



# Children of the Past vs. Children of Today

By: Amanda Martin

Elementary school music teacher; M.A.Ed. In Curriculum and Instruction

Pop Culture  
Grades 3-5



## Introduction

Students will compare and contrast the free time activities of today's children to children of the 1950s. Students will write a short essay about whether children of the 1950s or children of today have more fun.

## Learning Objectives

Students will compare and contrast leisure activities from children of the past to children of today.

## Materials Needed

- Venn Diagram sheets
- Writing prompt sheets

## Procedure

1. Begin the lesson by asking students the following question: What did children do in their free time in the 1950s? Ask students to think on this topic for roughly 1 minute. When the time is up, students may pair and share with a partner for 2-3 minutes. Then, ask the class to share their answers. (Note: Answers will vary. Some students will not understand that video games or the internet were not available to children in the 1950s.)
2. After listening to the student responses, it is time to correctly identify what children from the 1950s did in their spare time. Pass out a Venn Diagram sheet to each student. On the left side of the diagram, write "Children of the 1950s." Construct a Venn Diagram on the board and fill in the characteristics of the past as you introduce them to the class. Ask students to follow along and add each characteristic to their diagram as you go.

Here are some ideas for what children in the 50s did in their free time:

- Jump rope
- Playing cards
- Listen to the radio
- Frisbee
- Pogo stick
- Play-Doh
- Some families owned one TV that was shared
- Played in the street

Continued on page 2



# Children of the Past vs. Children of Today

By: Amanda Martin

Elementary school music teacher; M.A.Ed. In Curriculum and Instruction

Pop Culture  
Grades 3-5



Continued from page 1

- On the right side of the diagram, write "Children of Today." Ask students to jot down some of the things that children enjoy doing today onto their diagram (examples: video games, social media, TikTok, apps, cell phones, Fortnite, etc.). Give students roughly 2-3 minutes to write down their items. Then, ask for several volunteers to share one response from their diagram. As answers are shared, add them to the diagram on the board.
- Ask students to gather in small groups or with partners. Ask the students to find the similarities between the two by writing them in the middle of the diagram. Allow groups about 5 minutes to complete this section. When the time is complete, ask for group responses and add them to the board.
- Students will now complete a writing assignment individually. Give students the writing prompt sheet with the following question: *After comparing children from the 1950s to children of today, which group has the most fun and why?* Students must include 3-5 paragraphs in their response including an introductory paragraph and a conclusion. In the body of the essay, students must include at least 5 statements supporting their opinion.

## Evaluation

Follow this rubric:

	3 (Excellent)	2 (Okay)	1 (Not Quite)
The student fully supports his/her opinion with at least 5 supporting statements.			
The student presents his/her opinion in a logical way.			
The essay consists of at least 3 paragraphs including an introduction and conclusion.			
The student uses complete sentences with appropriate capitalization and punctuation.			