

## The revised EYFS Framework – exploring ‘Past and Present’

### What is the new EYFS framework?

A new Early Years Foundation Stage framework will become statutory from September 2021. Around three thousand primary schools in England are already implementing this revised framework – these settings have been deemed early adopter schools.

The actual curriculum for EYFS is not changing. There will still be seven areas of learning and development, categorised as either prime or specific. The three prime areas will remain as *Personal, social and emotional development, Communication, language and literacy* and *Physical development*. The four specific areas will remain as *Mathematics, Literacy, Expressive arts and design* and *Understanding the world*. Schools will still have the freedom to design and shape teaching and learning in the early years in the best way that suits their individual setting and the children they support.

### So, what exactly is changing?

The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) - the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of their Reception year - have changed within each area of learning. These new Early Learning Goals are more closely aligned with distinct subject disciplines. Within *Understanding the world*, there is a new ELG entitled ‘Past and Present’. Reception teachers will need to make a ‘best fit’ judgement about children’s ability in relation to the following criteria:

#### *Early Learning Goal for ‘Past and Present’*

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling

The non-statutory guidance document ‘Development Matters’ provides us with some examples of how we can support children’s learning to meet this revised Early Learning Goal:

Children in reception will be learning to:	Examples of how to support this:
Talk about members of their immediate family and community.	<p>During dedicated talk time, listen to what children say about their family.</p> <p>Share information about your own family, giving children time to ask questions or make comments.</p> <p>Encourage children to share pictures of their family and listen to what they say about the pictures.</p> <p>Using examples from real life and from books, show children how there are many different families.</p>
Name and describe people who are familiar to them.	<p>Talk about people that the children may have come across within their community, such as the police, the fire service, doctors and teachers.</p> <p>Listen to what children say about their own experiences with people who are familiar to them.</p>
Comment on images of familiar situations in the past.	Present children with pictures, stories, artefacts and accounts from the past, explaining similarities and differences.

Children in reception will be learning to:	Examples of how to support this:
	<p>Offer hands-on experiences that deepen children's understanding, such as visiting a local area that has historical importance.</p> <p>Show images of familiar situations in the past, such as homes, schools, and transport.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to observe children talking about experiences that are familiar to them and how these may have differed in the past.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for children to begin to organise events using basic chronology, recognising that things happened before they were born.</p>
Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.	<p>Frequently share texts, images, and tell oral stories that help children begin to develop an understanding of the past and present.</p> <p>Feature fictional and non-fictional characters from a range of cultures and times in storytelling, listen to what children say about them.</p> <p>Draw out common themes from stories, such as bravery, difficult choices and kindness, and talk about children's experiences with these themes.</p> <p>In addition to storytelling, introduce characters, including those from the past using songs, poems, puppets, role play and other storytelling methods.</p>

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*Caption:* Extracts from Development Matters (relating to Past and Present)

## Using stories and books

### Suggested Image



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**Caption** Using picture books to explore the past and the present

The revised EYFS framework emphasises the importance of using a range of books to develop children’s understanding of the past. When sharing texts with historical settings, it is a good idea to make explicit to children whether the story relates to fictional characters or whether it refers to a real historical figure. This can avoid potential misconceptions and is also an effective way to introduce children to the key concept of significance, by exploring why some people from the past should be remembered.

The following texts are suggestions of picture books that align with typical EYFS topics or themes:

Theme	Examples of picture books
Families	<i>Grandma’s Bill</i> by Martin Waddell (Orchard Books, 1991) <i>My Great Grandpa</i> by Martin Waddell (Walker Books, 2001) <i>My two Grannies</i> by Floella Benjamin (Frances Lincoln, 2009) <i>Coming to England</i> by Floella Benjamin (Macmillan, 2020)
Babies & Childhood	<i>Peepo</i> by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (Puffin, 2011) <i>The Growing Story</i> by Ruth Krauss and Helen Oxenbury (Harper Collins, 2016) <i>Once there were Giants</i> by Martin Waddell (Walker Books, 2001)

Houses & Homes	<p><i>A House That Once Was</i> by Julie Fogliano/Lane Smith (Two Hoots, 2018)</p> <p><i>Peepo</i> by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (Puffin, 2011)</p> <p><i>Our House</i> by Emma Rogers and Paul Rogers (Candlewick, 1993)</p>
Toys & Games	<p><i>The Toymaker</i> by Martin Waddell (Walker Books, 1993)</p> <p><i>Too many toys!</i> By Heidi Deedman (Walker Books, 2015)</p> <p><i>Lost in the Toy Museum: an adventure</i> by David Lucas (Walker Books, 2011)</p> <p><i>Dogger</i> by Shirley Hughes (Random House, 1979)</p> <p><i>Brown Paper Bear</i> by Catherine Allison (Macmillan, 2005)</p>

### **How can we make links to KS1 history?**

Essential to whole school planning is ensuring curriculum coherence from EYFS to KS1 and beyond. Although the topics or historical periods you study with children will necessarily be different within each key stage, the core concepts you cover will be consistent. This means asking children to identify similarities and differences and make connections between the past and present. It means focusing on both change and continuity. And it means giving children opportunities to develop their understanding of chronology, by identifying changes in their own lives and using simple language that relates to the passing of time.

Equally, we need to give children the opportunity to understand that we can learn about the past in lots of different ways. The new exemplification for Understanding the World emphasises the importance of giving children a ‘*range of personal experiences*’ - from visiting museums or sites of historical interest to engaging with their local community. Oral history, investigating artefacts, looking closely at images or exploring buildings will give children an early foundation into how historians use different sources of evidence to construct and frame their interpretations of the past.

Finally, it is always worth remembering that the Early Learning Goals - whether existing or revised - do not constitute the curriculum. Fundamental to good practice in EYFS is the provision of a holistic curriculum, centred on the development of the whole child. This can be best achieved by a continued focus on active learning, playing and exploring, and creating and thinking critically.

### **Further Reading**

DfE (2020). *Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (September, 2020)* [Development Matters - non-statutory curriculum guidance for EYFS \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance-for-EYFS)

DfE (2020). *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: early adopter version July 2020*  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/896810/EYFS\\_Early\\_Adopter\\_Framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896810/EYFS_Early_Adopter_Framework.pdf)

Historical Association (2020). *Exploring Historical Fiction: Primary History Summer Resource 2020* – This resource contains a comprehensive list of recommended picture books.

Crawford, H. (2017.) Learning about the past through a study of house and homes. *Primary History 76*

Crawford, H. (2017). Learning about the past through the theme of people who help us. *Primary History 77*

Kirkland, S. (2017). Learning about the past through ‘Ourselves and our families’. *Primary History 75*

Temple, S. (2018). Castles: distinguishing fact and fiction in the Early Years Curriculum. *Primary History 80*

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