

John Clare Then and Now

Lesson	Learn about the time in which John Clare lived and how it compares to our own.	60-minute session
Learning Outcomes	- To understand John Clare's life and how it would be different today - To be able to make comparisons it to our own daily routines - To reflect on how	
Resources Needed	- My Typical Day Timeline - John Clare's Typical Day Timeline - Helpston to Glinton Maps (1842 & 2022) - Seasonal Food Cards & Chart	

Adaption maybe required for additional student needs

	Outline	Resources
Introduction 5mins	Life was very different in the 1800's when John Clare was a child. There were no cars, food was seasonal and often scarce and you would rarely leave the place you were born. What other differences could you identify between living in the 1800's and your life today? – Class Discussion	
Activity 1 – My Typical Day 15mins	Think about your daily life and create a timeline of all the things you do and when. For example – - What time do you get up? - How do you get to school? - How long it takes to get to school? - What kinds of things do you do or learn when you are at school? - What food do you eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner?	My Typical Day Timeline Pens
Activity 2 – John Clare's Typical Day 15mins	Born in the town of Helpston, near Peterborough, John Clare had quite a difficult life. As he was from a peasant family, he had limited means and had to start working as a labourer in the fields from a young age. He received little formal education where he attended a day school in Glinton Church for a few months every year till he was 12. He would have to walk to school from Helpston Cottage which was a 2 mile walk that took him around 45 minutes each way! Have a look at the maps from both 1842 and 2022 to see how far this is and compare the two. He was severely malnourished as a child and that became the cause of the decline of physical health in his later years. The poor ate a rather plain and monotonous diet made up primarily of bread, potatoes and the natural seasonal foods that were growing around him; meat was an uncommon luxury. He had to do numerous odd jobs after school to help the family being a labourer and gardener, as well as helping his father in the fields until nightfall. Poor craftsmen and laborers lived in just two or three rooms, and the poorest families lived in just one room with very simple and plain furniture. It was a difficult life for the poor, as there was no government assistance. For every 1,000 children born in the early-18th-century, almost 500 died before they were 2, generally due to malnutrition, bad water, dirty food, and poor hygiene.	John Clare's Typical Day Timeline Pens Helpston to Glinton Maps

	In pairs or groups, use the same timeline to try to complete a day in the life of John Clare, using the information you have just been given. Compare it to your own – what differences can you see? Class discussion															
Activity 2 – Diets Then & Now 20mins	We previously heard that as a child John Clare was “severely malnourished” – do you know what this means? It means that he had less than the minimum amount of the nutrients or foods that were essential for his health and growth. Can you remember what foods he would likely be eating? • Bread • Potatoes • Seasonal/Local Wild Food Remember, meat would have been too expensive and other foods like, cheese and milk would not have always been affordable When we say seasonal wild food, what does this mean? Some fruits and vegetables only grow at certain times of the year, in certain seasons. For example blackberries only grow in August and September in England. We can find blackberries growing naturally in hedgerows where we can pick them for free and don’t have to buy them from supermarkets covered in plastic. But if we want them at other times of the year we have to get them from other locations in the world because they grow at different times of the year and we would have to pay for them. John Clare only had access to food grown in England and close to where he lived. Can you think of other foods he might have been able to have access to? – Class Discussion <table><tr><td>Onions</td><td>Watercress</td></tr><tr><td>Carrots</td><td>Cabbage</td></tr><tr><td>Turnips</td><td>Broccoli</td></tr><tr><td>Beans</td><td>Apples</td></tr><tr><td>Pears</td><td>Plums</td></tr><tr><td>Nuts</td><td>Mushrooms</td></tr><tr><td>Various Berries</td><td></td></tr></table> Of course we need to remember these wouldn’t have been all year round! Use the food cards to see if you can match them to the correct season. Winter – December to February Spring – March to May Summer – June to August Autumn – September to November	Onions	Watercress	Carrots	Cabbage	Turnips	Broccoli	Beans	Apples	Pears	Plums	Nuts	Mushrooms	Various Berries		Seasonal Food Cards & Chart
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Plenary 5mins	Would you have liked to have lived in the time of John Clare? What would you miss most about your life now?															