

LESSON 4: STORIES FROM HISTORY

Age range: 8-11 years

Time 1 hour

Outline <p>Pupils will explore Haiti's history through role play and then draw links between historical and modern events. They will focus on stories from Haiti's history which contributed to so many Haitian people being at risk when the earthquake struck in 2010. By taking a historical perspective, pupils will also see how Haiti's story is one of resilience: there have been many occasions when the Haitian people have come together to overcome huge obstacles.</p>		
Learning objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage pupils to develop empathy with people in different historical times. To draw inferences and make deductions from reading and apply to a role play. To begin to understand how Haiti's history has affected the country today, making it particularly vulnerable to the effects of the earthquake in 2010. 	Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils will empathise with people living in a different historical time. Pupils will extract information from written texts to create and perform a role play. Pupils will draw links between their story and Haiti today. 	
Key questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does my character think and feel? What is motivating my character? What was Haiti like in the past? How did Haiti's past affect what happened at the time of the earthquake in 2010? 	Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slideshow 1 – Stories from Haiti: up to 2010. Background notes for teachers. Haiti stories from history: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story 1: First encounters 1492-1789. Story 2: Slave revolt 1791-1865. Story 3: Turbulent times 1915-1986. Story 4: Growing divisions 1986-2010. Optional resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starter sorting example. <i>Further information for teachers: Haiti's history</i> 	
Curriculum links		
England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils retrieve information from non-fiction texts. Pupils participate actively in collaborative discussions, improvisation, and role play. 	Wales Oracy Range: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a variety of methods to present ideas, including ICT, e.g. drama approaches, discussion and debate. Reading Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retrieve and collate information and ideas from a range of sources. 	Scotland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As I write for different purposes and readers, I can describe and share my experiences, expressing what they made me think about and how they made me feel. <p style="text-align: right;">ENG 2-30a</p>

Activity Outline

Starter (5 mins)

Whispering stories

- Sit the class in a circle. Show slide 20 of slideshow 1 and explain that in this lesson pupils will be looking at some stories from Haiti's history. Whisper to one of the pupils next to you: "A visitor from Hispaniola has come into our school". Ask pupils to whisper the message right round the circle until it reaches the last person. By now it is likely that the whisper will be very different to the original one. Discuss how and when the message changed.
- Draw out from this that stories change each time they are told. When telling longer stories, each person decides what to put in and what to leave out. The stories that we know about in history have all been shaped in different ways over time. There is no one 'correct' story. (*Note: Hispaniola was the name the Spanish gave Haiti after Columbus landed there.*)

Activity 4.1 (15 mins)

Sort it out!

- Explain that the chain of stories being told by pupils in the starter activity are like stories being passed down through time and that stories from the past affect things even today. Most historical stories have long-term effects and this is true of the Haitian stories pupils will be looking at today. Explain that some long-term effects of these historical stories led to many Haitian people being in greater danger when the earthquake struck. Also explain that their stories show how Haitians kept going in the face of the difficulties they faced without giving up.
- To help pupils identify the links between the stories and their modern effects, pupils will be using sorting cards to match against four headings. Demonstrate how to do this using the example of Haiti's hurricane history on slide 21 (refer to Background notes for teachers for answers). Using slide 22, highlight how the impact of the hurricanes has both put people at greater risk and led to Haitian people becoming more resilient.
- Return to slide 20 and divide the class into groups of four or five. Give each group a different story from Haiti's history (1-4) and ask them to read it through as a group.
- Ask pupils to match their four jumbled cards under the appropriate headings on their table below the story. This will help them make links between their historical story and the dual modern-day effects of people being in more danger in the earthquake and being resilient in the face of difficulties.

Activity 4.2 (30 mins)

Role play

- Ask pupils to plan a short role play to act out their story. They should try to include messages for the rest of the class about the long-term effects of their historical story, using their matched cards to help them. Remind pupils that through the role play they



are not aiming to construct a finished play script. The intention is to help pupils develop empathy with, and understanding of, the issues that the people in Haiti have faced in different historical times. The role plays should be short and sharp and pupils should be able to perform them with very little rehearsal.

- Come together as a class and let each group perform, using freeze-framing and thought tracking to encourage pupils to empathise with their characters further. Note that it is likely that the role plays will have raised some powerful feelings, so allow time to debrief and let the pupils talk about what it felt like to be in their various roles. Talk about what it felt like to have power or lack of it.

Plenary (10 mins)

- Discuss the long-term effects of the historical stories and how some of these led to Haitian people being in danger when the earthquake struck.
- Finish by selecting pupils to share how Haitians kept going in the face of difficulties. Emphasise how the historical stories demonstrate how Haitians have been resilient and determined, willing to change their own lives wherever they have the power to.

Further ideas

- Select pupils to hot-seat some of the major roles in each of the historical stories, encouraging the class to ask questions which reveal characters' feelings, thoughts and motives.
- Ask pupils to write a diary entry as their character from the role play, encouraging them to write about their feelings, thoughts and motives.



Background notes for teachers

Of necessity, the historical stories provided in this lesson are selected examples. It may be that you feel a different story should have been included or a different emphasis given. If so, you could be overt about this with pupils and link this with the starter activity about how many different stories can be told about the same events and that there is no one 'correct' story. For more detailed information on Haiti's history, see *Further information for teachers: Haiti's history*.

The *Sort it out!* activity enables pupils to explore the long-term effects of their historical stories and to look at how these contributed to the vulnerability of Haitian people when the 2010 earthquake struck. They also enable pupils to cite examples of the resilience of Haitian people. If you have time, you might like to introduce these two words to pupils overtly as new vocabulary:

- Vulnerability: people being at risk or in danger.
- Resilience: the ability to recover quickly from difficulties or misfortune - can be described as the capacity to 'bounce back'.

Starter answers

Historical story: Hurricanes		
Long-term effect	How this put people in greater danger when the earthquake struck	Example of people keeping going in the face of difficulties
<p>Hurricanes not only destroy homes but also harvests. Food shortages can cause malnutrition and even riots.</p> <p>Rebuilding after hurricanes costs a lot of money, keeping many Haitians poor.</p>	<p>Farming is difficult because harvests are poor. Some farmers leave the countryside to live in cities like Port-au-Prince which can lead to overcrowding.</p> <p>Rebuilding after hurricanes is expensive, making it hard for people to stop being poor.</p> <p>Poorer people usually suffer most in natural disasters.</p>	<p>Haitian people have been training each other in preparing for when hurricanes come for many years now.</p>

Sort it out! answers

Historical story	Long-term effect	How this put people in greater danger when the earthquake struck	Example of people keeping going in the face of difficulties
<p>Cutting down many of Haiti's trees to make space for crops for slave owners to sell.</p>	<p>Rain and wind washes soil from hillsides, making it difficult to grow crops.</p> <p>More landslides and flooding.</p>	<p>Farming becomes difficult because the quality of soil is poor. Many farmers leave the countryside to try to find work in Port-au-Prince.</p> <p>Port-au-Prince becomes overcrowded and many houses are built close together on hillsides. When the earthquake strikes, houses lower down the hill are crushed by those above.</p>	<p>Haiti's slave population endured (or put up with) terrible living and working conditions over hundreds of years.</p>
<p>France made Haitians pay back former slave owners.</p>	<p>Haiti borrowed money from France and other countries which it then had to pay back over many decades.</p> <p>This meant the Haitian government had less money to spend on its people, resulting in many people remaining poor.</p>	<p>Poorer people usually suffer more in natural disasters. Often their houses are less strong because they are forced to use weaker building materials. This makes them more likely to fall down in an earthquake.</p>	<p>Haitian slaves fought in a rebellion over several years and did not give up when their first leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, was taken to France.</p>
<p>USA occupation from 1915-1934</p> <p>Having leaders like Papa Doc and Baby Doc.</p>	<p>Many people moved to Port-au-Prince from the countryside because the USA wanted to concentrate power there.</p> <p>Papa Doc, Baby Doc and their families and friends became very rich, leaving many ordinary Haitians poor.</p>	<p>At the time of the earthquake, nearly one third of Haitians were living in Port-au-Prince, the epicentre of the earthquake.</p> <p>Poorer people usually suffer more in natural disasters. They are less likely to have any spare money to help them rebuild their houses or businesses after losing these in a natural disaster.</p>	<p>Haitian people coped with harsh working conditions and low wages. Some Haitian writers spoke out against the regime.</p> <p>Haitian people protested and drove out Baby Doc.</p>
<p>Military coups</p>	<p>When the army takes over a government it is less able or likely to keep education and health services going well and local businesses suffer.</p>	<p>Poorer people have less access to healthcare or schooling and may struggle to keep their businesses going, all of which make it hard for them to stop being poor.</p> <p>Poorer people usually suffer most in natural disasters.</p>	<p>Haitian people protested several times when unfair events occurred.</p> <p>Leaders like Aristide campaigned to improve reading and writing and to raise wages. And despite these problems, Haitian people kept going.</p>

Starter sorting example

Can you match the correct column to the correct heading?

Historical story Hurricanes		
Long term effect	How this put people in greater danger when the earthquake struck	Example of people keeping going in the face of difficulties
<p>Farming is difficult because harvests are poor. Some farmers leave the countryside to live in cities like Port-au-Prince which can lead to overcrowding.</p> <p>Rebuilding after hurricanes is expensive, making it hard for people to stop being poor.</p> <p>Poorer people usually suffer most in natural disasters.</p>	<p>Haitian people have been training each other in preparing for when hurricanes come for many years now.</p>	<p>Hurricanes not only destroy homes but also harvests. Food shortages can cause malnutrition and even riots.</p> <p>Rebuilding after hurricanes costs a lot of money, keeping many Haitians poor.</p>



Stories from history

Story 1: First encounters 1492-1789



16th century depiction of Christopher Columbus landing in America.

Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons (PD-US).

In 1492, a sailor named Christopher Columbus landed in Haiti. He had sailed across the Atlantic from Spain together with three other ships. He was welcomed by the people who lived there, the Taino, who were wearing gold ornaments. Haiti is a Taino word meaning 'land of high mountains'. The Spanish called the island Hispaniola.

Columbus returned to Spain with news of his 'discovery' and came back to Hispaniola a year later. The Spanish were very interested in gold. They forced the Taino to mine it for them. Thousands of Taino were killed. Thousands more died from European diseases, such as measles, because they had not built up any resistance. The Taino people were almost totally wiped out by the Spanish conquest.

When more gold and silver was discovered in other parts of Latin America, the Spanish began to lose interest in the island. Pirates began to use it as a base to raid ships that were travelling to Europe. In 1660 French settlers arrived and began to farm coffee, indigo and sugarcane. They imported slaves from West Africa to do the work.

Eventually Spain gave the western part of the island to France and they called it San Domingue. The colony began to grow coffee and sugar and became a very successful exporter. By 1789 it exported 60% of the world's sugar and coffee.

The forests in Haiti were cut down to make space for these new crops. Around 800,000 slaves lived on the island. The conditions that they lived in were so terrible that they only lived for an average of five years. To replace those that died, tens of thousands of new slaves were imported each year.

Story 1: Sort it out!

The four cards on the next page are muddled up! Can you put each one next to the correct heading on the chart below?



Historical story		
Haiti's slave population put up with terrible living and working conditions over hundreds of years		
Long-term effects	How this put people in greater danger when the earthquake struck	Example of people keeping going in the face of difficulties

<p>Farming becomes difficult because the quality of soil is poor. Many farmers leave the countryside to try to find work in Port-au-Prince.</p> <p>Port-au-Prince becomes overcrowded and many houses are built close together on hillsides. When the earthquake strikes, houses lower down the hill are crushed by those above.</p>	<p>Rain and wind washes soil from hillsides, making it difficult to grow crops.</p> <p>More landslides and flooding.</p>	<p>Cutting down many of Haiti's trees to make space for crops for slave owners to sell.</p>
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Story 1: Act it out!

Your group will develop a role play based on part of this story. Some of you will play the Spanish and others the Taino.

Start by showing the arrival of the Spanish in Haiti. How do the sailors feel to be on dry land after such a long and dangerous journey? What are their first impressions of the Taino? How do the Taino feel about the arrival of these strangers?

How do the Taino and Spanish attitudes change over time? The Spanish want more gold. The Taino can see that the Spanish want their gold and are forcing them to mine more and more. They are seeing their communities destroyed and are being forced into slavery.

What are the slaves made to grow? What do they have to cut down in order to do this?

Try to make it clear to other groups how this story led to people being in greater danger when the 2010 earthquake struck and how slaves kept on going even though conditions were difficult.

Stories from history

Story 2: Slave revolt 1791-1865

In 1791, slaves and former slaves were inspired by stories of the revolution in France. They rose up against their slave masters under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture. He was a freed slave and, very unusually, was able to read and write.

Within a few weeks over 1000 coffee estates and 200 sugar plantations had been burned and their workers freed. The struggle for freedom continued over the next ten years. Napoleon Bonaparte, leader of France, sent an army to reintroduce slavery in 1799 but Toussaint's forces successfully resisted. In 1802 the French invited Toussaint to talk about a peace agreement - however, this was a trick. They kidnapped Toussaint, took him to France, and put him in prison where he died.



Jean Jacques Dessalines became the first Emperor of independent Haiti. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons (PD-US)

Meanwhile, a new leader in Haiti emerged: Jean-Jacques Dessalines. On New Year's Day in 1804, the new nation of Haiti was born. Haiti's was the only successful slave rebellion in the Caribbean. It gave hope to many other freedom movements, especially in the USA. But Haiti faced many problems. No other country would recognise the first independent black state because they feared that slaves in their own countries would also revolt. They blocked all trade with Haiti, keeping it poor.

It took another 21 years for France to agree to recognise Haiti as an independent country - however, France insisted that Haitians pay 150 million gold francs to their former slave owners for lost business. They wanted Haiti's black population to buy their freedom. Haiti had to borrow this money from French and later other banks. They charged high prices for these loans. As a result, Haiti only finished paying in 1947 and this debt kept Haiti poor.

Story 2: Sort it out!

The four cards on the next page are muddled up! Can you put each one next to the correct heading on the chart below?

Historical story Haitian slaves fought in a rebellion over several years and did not give up when their first leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, was taken to France		
Long-term effects	How this put people in greater danger when the earthquake struck	Example of people keeping going in the face of difficulties

<p>Haiti borrowed money from France and other countries which it then had to pay back over many decades.</p> <p>This meant the Haitian government had less money to spend on its people, resulting in many people remaining poor.</p>	<p>France made Haitians pay back former slave owners.</p>	<p>Poorer people usually suffer more in natural disasters. Often their houses are less strong because they are forced to use weaker building materials. This makes them more likely to fall down in an earthquake.</p>
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Story 2: Act it out!

Your group will develop a role play based on part of this story. Some of you will play the French and others the slaves who fought against French rule. If acting a fight, make sure that you do this as a mime without contact. You may like to freeze the role play at particular points in the action.

How do the slaves feel, being forced to work without their freedom? One of you could play Toussaint L'Ouverture, encouraging the revolt. Remember that many slaves would have been fearful about trying to gain their freedom. There had never been a slave revolt before and they would be harshly punished. The revolt was a brutal time in Haiti's history, with cruelty on both sides. Think carefully about how you might portray the brutality without hitting or hurting each other – you may find that using a freeze-frame will work well.



Stories from history

Story 3: Turbulent times 1915-1986



Haitian president François Duvalier, known as Papa Doc (on the right) at his coronation as president for life. Photo credit: Shaula, Wikimedia Commons.

By 1915, the island of Haiti was struggling. It had not been recognised as an independent country for many years after it became free from French rule. This made it much harder to earn money by trading with other countries like the USA and France. Many people moved away from the cities to farms so that they could grow their own food.

As the USA became more powerful it sought opportunities to improve its wealth from trade. In 1915, the USA invaded Haiti. They stayed in (occupied) Haiti for 19 years. They put down any calls for freedom by Haitians. They built roads, bridges and schools using virtual slave labour. They also built up the capital, Port-au-Prince, as a centre of power. This made ruling the island easier.

After the USA left Haiti in 1934 (following pressure from Haitians to leave) Haitian presidents continued to build up the capital city. By the start of this century nearly one third of Haitians were living in or near Port-au-Prince, the epicentre of the 2010 earthquake.

In 1957, a new president, François Duvalier, also known as Papa Doc, was elected with the support of the USA. He made himself president for life, killing his rivals. He replaced the army with his own secret police. Although he became very rich, ordinary Haitians remained poor.

After Papa Doc died in 1971 his son, known as Baby Doc, took over. Eventually he was driven out of Haiti following enormous protests by the Haitian people. During their 30 years of rule, the Duvaliers had not only stolen a great deal of Haiti's money but they had also driven out many of Haiti's most educated men and women. One in six had fled the country.

Story 3: Sort it out!

The four cards on the next page are muddled up! Can you put each one next to the correct heading?

Historical story US occupied Haiti from 1915-1934. Papa Doc and Baby Doc ruling Haiti from 1957-1986		
Long-term effects	How this put people in greater danger when the earthquake struck	Example of people keeping going in the face of difficulties

<p>At the time of the earthquake, nearly one-third of Haitians were living in Port-au-Prince, the epicentre of the earthquake.</p> <p>Poorer people usually suffer more in natural disasters. They are less likely to have any spare money to help them rebuild their houses or businesses after losing these in a natural disaster.</p>	<p>Many people moved to Port-au-Prince from the countryside because the USA wanted to concentrate power there.</p> <p>Papa Doc, Baby Doc and their families and friends became very rich, leaving many ordinary Haitians poor.</p>	<p>Haitian people coped with harsh working conditions and low wages. Some Haitian writers spoke out against the regime.</p> <p>Haitian people protested and drove out Baby Doc.</p>
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Story 3: Act it out!

Your group will develop a role play based on part of this story. Some of you will play the business people from the USA who are eager to make a profit out of Haiti, some will play members of the Duvalier family who are keen to get rich, and others the ordinary Haitian people who are being kept poor by those in power.

Business people should discuss the opportunities for trade and growing wealth that Haiti offers. The Duvalier family could talk about its growing wealth (with the support of the USA). How do ordinary Haitians feel as they watch this? They could talk about what they would like to do to change the lives of poorer Haitians for the better.



Stories from history

Story 4: Growing divisions 1986-2010



Jean-Bertrand Aristide meets US president Bill Clinton. Photo credit: White House, Wikipedia Commons.

After the Duvaliers had left power in 1986, Haiti faced a time of uncertainty. The government was overthrown by the army in what is known a military coup (pronounced *koo*) several times. Eventually in 1990 a former Catholic priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had spoken out against Papa and Baby Doc, was elected president with strong support. He worked to improve the lives of Haitians. He started a campaign to teach reading and writing and raised wages. Yet within a year he had been forced out of power by the army.

In 1994, the USA helped Aristide return to power as president. He replaced the Haitian army with a small police force. The United Nations kept the peace and in the next elections Aristide was replaced by Rene Preval.

Aristide returned to power again in 2000 but the United Nations army was still needed to keep order. Some severe hurricanes hit Haiti in 2004 and Aristide was forced to leave Haiti once again. This time the USA was accused of kidnapping him.

Over the next few years life was difficult for most Haitians. There was often fighting between supporters of different groups and levels of crime rose. In 2008 there were four hurricanes and some riots about food. In November that year a badly-built school in Port-au-Prince collapsed with around 500 pupils and teachers inside. During these difficult years, many of those who had enough money to travel overseas decided to leave Haiti. Today 85% of Haiti's most educated people live outside the country. Preval was president when the 2010 earthquake struck.

Story 4: Sort it out!

The four cards on the next page are muddled up! Can you put each one next to the correct heading?

Historical story Military coups, where the army took over the government of the country		
Long-term effects	How this put people in greater danger when the earthquake struck	Example of people keeping going in the face of difficulties

Haitian people protested several times when unfair events occurred. Leaders like Aristide campaigned to improve reading and writing and to raise wages.	When the army takes over a government it is less able or likely to keep education and health services going well and local businesses suffer.	Poorer people have less access to healthcare or schooling and may struggle to keep their businesses going, all of which make it hard for them to stop being poor. Poorer people usually suffer most in natural events like earthquakes.
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Story 4: Act it out!

Your group will develop a role play based on this time in Haiti’s history. One person could play a journalist who has come to interview Haitian people and ask them to comment on what is happening in their country.

Read the passage and think of how different groups might react to what is happening. Some of you may have an education (tell the audience!) and decide to leave. Others may be affected by hurricanes, be involved in crime as a way of earning a living, etc. You may know someone who died when the school collapsed. You may be a shop-keeper worried by rising levels of crime.