

Name _____



Little Red Schoolhouse

Read about how school was like in the 1800s and answer the True/False statements that follow.

Do you ever wonder what it was like going to school in the late 1800s? School was quite different back then. For starters, many went to the same classroom and had the same teacher. These were known as one-room schoolhouses.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries -this means the 1800s and early 1900s- many American students attended these one-room schoolhouses, especially in rural areas. Rural means out in the country. A single teacher would typically have students in the first through eighth grade. The number of students varied from six to 40 or more depending where you lived. The youngest children sat in the front, while the oldest students sat in the back. The teacher usually taught reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography. Students had to memorize and recite their lessons. There were great benefits to having mixed-ages in the classroom. One advantage being that there were usually older and more advanced students available to help those that were struggling in their lessons. It was like have tutors right on site. Another benefit was that many of the younger children absorbed the information that the older children were learning. This made it easier for many of them to get through those lessons when it came time for them to learn such things.

The teachers that taught in one-room schoolhouses were usually very special people. During the winter months they would get to the school early to get a fire started in the wood-burning stove so the building would be warm for the students. On many occasions they would prepare a hot lunch on top of the stove like soup or stew of some kind. They took care of their students and were always looking out for their health and welfare.

A typical school day was from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Children had morning and afternoon recess for 15 minutes each and an hour period for lunch. Since schools did not have running water the older students were given the responsibility of bringing in water. They also carried in coal or wood for the stove. The younger students would be given responsibilities according to their size and gender. Their jobs included cleaning the blackboard, taking the erasers outside for dusting and other duties that they were capable of.

Answer the statements with True or False.

1. Only students that lived in the city went to school. True False
2. A typical school day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. True False
3. Teachers usually had students from the first grade to eight grade. True False
4. All schools had running water for the children. True False
5. Older children sat in the front and younger children sat towards the back. True False
6. A benefit of a one-room schoolhouse was having older children help the younger ones. True False
7. Many younger children absorbed the information that the older children were learning. True False