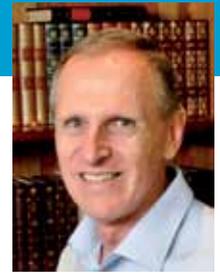


Children and History

MY WORD
with Rodney Martin



It's back to school again! This year will see more attention paid to the national curriculum and that includes history. Can history make sense for young learners before they can tell the time? My word it can – if the right connections are made. History is about understanding and learning from past events.

Young children connect with history through their own background. Baby photo albums are often their first history references. Their parents and grandparents represent other distant ages.

"Dad, is it true that kids didn't have mobiles when you were little?"

"Of course we had mobiles. Mine dangled from the ceiling in my bedroom!"

"Weird!"

Modern teaching often echoes the original meaning of history – encouraging children to learn by enquiry. You may find your children involved in projects that get them to search for information and report on what they have found.

History is often told as stories. Adults experience this in movies based on true events, but interpreted by the movie-makers. Modern teaching has children present their own thoughts on information they find – making sense of the world by connecting it to what they already know.

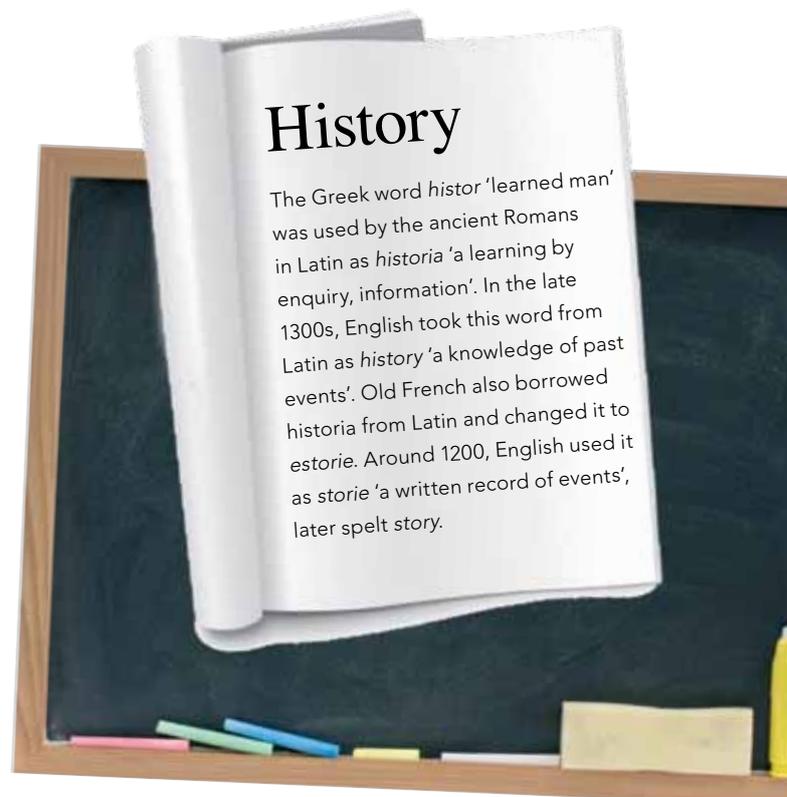
"Mum, how did our family get to live in Australia?"

"They sailed here from Europe long ago."

"How did they get past the ships that stop boat people?"

Today's digital child has the internet – the greatest collection of information in history. Children need to learn from history, but with the knowledge that history is written from the point of view of the writer. For example, in England, people recognise Alexander Fleming as the hero of penicillin. In Australia we give Howard Florey the credit.

Today, children are taught to question information, so they test the truth or accuracy of what they read or hear. One way of doing this is to suggest to your young digital enthusiasts that they check out more than one internet search on a topic



History

The Greek word *histor* 'learned man' was used by the ancient Romans in Latin as *historia* 'a learning by enquiry, information'. In the late 1300s, English took this word from Latin as *history* 'a knowledge of past events'. Old French also borrowed *historia* from Latin and changed it to *estorie*. Around 1200, English used it as *storie* 'a written record of events', later spelt *story*.

to see if they give the same answer. Of course, parents are used to children testing anything spoken.

"Eat your vegetables."

"Why?"

"Because they're good for you."

"Why?"

"Because ..."

And the rest is history!

Rodney Martin is a children's author and educational publisher. His SA family business, Era Publications, creates online interactive children's fiction and nonfiction books (see www.erapublications.com/south-kids) used in many homes, schools and public libraries.