in different conditions.
2. The students have a choice of writing a report or doing a class presentation, based on their research and class discussions, about life over the past two hundred years.
3. The students will write in the first person about a day in the life of a child living in the past. (It should include clothing they wore, food they ate, responsibilities & chores, activities, and how they were educated.)

Each of these assessments will be scored using rubrics which have been explained to the students.