

For any secondary school teachers who want to bring the 100 Years project to their classroom, see the lesson plans (linked as PDF's) below!

100 Years Lesson Plan 1: Sensing the Past

Introduction; 5 minutes

What is the 100 Years Project?

The 100 Years Project is an initiative from Fighting Words, linked to the Department of Culture's Decade of Centenaries programme. Our aim is to use creative writing and thinking as an access point to encourage discussion about shared identities, shared histories, historical context, and reconciliation.

Some questions to consider: Why 100 years? What do we know about society from 100 years ago? What was daily life like for a student? For a teacher? For a... shopkeeper?

Warm Up in small groups; 10 - 15 minutes

Divide the class into five small groups and give each group one of the five senses. The task for each group is to think of as many differences as possible between the experience of being alive 100 years ago vs now through the prism of their designated sense. Get each group to enter the POV of an individual waking up and going about their day and experience the whole day through the chosen sense.

Ex: The "sense of smell group" would think about (A) smells that might have been common then but have since disappeared or become less common... oilcloth bedsheets, mothballs, different toothpaste, rusty water, cooking over wood fired stove, leaded petrol, horses, oil lamps, carbolic acid, coal smoke... (B) smells that we experience now that would NOT have been part of the daily experience 100 years ago.

Get each group to share their thoughts.

Creative Prompt: Individual Writing; 20 minutes

Students create a character and a setting from the past. They might want to select an important historical event or set the story in a different country. Write a short piece and aim to use descriptions in all five senses throughout the story to evoke a strong sense of place and time. As an extra challenge, see if they can make it obvious when and where the story takes place without ever stating it explicitly.

Sharing time; 10 minutes

Invite students to share their creative efforts. Consider posting the stories online and tagging Fighting Words.

100 Years Lesson Plan 2: The Time Traveler

Introduction; 5 minutes

What is the 100 Years Project?

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What do we know about society from 100 years ago? What historically significant events were happening between 1914 and 1924? How has this shaped modern life?

Warm Up in small groups; 10 minutes

How the past affects the present... imagine a time traveler who can travel backwards in time UP TO 110 years ago... What event could they change that might have a big impact on our present?

The butterfly effect is the idea that tiny, tiny incidents can have unpredictably huge consequences... ex. A butterfly flapping its wings in Peru might cause a tornado in Indonesia. What is the SMALLEST POSSIBLE action a time traveler could take that would alter the course of history?

Give each small group a few minutes to discuss and take notes, then nominate one member from each group to present the ideas gathered.

Creative Prompt: Individual Writing; 15 - 20 minutes

Students choose one of the ideas presented in the previous exercise and create a time traveling character whose "home time" is the present day. The character takes action to change something in the past and this radically alters something in their own time. Maybe think about the butterfly effect when writing: an action as inconsequential-seeming as dropping a piece of paper could spiral into huge consequences...

Sharing time; 10 minutes

Invite students to share their creative efforts. Consider posting the stories online and tagging Fighting Words.