

What is local history?

Local history provides us with a type of 'microhistory', where we examine historical events on a small, local scale to help us frame, understand and elaborate on broader national narratives.

What does the research say?

There is significant value in using local history as a lens to illuminate the bigger picture. It is a 'microcosm to consider wider and more significant trends' *John Becket*.

Microhistory is "wider and more educationally relevant than any other form of history" *David Dymond*.

Liz Taylor (TH116) highlighted how a firsthand experience of a location is valuable in bringing the history to life.

Think about school trips to the Battlefields; a sense of location gives students a really tangible picture in understanding the history. So why not bring this into focus by examining local history?

Further Reading

Teaching History: 168- New, Novice or Nervous? *Local History*; 156- D.Waters; 134- 'Local Voices'; 116- L.Taylor

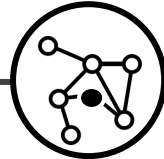
The Microhistory Lens blog

Using local history



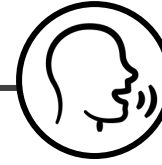
Time-thickened places

- Select a place: house, school, church, town hall, field, like the GCSE historic environment does (*A House Through Time* series)
- The history of that 'time-thickened place' (*Crang*) can be used to tell a much wider story of the town/city and beyond, using personal histories to tell fascinating stories.



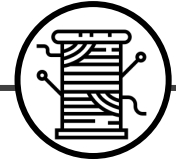
Microcosm

- By zooming in on a small area, you can really see the finer changes taking place on a personal level.
- This can resonate more with students, and can also then be compared to bigger historical events/developments for similarities and differences.



Oral history

- A very underused source in the classroom.
- Real opportunity to get students to speak to relatives/neighbours about the 20th century.
- This could then become a resource for future classes.

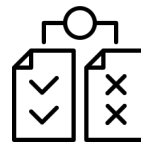


Thread throughout curriculum

- Value in creating a thread of microhistories throughout the curriculum, from KS3-5.
- Look for interesting local stories on KS4 content eg: Elizabethan architecture; local Chartists; local soldiers from WW1.

Do's and Don'ts

To truly utilise local history in the classroom, here's some top tips:



- Be confident even if you're not from where you teach- you tell the history of many places you don't come from!
- Get students involved in uncovering lost local stories
- Encourage visits to the locations you are talking about- official trips or to walk past out and about
- Assume that students know lots about their local area
- Make it seem like a bolt-on to the lesson
- Don't think that the microhistory is insignificant to the wider story you are telling. Once you begin incorporating, the value is clear.

In the History Classroom

Here are some starting points for how to embed local history into your lessons and curriculum.

Domesday Book

opendomesday.org
Find digitised village records from 1086 survey

Legacies of Abolition

ucl.ac.uk/lbs
Search for slave owners who claimed for compensation

Votes for Women

suffrageresources.org.uk
Database of suffrage supporters with further links

Your local archives

Use them to your advantage. Their websites are a great starting point

