

# THE ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. apply critical thinking skills to organize and use information
2. differentiate between primary and secondary sources
3. analyze information by comparing and contrasting
4. identify different points of view
5. create a visual product incorporating main and supporting ideas

TEKS: SS 3.2B, 3A, 12A, 17A,C&E, 4.21A&B, 22B&D, 5.24A,B&D.  
25A&D; LA 3.21A, 4.19A, 5.19A

Materials: Photographs (attached) from the Library of Congress website <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>, construction paper or legal paper, map of your school, list of teachers

Vocabulary: advantages, disadvantages, principal, behavior, discipline

Teaching Strategies:

1. As students are welcomed back to school, take a few minutes to compare modern schools with one-room schools of the past. Begin by asking students to guess the number of rooms in your school. Then, if possible, display a map of your school and count the rooms.
2. Ask students to guess how many teachers there are in your school. Count by grade levels the number of teachers, and then add support staff such as librarians, music teachers, PE teachers, aides, and administrators.
3. Remind students that when schools first started, all the students were in one room, taught by one teacher. There was no principal, no cafeteria, no library, and no bathroom. Display the attached pictures, noting that these are considered a primary source and come from the Library of Congress.
4. Ask for student response. In what ways would that type of school be better or worse than schools are now? Possible areas to explore include: being able to advance at your own pace, having brothers and sisters in the same class, older children tutoring younger children, how a teacher can teach all grades all subjects, having the same teacher for several years, and how discipline would be different.
5. Ask students to imagine a "What If?" scenario. What if some people proposed that we go back to the days of the one room school as a way to combat behavior problems, gangs, dropouts and other ills of our current educational system? Discuss briefly the pros and cons.

6. Assign student to write two editorials, one for changing our current system to that of the one room school and one against.
7. Students will also create an advertising billboard (on legal sized copy paper or 11x18 construction paper) for one side or the other, with three or four reasons citizens should vote for or against the suggested change.
8. Ask students to line up on two sides of the room, representing their view, to display their posters and argue their case. Display the posters after the discussion.
9. Check the school library for a book on the one-room school. Some possibilities include: *One-Room School* by Raymond Bial, *A One-room School (Historic Communities)* by Bobbie Kalman, *One Room School* by Laurence P. Pringle, *The One-room Schoolhouse: A Tribute to a Beloved National Icon* by Paul Rocheleau, *The Little Red Schoolhouse (Dover Books on Americana)* by Eric Sloane

Extension for G/T

Students will develop criteria for hiring a teacher for a one-room school. Include age, experience, and education. Compare it to requirements for today's teachers. Also compare compensation and benefits for yesteryear and today.

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St Elmo School House, Chaffee County, Colo.

Library of Congress, American Memory Collection

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html> In search box, type in "one room school," then click on [St. Elmo School House, Northwest corner, First Street & North Avenue, Saint Elmo \(historical\), Chaffee, CO](#)



What's that building behind the school? An outhouse!



Where would you want to sit? Notice how many desks there are. What's that in the middle of the room? A stove



View from the back of the room. Notice the chalkboards. What's missing from this classroom? Lockers?