**The 12 BIG ideas of History – from KeyStageHistory.co.uk**

1. **A world existed before both the children and those around them were born.** Some schools have successfully looked at Nursery rhymes with Reception classes to bring this point home. They looked at the old fashioned clothing and kitchen implements, which they knew were ‘real’, ‘old’ and from the ‘past’.
2. **There are different ways of describing the past such as days of the week, seasons, and words like yesterday, today, long ago, new, old.**  Frequent discussion, comparison of ‘old’ and ‘new’ pictures/objects and sequencing is helpful here. The more pupils have to talk about differences between the past and the present, the greater the need to develop a vocabulary to describe the past. Using topics such as Toys and Homes provides good context for the talk.
3. **The past was different to the present but there are similarities.**It is important that children don’t think that the past is just some imaginary place where things were done completely differently. They should see the things they have in common with their ancestors. Again, topics such as Homes, Washday and Toys are useful. Bringing in the old teddies is a favourite.
4. **People in the past had feelings, attitudes and ideas.**The natural context for this is through your study of famous people, focusing on those parts of their lives when they had to make important decisions, often when faced with human dilemmas which children can identify with.
5. **People make things happen, so some happenings are planned; things did not just happen.** Once again, it will be the work on Famous People and Famous Events that offer the best contexts. People in the past had choices.  Why did they act as they did?  Sometimes things are out of your control, such as the Great Fire. Pupils begin to question whether things happened because of human error e.g. the Sinking of the Titanic or the failure of Scott to get to the South Pole before Amundsen.
6. **People are affected by events**. Stories are a very good way to explore consequences, but so is discussion of the effects of a famous event, such as the Great Fire.
7. **We can tell different stories about the same event.**Almost any story will be told differently in books. Try to devise activities which highlight the differences. One of the outstanding lessons on Grace Darling focuses on the different versions of the rescue. One on Florence Nightingale looks at why people had different opinions of her.
8. **There are different ways of showing what happened in the past.** This is a good opportunity to use a range of sources e.g. video/oral accounts/pictures of the same event.
9. **We can disagree about what happened in the past, and it does not mean one of us is wrong.** This helps pupils to grasp that we need to listen to others’ views, which can be different, but valid – an important life skill if ever there was one.
10. **We know what it was like in the past from the evidence left behind.**  Work on pupils’ own lives is a great context for asking *“How do we know what we were like when we were 1, 2 or 3?”*  Photographs of birthday parties with candles on a birthday cake? As children move through the key stage, ask more open questions such as, *“What can we learn about Seaside holidays from these photographs and pictures. How do we know what happened during the Great Fire?*”
11. **Often there are not enough clues to tell us the full story so we have to do our best to complete the picture.**Pupils can grasp the idea that there is a difference between what happened and what we have evidence for.  We can make informed guesses, e.g. what a mystery object was used for, or how a film portrays an event such as the Sinking of the Titanic, but we cannot know for sure *exactly*what happened.
12. **We have to use words like ‘perhaps’ and ‘maybe’ to show that we cannot know everything for sure**.