

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

Grade Level: 3 to 5

## IN THIS LESSON

Inspired by the 1985 movie *Back to the Future*, students will write a story imagining what it would be like to travel back in time and meet their parents as elementary school students.

## OBJECTIVES

- To develop historical empathy with kids of the 1970s and '80s
- To understand the relationship between past, present, and future
- To develop writing skills and encourage creativity

## ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

**Goal 3:** Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

**Goal 4:** Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

**Goal 5:** Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information.

### SOCIAL SCIENCE

**Goal 16:** Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States, and other nations.

## SUGGESTED ARTIFACTS

### MOVIES

*Back to the Future*  
*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*  
*Muppets Christmas*  
*Pretty in Pink*  
*Star Wars*  
*Return of the Jedi*  
*The Empire Strikes Back*

### TOYS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Cabbage Patch doll  
Monchichi doll  
Cash register bank  
Snoopy doll  
Yearbooks  
Mad magazine  
*Cracked* magazine  
Handheld baseball video game

### RECORDS/CASSETTES/ 8-TRACKS

Prince, *Purple Rain*  
Duran Duran, *Seven and the Ragged Tiger*  
Huey Lewis and the News, *Sports*  
Michael Jackson, *Thriller*  
Phil Collins, *No Jacket Required*  
Wham!, *Make it Big*  
New Kids on the Block  
Billy Joel, *The Nylon Curtain*  
Air Supply, *Greatest Hits*  
Styx, *Edge of the Century*  
Rick Springfield, *Working Class Dog*  
John Cougar Mellencamp, *Nothin' Matters and What If It Did*

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Artifact Analysis worksheets (<http://www.greatchicagostories.com/classroom/artifact.php>)

Document Analysis worksheets ([http://www.greatchicagostories.com/pdf/worksheets/elementary/document\\_wk\\_elem\\_edited2.pdf](http://www.greatchicagostories.com/pdf/worksheets/elementary/document_wk_elem_edited2.pdf))

Photograph Analysis worksheets ([http://www.greatchicagostories.com/pdf/worksheets/elementary/photograph\\_wk\\_elem\\_edited2.pdf](http://www.greatchicagostories.com/pdf/worksheets/elementary/photograph_wk_elem_edited2.pdf))

VHS or DVD player

*This lesson is part of the History Connections & Artifact Collections project, made possible by a generous grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation.*

*This lesson was developed and written by Linda Murakami.*

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

### ACTIVITY

#### DAY 1

1. Show students selected parts of the film *Back to the Future* where Marty McFly travels back to the past and meets his parents when they were in high school.
2. Break students into small groups and allow them to examine the artifacts in your artifact kit. Make sure all groups have a chance to interact with all of the artifacts. Have students choose a favorite object and complete the applicable worksheet (Artifact, Document, or Photograph Analysis).
3. Direct students to write a short story in which they travel back to the 1970s or '80s and meet their parents when they were elementary school students. What were their parents like as kids? What would the students say to their parents? Is there anything they would like to ask their parents? Students should incorporate their chosen artifact into the story.

#### DAY 2

1. Have students read their stories aloud for the class or the entire school.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Have students interview their parents to see what life was like for them in elementary school. If possible, have students bring in elementary school pictures of their parents to share with the class.

Essay assignment: If you could save one object for your kids, what would it be and why?