

Practical Experiences

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REVISING HISTORY THROUGH GAMES IN THE 8TH GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Summary – For teachers, it is usually most difficult and least rewarding to plan revision lessons because it is very hard to achieve a high level of students' concentration and involvement of all students. At the same time, this type of lesson seems to be the most boring one – especially if it comes down to the usual form of oral testing. The passive way of learning History, the one in which students study and only reproduce the teaching content, causes resistance among students because this teaching method is actually a form of pedagogical violence. However, active learning methods, especially games, enable students a high level of learning autonomy. In History teaching process, it is strongly recommended to use practice methods such as practicing speech skills, reading, essay writing, drawing maps and schemes, and making portfolios (Rendić Miočević, 2000). I must add that games are also recognized as a relevant method and should be used sometimes, if nothing else, than to refresh revision lessons.

Key words: revision, active methods, game, communication, tolerance

USING GAMES

If a game is used from the 5th to 8th grade, then it becomes an interesting and pleasant habit. We tend to think that it is always based on the same principle, but students regularly add something new, they change the rules, expand them, come up with new games and it is really refreshing to leave the games to their imagination and creativity. They also encourage us and give as additional motivation to make new games.

Game, as a method, is very suitable for revision lessons for:

- application of knowledge as well as
- systematization and integration of the teaching content.
- It is equally suitable for the lessons when new teaching material is developed:
- as a lead-in to raise students' motivation;
- throughout the lesson to maintain or restore students' concentration;
- at the end of the lesson when new knowledge should be applied (Dukić, Janković, 2005).

Games help students to:

- develop oral communication skills;
- develop tolerance towards different opinions and attitudes;
- develop listening skills;
- build self-confidence;
- feel good and satisfied with the knowledge they have acquired;
- encourage competitive skills.

All of these skills are required and appreciated in today's labour market.

EXAMPLES OF GAMES THAT CAN BE USED

Some of the games that students have been playing for the previous three years have been well-received by all of them, and the rules need not be explained anymore. A good example is a game called **Hangman**. It is now sufficient to ask a student to draw the gallows on the blackboard (while I write the lesson title into the register), determine the number of letters in the key word, and the game begins.

There is a similar game called the **cluster**. The teacher writes the revision topic on the blackboard, and students come one by one, as they sit, to write their word or concept in the cluster. At the end of the game, if someone should require it, we ask the student who had written the notion or the word down to provide an explanation for it. If he is not able to provide an explanation, it is obvious that somebody had whispered to him what to write on the blackboard.

Crossword puzzles are easy and quick to make, as well as **association games**, with 4 columns and 4 notions, as well as 4 solutions for each of the columns and the final solutions. History teachers check the facts before the game is printed.

Rebuses are rarely used because besides an idea, one should have good drawing skills.

The cube opens the door of endless possibilities. It can be used as a finished cube, with all the notions, events, dates, people, etc. written down already, or students can write them down themselves, and then glue them onto the cube. Making variations as frequently as possible is welcome. On a cube the teacher can write only the beginning of a question: who, what, where, when, how, why...? Firstly, students are supposed to prepare the questions themselves, individually, and then check them in pairs and groups in order to avoid repeating some of the questions. Then one group asks another group a question. Then, this second group rolls the cube/die. All the students are actively involved because they all take turns in asking and answering the questions. The whole class uses one cube, but each group can make its own cube and play the game in their own group.

THE CUBE

Cut and write down on the planes 6 events / notions / people / dates / battles, etc. (only one per category) and glue the planes onto a cube.

Each participant rolls the cube/die and explains the given category.

Or

THE CUBE

Write the questions **WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? HOW? WHY?** before the cube has been finished. Take turns in rolling it and ask a question with the given question word

(one student rolls the cube and answers the question, the next one asks a question).

Or a more difficult task

THE CUBE

A cube with tasks:

EXPLAIN, PROVE, APPLY, THINK, CONCLUDE, NAME.

Students are supposed to create the exercises themselves. If necessary, they can ask their teacher for help.

A map with flags is a game students like to play very much. It is diverse, each student in the group has a special task, and in the end the result is very efficient for them, as well as for the whole class.

This is The Second World War example. It can be created for any teaching unit, or, even better, let your students decide what they would actually like to create concerning the topic which is being revised.

A MAP WITH FLAGS

Cut the coloured flags and **glue** them onto toothpicks. **Write** only one piece of information on the flag – major battlefields, members of the Tripartite Pact and Allies, conferences, treaties, defeats, major battles etc.

Find a suitable place on the map and **put** your flag on it.

A role-play is good for students who like drama and stage. It is necessary to know well the person's habits, biographical data, sources etc. Then it is easier to play the role of that person. The game is always played within a group.

ROLE-PLAY

Choose a situation you can retell, explain and present through a few dialogues (a shorter one at school, a longer one for your homework):

- Tehran,
- Yalta,
- Potsdam,
- Tito – Šubašić,
- The second session of AVNOJ
- ZAVNOH (or any other topic).

An interview is a game students like and is easier for them, because they can present it while remaining seated and they do not have to move on the stage. They work in pairs.

INTERVIEW

Introduce the person you have chosen by asking questions and answering them:

- Tito-Šubašić,
- Stalin in Tehran, Yalta or Potsdam;
- Winston Churchill
- Hitler (or any other person from history).

Students can always add a person of their own choice.

Dominoes has usually been played since the 5th grade, but it is always challenging. These are the examples from the games I have used. All the teaching units have been used in this game, so at the end of a school year they can always be used for systematization of the units we have covered throughout the year.

EUROPEAN DICTATORSHIPS

	25 TH OCTOBER, 1929	‘BLACK FRIDAY’ IN NEW YORK	THE GREAT ECONOMIC CRISIS	USA	1919
THE NATIONALIST PARTY	MARCH, 1919	THE FASCIST PARTY	1922	‘THE MARCH ON ROME’	1929
THE HOLY SEE TREATY	THE STATE OF VATICAN	THE LATERAN TREATY	1925	FASCIST DICTATOR- SHIP	DUCE
BENITO MUSSOLINI	1920	THE COMMUNIST DICTATOR- SHIP IN RUSSIA	1922	USSR	1924 – 1953
THE AGE OF STALIN	THE PERSONA- LITY CULT	MUSSOLINI, STALIN, HITLER	1923	THE MARCH ON MUNICH	1933
THE NAZI DICTATOR- SHIP	ADOLF HITLER	‘THE FUERHER’	1935	THE NUREMBERG LAWS	1938
THE EXILE OF THE JEWS	THE THIRD REICH	THE GERMAN EMPIRE	THE SUPREME RACE’	THE ARYANS	

THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FROM 1990 – TO PRESENT DAY

	1990 – 1999	FRANJO TUĐMAN ERA	AUGUST, 1990	THE KNIN REBELLION	1991 PLITVICE
THE WAR BETWEEN CROATIA AND THE YUGOSLAV ARMY	MAY, 1991	REFEREN- DUM IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA	25 TH JUNE, 1991	CROATIA, AN INDEPEN- DENT COUNTRY	8 TH OCTOBER, 1991
THE BREACH OF ALL CONNECTI- ONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA	1991 – 1995	THE WAR IN CROATIA	15 TH JANUARY, 1992	INTERNATI- ONAL RECOGNI- TION OF CROATIA	1992

CROATIA, A MEMBER OF UN	1992	THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA, A MEMBER OF OESS	1993	MILITARY ACTIONS FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE OCCUPIED REGIONS OF CROATIA	1995
“THE LIGHTNING AND THE STORM”	21 ST NOVEMBER 1995	THE DAYTON PEACE TREATY	1996	CROATIA, A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE	1998
THE PACT ON STABILITY AND COOPERATION IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE	1998	REINTEGRATION OF EASTERN SLAVONIA AND BARANJA	31 ST AUGUST, 1999	PACT ON STABILITY IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE	2000 MULTIPARTY ELECTIONS
THE VICTORY OF COALITION	OCTOBER 2001	THE STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT	FEBRUARY, 2003	APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE EU	

It is highly recommended to connect each game with a story about Europe. For example: Europeans kill each other and descend to hell; Not to be forgotten (the holocaust and genocide); Europe doesn't rule the world anymore; And now... should Europe be united in a better way; What kind of Europe, etc.

Povijest u zrcalu anegdota (History in the mirror of anecdotes) is a book which offers over 50 anecdotes which are short and easily applied during new material development, before or after students' reports, during games. The topics cover anecdotes about de Gaulle, Hruschov, Churchill, Wilson, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Truman, The Way of the Cross in Bjelovar and others.

CONCLUSION

Using the games in the teaching process raises the level of spontaneous individual work, makes communication easier, and improves and personalizes the relationship between students and the teacher (Dukić, Janković, 2005).

Therefore, games help us accomplish pedagogical aim in the History teaching process, that is, we develop the following values: tolerance, co-operation, accepting the differences, developing working habits, raising awareness about peaceful problem solutions (Koren, 2004).

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