

# Slate and Pencil

## 1 INTRODUCE



### What is this object called?

A Slate and Pencil.

### What was this item used for?

Used to write on mainly during school lessons.

**What object today does the same job?** Exercise books.



## 2 INVESTIGATE



Let the children feel the slate and slate pencil.

## 3 DESIGN/MATERIALS



**What is this object made out of?** Slate (a type of rock) and wooden frame. The pencils are made from a softer slate.

**Why wasn't paper used in the past instead of slates?** Paper wasn't as easily available as it is today and it was more expensive.

**Is the slate heavy or light?** Light. Easy to hold up so students could show the teacher their answers.

## 4 HOW DOES IT WORK?



### How does it work?

The slate pencil is made from a softer form of slate and was used just like a pencil to write on the slate board. Often one side of the board was used for writing and the other used for mathematics and drawing.

**Did everyone own their own slate and pencil?** No. They were often kept in the classroom cupboard and class monitors would hand them out at the beginning of different lessons.

**Who used them?** School students.

**What lessons were they used for?** Maths. Students wrote sums on their slates then held them up for the teacher to check. Hand Writing. Students practiced writing by copying words and sentences off the board.

**How did they rub the slate out?** Sometimes students would use a wet rag to wipe the slate clean. Other times they would spit on the slate and wipe it with their sleeve. As slates were passed from student to student many coughs and colds were spread by this process.



### **5 LEARN MORE...SAY...**

*Slates were used in schools during the 1800s and even well into the 1900s. Some of your grandparents might have used them at school. They were usually used by the younger students who learnt how to write on them. Older students used ink pens which could be messy in little hands. As slates didn't allow for a lot of writing, lessons were taught very differently in the past. Students had to copy letters and sentences from the board and memorise facts and their times tables. There was no such thing as group work as students sat at desks lined up in neat rows. Many different grades were taught by the one teacher at the same time and students usually only went to school until they were 11 or 12.*



### **6 COMPARE IT TO TECHNOLOGIES TODAY**

**Instead of slates and slate pencils, what do we use today?** Slates have been replaced by paper and even electronic whiteboards and other electronic devices such as laptops, iPads etc. Slate pencils have been replaced by chalk, lead pencils, ball point pens, felt pens etc.



### **7 THINK**

**What does this item tell us about the past?** That paper was not as available as it is today. That students did not use as many writing books or pens as they do today. School was very different in the past.

**This item is called a slate because it is made out of slate. Can you think of another name you would call it? Think about how it was used.....**