

Here comes the '60s:

exploring a period in 'living memory' at Key Stage 1

Karin Doull

The 1960s were a decade of great change in Britain. The previous decade had seen America begin its gradual global cultural domination while Britain had to revise its role from imperial state to a member of the new Commonwealth of Nations. Recovery from the war had not been easy and the 1950s had been a period of slow rebuilding and re-evaluation. Suddenly the 1960s exploded in a psychedelic paisley blast. Britain, especially London, became the centre for the latest fashion and music icons.

Changes within Living Memory – Key Stage 1

This period provides a fascinating challenge for children at any age and the reading list includes a recent article related to teaching with older children at Key Stage 3. Within the primary school it provides rich opportunities as part of a theme or turning point post-1066. The purpose of this article, however, is to show how this is a fascinating period to look at when considering 'changes within living memory' at Key Stage 1 as it is still relatively easy to find primary source material.

As such a vibrant period, it also remains fresh within people's memories. The national curriculum does specify that when considering this focus teachers should try 'to reveal aspects of change in national life'. This need to make comparisons is a key feature within the national curriculum. It is also possible for students to focus across different periods, as well as comparing with their own

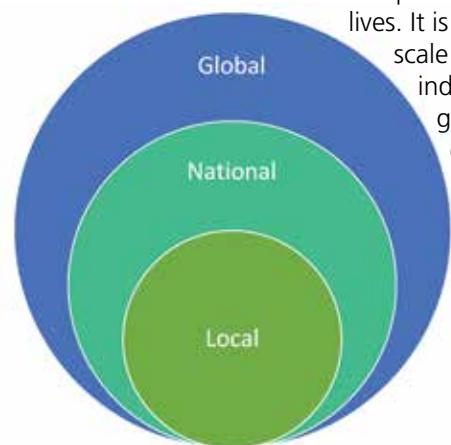
lives. It is also interesting to scale upwards from the individual or local to the global. The national curriculum talks about local, national and global. I think that, notwithstanding Brexit, you could also include a European dimension here even though this is not an aspect within the NC requirements.

Exploring chronology and a sense of period through the 1960s

This topic is predominantly about two key concepts, identifying the characteristic features of that period and understanding what was significant about the time. You will also be developing children's ability to compare the way of life in the past with their own. There is an expectation that children will know where the people and events fit within a chronological framework and to do this you need to consider what came before as well as what follows the period. Of course it is possible here to talk about child>parent>grandparent (or great grandparent depending on how young the parents in your school are) but this is a little amorphous. Creating a timeline of decades would probably be of most use here. With any timeline for Key Stage 1 plenty of images should be used. These are important markers to help children develop a store of visual reference points. Children are very capable of identifying a 'style' even if they cannot manage time intervals. Your timeline can, of course, be fixed but a human line with children in different tabards is always fun and a good way to reinforce ordinality.

Exploring the 1960s through oral history

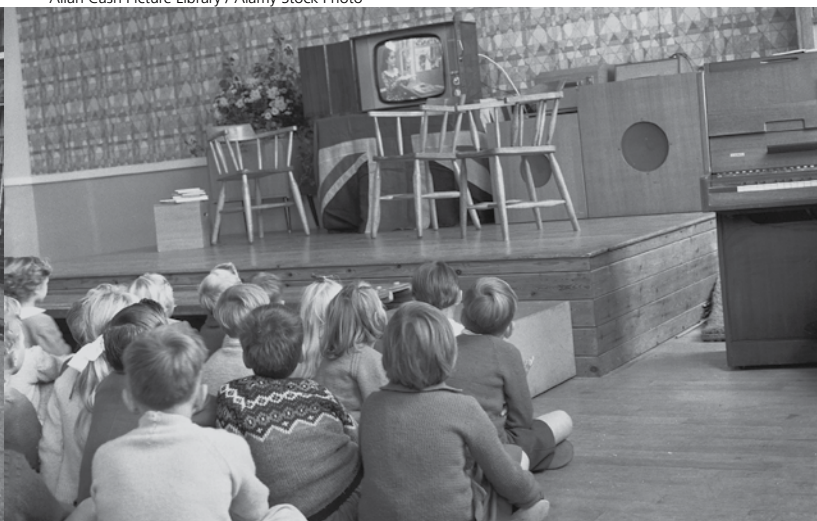
Of course one of the key activities both for Year 1 and Year 2 is to invite in friends or family to talk about what life was like at this time. While it is useful to think about some general ideas you would like to ask about, I would advise not allocating specific questions to individual children. They can become so focused on waiting to ask their question that they do not always listen to the answer. Do ensure that you think of open-ended questions. If you ask 'Did you wear shorts as a little boy?' the answer is liable to be 'yes', 'no' or 'sometimes'. The question 'What did you wear as a child?' is liable to have a much richer response. If possible ask your visitors to bring in photos or artefacts. Have some local photos of the area in the sixties to help jog the memory. Ensure that you have spoken to the person and listened to their stories before inviting them into class. You want to ensure that their talk will be at the right level for



Children playing in the streets 1966.
Trinity Mirror / Mirrorpix / Alamy Stock Photo



A group of primary school children watching television.
Allan Cash Picture Library / Alamy Stock Photo



your class. I would video or film the interview. Play back the interview to children and ask them what they think the most important elements were. What was the funniest thing they said? Was there anything that was surprising? What would you still like to ask? A large photo of your visitor with some of their key comments makes a wonderful record. If you speak to more than one person you can see if they mention similar experiences. You could also use a series of speech bubbles to show what the different people said about the time. These could also be colour coded into local, national or global events highlighting the overlap between people's experiences.

Older children could take photos of the talk. These can be uploaded onto a programme such as 'Shadow Puppets' where children can then select four or five images and add commentary orally to produce a short narrated slide show.

Children's understanding of the past develops as they progress through Key Stage 1 and with this in mind the following activities suggest different challenges which could be made for Year 1 and Year 2.



Places to visit

The Beatles Story
Britannia Vaults, Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AD

Museum of London
150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN

The Victoria and Albert Museum
London SD7 2RL

Teaching the 1960s with Year 1 children

What was life like for children in the 1960s?

If you are looking at this with Year 1 then I would suggest that social history is probably the best option. School days, home life, clothes, children's television and toys and pastimes are all easily accessible and offer clear points of comparison.

What was it like to go to school in the 1960s?

What did our homes look like in the 1960s?

What sort of clothes did children wear in the 1960s?

What children's television programmes were there in the 1960s?

What toys and games did children play in the 1960s?

How has life changed or stayed the same since the 1960s?

Teaching the 1960s with Year 2 children

Here come the 1960s: How can we recognise the 1960s?

The idea behind this investigation is to consider why this period is seen as so iconic. It takes a number of influential areas and explores them focusing on the characteristic features of the period and the significance of different individuals or events. While it is easy to look at what was happening in the big cities such as London, Manchester or Liverpool your local aspect can be provided by an older local resident through the oral history. The areas I have chosen to focus on are:

- fashion
- photography
- hair
- music
- key events

Key Question	Learning Intention	Activity	Assessment Criteria	Resources
How was fashion different in the 1960s?	Identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods.	Compare fashion across different decades and identify characteristic features of 1960s. (Activity 1 and 2)	Can the children identify features that relate to fashion in the 1960s?	Images of fashion from 50s, 60s and 70s. Timeline of three decades Images of sixties boutiques Resources for IPA. Set up a working wall with images and key words.
Who was David Bailey and why was he significant?	Ask and answer questions, choosing and using sources to show they understand key features.	Watch videos of images. Stop at points to look at light/pose/background. Look at other images – are there any characteristic poses? What sort of people was Bailey photographing? What is a celebrity photographer? Why might he still be important? (Activity 3)	Can the children take photos in the style of David Bailey?	Videos/images (see activity 3) Add Bailey to timeline. Add image of David Bailey then and now to working wall. Add some iconic models in poses, if possible with names (type out names on typewriter).
How did a hairdresser create a look for this period?	Understand some ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.	Look first at the Beehive Style – what are the characteristics? Look at images of ‘the bob’. How are they different? Listen to a hairdresser talk about different styles. (Activity 4)	Can the children record what they think is significant from the talk by the hairdresser? (Photo of visitor; speech bubbles of key information)	Images of Sassoon and his signature cuts. Add image of Vidal Sassoon to working wall. And images of two hairstyles to working wall. What did he and David Bailey have in common? (born in east end of London)
What sort of music did people listen to in the 60s?	Know where people and events fit within a chronological framework. Create structured accounts using a range of media.	Listen to different artists particularly the Beatles – look at images and memorabilia. Watch videos of dancing. How is it the same or different to now? Ask older people in to talk about the music of period. What did they like and why? (Activity 5)	Can the children recognise styles of music and dance from the period?	Variety of music and film of dancing. Add Beatles to timeline with pictures of early look and then 1970s.
Was the 1960s a good time to live?	Recognise that there are reasons why people in the past acted as they did.	Sort events and images of those events into categories depending on whether they think they made the world happy or sad. Talk about result. (final Activity)	Can the children explain why they think that the 60s was or was not a good time to live?	List of events. Images of events. Add to working wall the result of poll about whether it was a good time to live or not.

Activity 1:

1950s



1960s



1970s



Gather a number of images of fashion from the fifties, sixties and seventies. Make sure they have clear characteristic features (you may want to focus on just female fashion here).

Get the children to sort them into groups, discussing what categories they are using to make their choice.

If children have not noticed any of the fashion features then select a typical fifties outfit. Can you find any that look like this?

Do the same with the sixties and seventies.

Focus then on the sixties.

Look at the shapes, colour and patterns – what are characteristic styles of the sixties?

Introduce Mary Quant. Show images of her clothes and her logo. Talk about why she was so influential.

Can the children design their own outfit using Mary Quant's style?

<http://ellefrances.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/mary-quant.html>

(There is an interesting idea here if anyone wants to try to make a Quant style dress out of black and white T-shirts: www.rookiemag.com/2012/04/how-to-turn-a-t-shirt-into-a-dress/)

For the men a vivid image is that of Michael Fish's kipper ties: www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-peacock-revolution-1960s-menswear Children could paint or use vivid oil pastels to produce their own designs on a cut-out tie.

Fashion

The 1960s moves into an era of far greater individual informality and expression as the decade progresses. While the concept of a 'teenager' appeared in the 1950s, it is during the 1960s that youth fashion begins to become radically different to that of the older generation. Clothes were seen as something that should be easy to care for and fun to wear.

For the girls – The obligatory female hats and gloves for day wear disappeared except as fashion statements. Shirts became straight and increasingly short and designers made the most of new materials such as acrylic and PVC. Colours and patterns became exuberant and bold. Tights, as a new phenomenon, allowed skirts to rise and rise in a way that would not have happened with stockings and suspenders. These tights were generally black or white and often patterned. Some designers favoured geometric shapes on blocks of solid colour; others used heavily patterned material in bright often clashing colours such as green and orange or pinks and purples. There was often a space-age feel with lots of silver and white. Knee-length boots were popular as were floaty scarves and hats with wide floppy brims.

For the boys – Short back and sides disappeared once national service was abolished at the beginning of the era. While suits might still be worn they were slimmer fitting and some made with brightly coloured patterned material. Kipper ties – large and very colourful – were popular. Coloured patterned shirts or plain-coloured roll necks were what the well-dressed young man was wearing.

There were some very different fashion styles, the mods (who preferred Italian styled suits), rockers (denim and leather), beatniks (Black and white Parisian) and later flower power hippies (floaty lightweight ethnic material and long hair). They listened to different music, dressed in very different fashions and even chose different modes of travel.

Boutiques

Fashion shopping changed radically at this period. Small individual shops selling individual designers material developed in places like the King's Road and Carnaby Street in London. This was a period of high employment and many young people had money to burn on the latest trend. Clothing was machine made, and stock changed rapidly. Boutiques were small, self service with bright young assistants and plenty of loud music. Window design was exciting with individual logos and styles. Young busy urban secretaries flocked to these new shops. One of the best known was Biba.

Activity 2:

Set up the home corner (IPA) as a boutique with clothes and hats on shelves and rails. Get children to print logos onto plain paper bags for children to take purchases home in (you could look at those from Biba or Mary Quant). Create a sign for the boutique. Have a CD of sixties music for the background.

Have some seats so that people can sit and talk. Try to get hold of an old toy cash register with buttons and a till that opens (no electronic display).

See if you can get a portable record player and old records.

Photography

David Bailey was the celebrity photographer who created many of the defining images of the period. His black and white photographs are particularly characteristic of the period. Gather a series of his photographs for children to look at. Which ones do the children like and why? Use children's knowledge of photos and selfies? How are these different? Have any of the children had studio portraits taken? Again how are these the same or different?

www.vogue.it/en/news/encyclo/photography/bandana/david-bailey-

www.beetlesandhuxley.com/david-bailey-defining-1960s.html

<http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/photography/picture-galleries/2010/april/13/david-bailey-look/>

www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/nov/13/david-baileys-best-photograph-60s-london-east-end

Activity 3:

Watch first thirty seconds of this video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCh2S0Hf_WE

Look at the different poses taken particularly by Twiggy or Jean Shrimpton (select carefully her to avoid any that might be overtly sexual). Load a series of Google images onto computer. Get children to use black and white facility on tablets and create a series of their own images.



Resources

Developing your subject knowledge

There are a wide range of resources available. For example the following will provide useful background:

Armstrong, M. (2014) *Swinging Britain: fashion in the 1960s*, Oxford: Shire Publications

Evans, P. (2010) *1960s Homes*, Oxford: Shire Publications

Websites

Pathe News www.britishpathe.com/workspaces/BritishPathe/Hi77liA

The Marks and Spencer Archive <https://marksintime.marksandspencer.com/ms-history/timeline>

YouTube

The following provide a feeling for childhood at this time. However, as with any YouTube videos, do ensure that you have watched it to check for suitability with your class.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SfP5qCdMUU

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pH0kvxCfvG8

www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0n5cSN-bG0

Children's Books

Harris, N. (2008) *Dates for the Decade: the 1960s*, Franklin Watts – intended for Key Stage 2 but provides useful contextual knowledge

Hairdressing ('The Look')

One of the iconic looks of the period was 'the bob'. Created by Vidal Sassoon and modelled by Mary Quant and Twiggy. Its apparent simplicity owed everything to precision cutting. The geometric shapes reflected some of the fashions of the time. It was completely different to the elaborate 'beehive', another early fashion hairstyle.

Activity 4:

Invite a hairdresser in to talk to the children about the different styles and how hard or easy it is to create these looks.



HA Resources

Coleman, R. (2017) Triumphs Show: 'Keeping the 1960s complicated' in *Teaching History*, 167, *Complicating Narratives Edition*, pp. 50–54. This article relates to work with Key Stage 3 children but it provides good ideas and contextual insights.

Maddison, H. (2015) 'Oxford in the 1960s' in *Primary History*, 71, p. 27. This provides a useful initial stimulus for looking at ordinary lives.

Doull, K. (2015) 'Planning for Changes in Living Memory' in *Primary History*, 71, pp. 14–17. This relates to broader issues than the 1960s but the insights and information regarding 'Shopping' could be related to the 1960s, setting its changes in a broader historical context.

Music

Focus on one of the main bands of the time – the Beatles. Listen to some of their music from their early period. (You may need to think carefully about lyrics and whether these include drug related material, although that will probably be in later material.) You can compare this with music and images of performers at different times.

The following websites can help with this:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=e35zoQUKr9Y
The Beatles in concert
www.youtube.com/watch?v=brwmljD-3Hw

Activity 5:

What made The Beatles so special?

Learn one of The Beatles songs to sing at an assembly on the period.

Watch this film and learn one of the dances – I suggest the Twist: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETX03Zjtarc&t=25s

Compare this song with music selected from one or more of the 1920s, 1940s and 1950s, looking for similarities and difference.

Look at early images and memorabilia of the Beatles. Consider questions such as: What impression do the children have of this?

Look at how images of The Beatles changed throughout the decade?

Discuss the following questions. How do images of The Beatles compare and contrast with pictures of performers in previous decades? How can The Beatles be compared to other later boy bands?



Final Activity: Key events in the 1960s

Select a number of specific events from national/ European/global affairs, such as:

- the Berlin Wall being built/MLK assassination/ Vietnam War/ Moon landing/ World Cup win/ Jamaican independence/Nigerian independence (look at mix within class to see if you can make relevant) World Wildlife Fund created/ first episode of Dr Who/ Paris student demonstrations/celebrity models/ east end poverty.
- Make a photo montage that you can play as a slide show or film. Set this to music as well.
- Ask the children to watch the images as they listen to music. At the end ask:
 - What do they remember?
 - What stands out for them?

Overall, do they think that this period was a good one to live in? Why?

Key events and people in the 1960s

This decade was certainly shaped by many momentous events and individuals which can be categorised in local, national, European and world dimensions such as:

1 A local dimension seen through personal interviews with grandparents

- sorting their reminiscences into local, national, european, global contexts
- comparing their lives in the 1960s with today

2 A national dimension

- Significant individuals of style e.g. Mary Quant, Biba, Vidal Sassoon, David Bailey or Twiggy
- Significant musicians e.g. Beatles, Rolling Stones
- Changing lives e.g. Caribbean and South Asian immigration
- Sport and leisure e.g. England winning the World Cup (1966), the first episode of Doctor Who (1963), Coronation Street (1960), Top of the Pops (1964); World Wildlife Fund created (1961)

3 A European dimension e.g. the Berlin Wall was built (1961)

4 A global dimension e.g. Jamaican independence (1962), the Civil Rights movement, the assassinations of President Kennedy (1963) and Martin Luther King (1968), the Moon landings (1969)

There are opportunities to focus on specific events or people such as Martin Luther King or the Moon Landing and/or select and categorise them into local, national and world dimensions to develop a sense of the period.

Karin Doull is Principal Lecturer in primary history and Holocaust Education at the University of Roehampton.