

Megan Czarnecki
Social Studies In My Life

My favorite year for learning social studies was in fifth grade. My teacher was very passionate about teaching the civil war. She really got into it by bringing in artifacts and having us represent a person from that era. She made it very easy and fun to learn about American history. In seventh grade I enjoyed learning about the early civilizations because my teacher had us reenact events such as the diseases spread to the Native Americans by the Europeans. Making topographic models of geographic features was always fun (who doesn't like playing with play dough?) My seventh grade teacher did well with "dumbing" the material down for everyone. She related the topics to our everyday life so it made it enjoyable and easy to learn about. She also had us keep fictional letters/journals about where we "traveled" when we learned about the different early civilizations, which was a fun way to put our own perspective in the history. When learning about community we helped with a food drive in elementary school. This was one of the most rewarding things I participated in during school. It was an awesome way to teach about volunteering and giving back to the community. The things in social studies that I remember best from elementary and middle school are when I could feel it, see it, or have fun with it.

Research projects were never my favorite thing to do in social studies (or in any other topic). Finding historical information from books or the internet was usually overwhelming and boring. I have never been a fan of government and civics and my middle school teacher really didn't do much to try to spark our interest. It was more like a lecture with information just thrown at us. This teacher didn't have different ways of teaching, he mainly just spoke to us and gave us notes. It was very dull and frankly, I don't remember much of what I learned.

When I teach social studies I want to present the information in different ways like my fifth and seventh grade teachers did: through activities, reenactments, and hands on activities. I think the lessons should be taught with enthusiasm and it should be easy for the students to relate to. I wouldn't just make them take notes. I would have songs to sing, games to play, and short films to see whenever possible. If I could, I would like to try to give students volunteer opportunities like I had with helping in the food give away. I think when it comes to research, I would want students to research small parts of a big topic and then all come together as a class and share what we found so that we can piece together the small parts to better understand the big topic. That way students can experience researching but in perhaps a less overwhelming way. I would also like to have a way for students to keep a journal of the things they enjoyed learning about in social studies every week with a classroom blog or something. Basically, I would want many different hands on way for students to learn.