

LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

Sections

Description of Unit.

What is History?

Young Reporter: Family histories.

Timeline of Ugandan History.

Creating a Living History Museum.

Impact of the Mobile Phone

Teachers' Introduction

All countries, including Uganda, are shaped by their History.

It follows that a person's education is incomplete if it lacks knowledge of the past events which have shaped our current lives.

The aims of this Living History Project are to:

- Provide young people with an awareness of recent history and of the events and changes that have taken place during the lifetime of their elders.
- Enable them to act out the role of investigative journalist trying to discover the truth of what life was like in the immediate past, and how major national events affected those lives.
- Encourage children and students to talk with their parents, grandparents and wider family and friends about their lives in earlier times.
- Foster a sense of empathy and understanding of the lives of their elders and an appreciation of the knowledge, experience and wisdom those older have gained during their lives.
- Promote closer relationships between the generations and engender a sense of pride in their families' achievements.
- Give young people experience in planning and conducting an investigation: framing questions, conducting oral interviews, listening and recording skills, reporting results orally, in writing and using art and drama.
- Providing an opportunity to analyse survey data using a computer spreadsheet.

There are activities that are suitable for primary children and secondary students.

The teacher has an important role to play in leading initial discussions to work out what aspects of life are to be investigated. At each level, we provide ideas for fruitful lines of questioning for the “Reporters”, but we strongly recommend that, once initiated, teachers allow the Young Reporters to take ownership of their investigations.

Teachers will, however, need to offer helpful guidance and suggestions at key points and, in particular, ensure that the enquiries are brought together (synthesised) and evaluated through presentations and discussion. A suitable way should be found to present the findings – this could be in written form, using pictures or posters, or presented as a piece of drama.

What is History?

Introduction

Young people will have the idea that History is learning about the past. However, there are different ways to carry out this learning.

1. They can be told the story of the past by their **teachers**.
2. They can read about the past from **story and textbooks**.

Both of these are important, but it would be a shame to ignore the wealth of historical knowledge that is held in the heads of family members and of the community more widely.

3. **Oral History:** Families in Uganda have, for centuries, passed down in stories what has happened to their families in previous generations. Every family has its unique story, but broad patterns re-emerge across families. This story telling tradition has given rise to, what we now call, Oral History. By tapping into these stories and the experiences of their elders, young people can gain a valuable insight into the past in a way that is likely to be richer and more personal than anything they will find in textbooks.

In this Living History Project, we aim to encourage young people to learn about the past from their own families, and to record what they find, for themselves and for the benefit of people living elsewhere and future generations.

Activity 1: Introductory Question and Answer

A. For Primary Schools

In primary schools, History teaching gives children an idea of what life was like in the past and develops awareness that life has not always been the same. The focus at this level tends to be on Family and Social History, which looks at how the lives of individual people, families and communities change with the passage of time.

A useful starting point for teachers is to use leading questions to draw out what their children already know about changes in the recent past.

Example Dialogue

(*Note*: key words that teachers might wish to expand upon are highlighted in **bold**):

- Long ago people would have made containers for storing grain or carrying water from wood, clay or animal skins. Do you have any of these old things around where you live?
What **new materials** do we have today? (*Possible answers*: metal, glass and plastic.)
What are these newer materials used for at your home?
- What were traditional homes made from, in times gone by? (*Possible answers*: sticks and branches, mud for daub and grass, reeds and palm fronds to keep the rain out.) How are newer houses different? (*Answers*: newer houses use bricks, cement and corrugated iron or tiles for the roofs.) Do you think houses have improved over time?
- Even the food we eat has changed. Long, long ago, human beings everywhere survived by **hunting and gathering**. What sort of food do you think they would have eaten? (*Possible answers*: fruits, berries, wild plants and bush meat.)
These days our food is **cultivated on farms**. We grow food crops and rear animals. Let us make a list of all the foods we eat today.
- What food do you think your grandparents ate when they were young?
How was it different from what we eat today?
- Those people who work and live in a town, such as Kamuli, Jinja, Masaka, Gulu, Kasese or Bundibugyo, or in a city, like Kampala or Mbarara, can buy, in **markets** and **supermarkets**, a wide **variety** of food to cook at home, and they can also eat out in **cafés and restaurants**. What sorts of food are available to people living in towns and cities?

(*Possible answers*: staple foods such as maize, matoke, millet and rice, root crops (e.g. cassava, sweet potatoes, groundnuts, yams, Irish potatoes), vegetables (e.g. dodo, nakati, borr, cabbage), fruits (e.g. bananas, pineapples, pawpaw, mango, passion and jack fruit), and meat such as chicken, goat, pork, beef and fish.)

The variety of food is increasing, especially in towns, where you find chapati and rolex (omelette rolled in a chapati), kebabs/skewers, samosas, kabalagala (fried banana cakes) and in the cities you will find that foods from other countries, such as India, China, Thailand, Ethiopia, France and America, are becoming very popular. **Trading** with other countries brings in new foods and cooking ideas.

- Long, long ago, what did people use to make clothes? (*Possible answers*: animal skins, bark cloth, woven from local materials.) What are clothes made from today?

(Cotton, wool and man-made fibres.) Where do people get their clothes? (Answers: Mainly bought from **markets**, some made locally or at home.) **Shops and international trade** have increased variety. Is anyone wearing a shirt from another country? (Football shirt for Manchester United, Chelsea?) Did your grandfather wear a football shirt when he was young like you? Why not? (There was much less trade.)

- What do people use to buy clothes and other things? (Answer: **money**) Where do they get money? (Answer: they have to **earn income** by working and selling things). How does your family make money? How did people make money in your family when your parents and grandparents were young? (Teachers could mention here that there has been a move away from a **subsistence economy** and towards a **cash or exchange economy**, and the distinction between **cash crops** and **food crops**, though these days many farmers sell surplus food for cash.)
- Where did most people used to work? (Answer: on the land growing food for subsistence or sale.) What about today? (Answer: Many people earn a living by **working for others**. They get paid for their **labour** and **skills** by **businesses** and by **government**.) So, the way people make a living has changed over time.
- Do you expect to be doing the same as your family when you grow up? What do you think you will be doing when you are 30?

B. Extension Work for Secondary Schools

The above sequence of questions could also be used with lower secondary school students.

However, at secondary level, teachers might want to bring in more aspects of social and political history, such as:

- Over the passage of time there has been much movement of people in Uganda. Have your family always lived where they do now? Did any of your **ancestors** come from another place? Did your mother and father come from the same place? If they have moved from somewhere else, they have **migrated**.
- In Uganda, as in many other countries, people have been moving from rural areas into towns and cities. This is called **Rural to Urban Migration**. Do you know people who have moved to live and work in town or to the capital, Kampala? Has anyone moved in your family? Do you keep in touch with them?
- In the past most people worked on the land as farmers. Farming is part of the **primary sector of the economy**. Today, some people work in **secondary industry** (perhaps in a factory), where they make articles for sale. Many others work in the **service sector**. What jobs do we include in services? Do you know people who work in a service occupation?

- We have seen in recent years that the lives of people are changed by the development of **new technology**. What new technology do you think has made the biggest difference to lives in Uganda? (*Possible answers:* hydro-electricity, water pumps, the internal combustion engine, communications technologies (radio, TV, mobile phones.)
- The history of a country is also affected by its **politics**. This concerns how the country is governed and how decisions are made about taxes and about spending on such things as roads, health care, education and training. Can you think of ways that the government has brought changes in Uganda?
- **Political stability** is important to people. Most countries in their history have experienced periods of **political instability** (when there are sudden changes of government caused by violence or **civil war**.) Uganda has experienced periods like this. What do you know of these? What have people told you about life in times of instability and fighting? Which do people say were the worst periods? What do they say were the best periods?

All these things affect the story of a nation. They affect what is written down and recorded as its history. We can learn much from studying the past.

The French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, is reported to have said that: “*History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.*” This view is controversial! It implies that countries will choose to tell those stories of the past that fit in with an accepted story or **narrative** of how they wish to imagine their nation’s story. Others argue that History can be **objective**.

Definitions:

Objective Truth This is an account based on factual evidence. It is taken to be the true story of what happened. In the case of History, this implies that there is a sequence of events that actually happened, and the purpose of History is to tell about them as **accurately** and as **impartially** as possible.

Most historians probably aim to research the truth and tell, as objectively as they can, the true story of what happened in the past. However, this is often difficult in practice, because we all hold different **opinions**, and we have different **beliefs and values** about what is important. Some books of history will miss out what another historian would include, because they make different judgements about what they think is worth writing about. This can give rise to **selection bias**.

Impartial – this is when writers try to set aside their own feelings and prejudices and do their very best to give a fair and balanced account of events.

Subjective – if an account of history is heavily influenced by the values and politics of the author, it is said to be a subjective account. Someone else might see the same facts and interpret them in a different way.

What different people have said about the study of History:

“Those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it.”

Winston Churchill (The British Prime Minister who described Uganda as the *Pearl of Africa*).

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.”

Marcus Garvey (The Jamaican political activist.)



“The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future.”

Theodore Roosevelt (Former American President.)

“History is who we are and why we are the way we are.”

David McCullough (American writer and historian.)

“Everyone has a history. What you do with it is up to you.

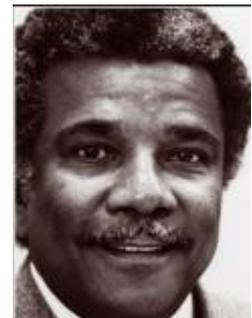
Some repeat it. Some learn from it. The really special ones use it to help others.”

John Mark Green (American writer.)



“The more you know of your history, the more liberated you are.”

Maya Angelou (American poet, singer and civil rights activist.)



“A people denied a history is a people deprived of dignity.”

(Ali Mazrui, born in Kenya, former Professor of Political Science at Makerere University.)

Young Reporter: Family Histories

Junior Reporters: My Grandparents' Childhood

It is suggested that this activity is conducted in groups of 3.

Each child should choose a grandparent or someone of a similar age and ask them if they are willing to be interviewed, by themselves and two school friends, about their lives when they were children. All three children together will interview three adults

The children should imagine that they are newspaper reporters. They have been asked by their newspaper to find out about what life was like when their grandparents were children. They should find out as much as possible about their lives and prepare a story for the newspaper.

They should begin by making a list of the questions they would like to ask. To choose the questions, they should try to imagine what readers of the newspaper might find interesting about life at that time.

Teachers' Note:

Children should be given an opportunity to come up with questions themselves but, if they are finding it difficult, you may need to give them some hints, such as:

- How many people were in the family?
- How did they sleep?
- What did they eat?
- What jobs did they have to do each day as children?
- What time did they get up in a morning and go to bed at night?
- How did they get water and firewood?
- What things did they have in their homes?
Beds, furniture, cooking equipment, tools for digging, hunting?
- How did they survive? Where did they get their food?
- Did they sell things in markets? What?
- How did they get money?

- Did they sing and make music? What songs did they sing?
- Did they play games? What games?
- Did they ever get into trouble?
- What made them happy?
- What other things do they remember about life when they were young?

Bringing it all together

It is important that the children have an opportunity to talk about what they learned from the interviews and to hear what other children found out. According to the age and ability of the children, they could be asked to:

Give a Talk: A few groups could be chosen to talk to the class about interesting things they found out about the lives of their grandparents. Other children could add things they found.

Write a Newspaper Story: Describe, in a short story, some of the more interesting things they found out from their grandparents.

(**Note:** We could add the best of these stories to the *HumanStudies.Education* website. Perhaps teachers could take photographs of children interviewing their grandparents.)

Draw a Picture: If you have suitable materials, the children could draw a picture illustrating something they learned from the interviews.

Make a Drama: The children could act out, with their grandparents present, some of the more dramatic or funny things that happened to their grandparents when they were young.

2 Minutes Thankfulness

It is quite a nice idea to ask the children to spend two minutes in silence being thankful to their grandparents for all they have done to care for their family, and for overcoming all the challenges they had to face along the way.

Senior Reporters: Changing Lives

Teachers need to explain to the secondary students that they are going to be newspaper reporters. Their job is to carry out an investigation and write a news feature about life in the past, when their older family members were young. They are going to obtain the information they need by interviewing older members of their families.

They will work in groups of 3, and each group must interview 3 people.

Students should begin by listing those aspects of their elders lives that might be interesting to readers of the newspaper, who mainly live in towns and cities.

Bear in mind that your family members will have faced many challenges in their lives. For example, they might have experienced serious accidents and illnesses, childbirth, loss of family, crop failure, economic insecurity, periods of social disorder, civil war and changes in national leadership. Some will have prospered and seen substantial improvements in their living standards, others will have had a life of ups and downs. Whatever has happened to your elders they will all have learned a lot in their lives – they are older and wiser!

Through the interviews try to learn as much as possible about what life was like in earlier times. Many people before were not able to go to school. How was their childhood different? Did they have time to play or did they have a life of work from an early age? What games did children play? What adventures did they get up to? Was the food the same as now? In what ways have their lives changed? What were the most challenging periods in their lives?

Take a look at the **Timeline of Ugandan History**.

What have been the key events since 1939? Try to find out from your elders, which of these events affected their lives. Think of some questions you might ask them about the Political History of Uganda.

Teachers' Note:

Young people are being asked to imagine themselves as young newspaper reporters, setting out to write stories about what things were like during the lives of their parents, grandparents and others who have gone before them.

The first step is to give students time to frame their own questions to use as a starting point for discussion. If they need help then the questions for primary children could be used or adapted. But we offer two alternatives below:

Alternative A: Open Format Interview

This is where the students think of some simple opening questions and then simply prompt their interviewees to keep talking about their recollections of the past. Students try to make as accurate as possible account of what was said.

Alternative B: Political History Focused Interview

As a teacher of secondary students, you might want to ask them to focus on their grandparents' and elders' memories of important political events in Uganda.

A good preparation for this, if it is possible, would be for students to spend time studying the *Timeline of Ugandan History*. This sets out the basic **chronology** of events, and links provide access to further information about the events. As extra information comes to light, it will be added to the links in the timeline.

Here are suggested questions to tease out the elders views on the political evolution of Uganda:

- In your life as a whole, who or what has had the most impact on your life?
What has caused the biggest change for you?
- Was your life affected by changes in political leaders or by the periods of trouble and fighting?
- How did you feel about life under Obote, Amin and Museveni?
What were they like to begin with? What were they like later?
- Did the expulsion of the Asians in 1972 affect you at all?
How do you feel about it?
- Do any of them remember life before Independence in 1962, under the British?
What was it like then?
- Do you remember the 1945 or 1949 disturbances?
Did you take part? Why or why not?

- Do you remember the April 1962 pre-Independence election?
How did you or your parents vote? What was it like, voting for the first time?
- How did you come to hear that Obote II was over and that Museveni and the NRA were in power? What difference did that make to you?

Advice on the Conduct of Interviews

Sensitising students to some principles of how to conduct effective interviews is essential.

Listening and recording carefully. A good interviewer knows the value of silence. Once you have asked someone a question, it is important to keep quiet and listen carefully to the answer. Sometimes, it will be clear that the interviewee does not understand your question. In which case you might need to make the question clearer.

Older children and students can be made aware of the importance, for all news reporters, of the following principles:

Corroboration. This involves confirming someone's account by checking it against materials from other sources. A story can be corroborated by comparing it with written, photographic, recorded sources or by interviewing more people.

Triangulation. This is when you ask a number of people the same questions and compare the replies until you feel you have gained a reasonably accurate picture. This can be a good way to corroborate a story.

Once the interviews have been conducted, they should be written up. If different students are exploring the same topic, then it would be good to bring them together to compare the information they have gathered. In this case, a single agreed account could be written.

Please ensure that some of the better stories are submitted to the Living History web pages, so they can form an historical record for those in other schools around Uganda and across the world to see.

Timeline of Ugandan History

This timeline of Uganda History is a work in progress. It sets out important political events after 1939 which had effects across the nation. As we learn, from the Young Reporter interviews, what ordinary Ugandans remember as the important landmarks in their lives, additions can be made to the timeline. For example, we might want to add particular climatic events, outbreaks of disease, the improvement of major roads and power lines and other things that have affected the lives of large numbers of people. We will be gradually adding links to the events on the timeline, which will allow you to access further information about them.

LANDMARK EVENTS IN UGANDAN HISTORY

1939	Start of World War II
1940	World War
1941	World War
1942	World War
1943	World War
1944	World War
1945	Strikes and disturbances at the end of the War
1946	
1947	
1948	
1949	Disturbances
1950	
1951	
1952	Andrew Cohen, new British Governor appointed
1953	Start of 'Kabaka Crisis' November: Kabaka Mutesa II deported
1954	
1955	End of 1900 'Buganda Agreement' Kabaka returns
1956	
1957	Andrew Cohen, ends time as British Governor
1958	Territory-wide elections to the Legislative Assembly – except Buganda
1959	
1960	
1961	March elections: boycotted in Buganda: won by Ben Kiwanuka, Democratic Party
1962	25 April: elections won by Milton Obote and UPC (and Kabaka Yekka Party) 9 October: Independence Day
1963	9 October: Uganda becomes a Republic with Kabaka Edward Mutesa II as President and Milton Obote as Prime Minister
1964	
1965	
1966	Destruction of Buganda Kingdom Flight of Kabaka Mutesa II
1967	Milton Obote issues <i>Common Man's Charter</i> and New constitution
1968	
1969	
1970	
1971	25 January: Military coup brings Idi Amin to power
1972	4 August Amin gives Uganda's Asians 90 days to leave the country

1973
1974
1975
1976
1977
1978
1979 11 April Amin overthrown by Uganda National Liberation Front
and Tanzanian army. Amin goes into exile
1980 10/11 December General Election
Milton Obote and Uganda People's Congress elected to form new government
Start of Bush War led by Yoweri Museveni and National Resistance Army (NRA)
1982
1983
1984
1985 28 July Obote ousted in military coup by the Okello brothers
1986 26 January NRA take Kampala, 29 January Yoweri Museveni declared President
1987
1988
1989 11-28 February Elections to National Resistance Council (no parties allowed)
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994 28 March Elections for Constituent Assembly
1995 New constitution Two term limit for presidency
1996 Presidential election Museveni beats Paul Ssemogerere
1997
1998
1999
2000 Referendum on the constitution
2001 Presidential election Museveni beats Kizza Besigye
2002
2003
2004
2005 Parliament lifts two-term restriction on presidency
2006 Presidential election Museveni beats Besigye
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020

Creating a Living History Museum

A museum is a place where you can find out about history. Traditional museums store and display objects which give an idea of how people lived in the past. Most museums are divided into sections, according to what is being displayed. Many museums are divided into parts showing what life was like in different time periods from the stone age, through the metalworking age (bronze and iron) and so on to modern times. Where different parts of a country have different traditions, the museum might show life in each region. A museum might also specialise in specific themes, such as the way people live and work through the ages, clothing and costumes or even the art and music of different eras.



The Uganda Museum on Kitante Hill, Kampala (above) has a large collection of **artefacts** from different periods in Uganda's past. There are displays showing life in early stone and iron-age Uganda. A display shows iron smelting using bellows, which started well over two thousand years ago in Uganda, between the first and fourth century BCE. Other displays show weapons used for hunting and fighting, farm implements, clothing and musical instruments. The museum is very much a living museum. It has regular demonstrations where, for example, musicians play traditional instruments. There are also displays showing the natural history of Uganda. The museum, for example, has a large collection of butterflies that are native to Uganda.

Activity 1: Photo Identification

Below are two photographs of articles in display cabinets at the Uganda Museum. Look at the pictures carefully and see how many of the items you can identify.



Activity 2: Help us to Create a Virtual Museum of Living History

Would you help us to create a virtual museum on this website? Together we can record life in Uganda during the memory of those people living now, including you, your parents, grandparents and extended family?

You can do this as a class activity.

Ask different people to propose objects to place in the museum that will help people in future to understand what life is like now and in the recent past. You could have a number of sessions to discuss what you are going to include. Each session could take a different theme, such as:

- How we make a living.
- The food we eat.
- How we grow food, and what implements we use.
- How we prepare food to eat, with pictures of cooking pots and implements.
- How we cook food. (What about including some recipes?)
- The clothes we wear, and where we get them.
- Our houses and what is inside them – furniture etc.
- The ceremonies we have, weddings, funerals, baby naming.
- The conventions we have when naming children, e.g. use of clan names.
- The games people play, young and old.
- The music and songs that people make and listen to.
- The way people use radios and T.V.s – what they listen to and watch.
- How people use mobile phones and the difference they have made to their lives.
- Shopping – where do people shop and what do they buy?
- Other things...

Once you have decided on what you would like to include in your museum, take some photographs with a camera or phone. Your pictures will take the place of displays in the museum. If you look carefully at the pictures of the cabinets in the Uganda Museum, you will see that each object or set of objects has some printed information about it. In our virtual museum we also need you to write something about each object. The material on this website will be seen by people all over Uganda and all over the world, now and in the future. So, we need to give them as full and accurate a picture of what life is like in Uganda as possible. We need lots and lots of photographs and interesting notes to explain each one.

By creating this virtual museum, you will be helping to preserve Uganda's history for the benefit of people to come.

Two items you might want to include in your virtual museum are the radio and the TV. Perhaps you could find out when people in your family first had access to each of these. What programmes do they listen to on radio? What do they watch on TV? How have both affected their lives? Do young and old listen to and watch the same things? When you have interviewed some people write some information to go with each picture.



What will be your next items?

Impact of the Mobile Phone

This activity gives students an opportunity to investigate the historical changes to lifestyles that the mobile phone has brought to Uganda.



We would like you to take the interview questions below to members of your family in different age groups. Ask them the questions and make a record of each person's reply.

You can analyse the results by hand or use a calculator.

Alternatively, if you have access to a computer, you can enter the responses into a spreadsheet and analyse the data with the various spreadsheet functions.

You might be able to submit this activity as a piece of coursework for your computer studies examination.

Each student, or pair of students, should ask the questions below to at least 3 people in their family in the age groups: Under 21, 25 to 60, Over 60.

IMPACT OF THE MOBILE PHONE ON LIFE IN UGANDA

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Pre-interview information:

School Name:

Class:

Nearest town:

Distance to town in km:

Date of Interview:

Sex of Interviewee: Male (1), Female (2)

Introducing the interview:

At school we are investigating the effect the mobile phone has had on Uganda.
Would you mind answering a few questions?

There are also one or two personal questions. Do you mind telling me?

Your age:

What you do? (e.g. student, job, retired)

Do you have the use of a mobile phone? Yes (1), No (0)

Is it one you own (1) or one you borrow (2)?

In which year did you first have use of a mobile phone?

How many mobile phones have you had?

What did you pay for your first one?

What did you pay for your latest one?

How do you use your mobile phone? Say Yes(1) or No(0) to each of the following:

- A. To call family and friends for a chat
- B. To meet people
- C. To call for a bodaboda or taxi
- D. To check on prices of goods and place orders
- E. To check prices in markets of things I am selling
- F. To read the news
- G. To take photographs
- H. For social networking (Facebook, whatapp etc)

I. To search the internet

How important is the mobile phone in your life? Tick one. Tick(1), No tick(0)

- Not at all
- I use it sometimes
- I use it often
- It is essential, I use it all the time

How has having a mobile phone affected life?

(Record 1 for Yes and 0 for No for each of the following)

- A. Not at all
- B. It has saved money on my purchases
- C. It has enabled me to get higher prices for what I sell
- D. It has made it possible to pick up work
- E. It is essential to my work
- F. It has helped me to keep in touch with people
- G. It has made me happier

FINAL QUESTION: *Is there anything else you would like to say about the effect of the mobile phone on your life?*

Write down what they say:

If you intend to analyse your data using a spreadsheet then download whichever one of these templates works on your computer:

Mobile Phone Interview.xlsx or Mobile Phone Interview.ods

Once you have analysed your data, present a report of your findings to the class.