



MUSEUM OF EARLY  
TRADES & CRAFTS

## *School Days*

*(2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades)*

### **PRE-PROGRAM ACTIVITY**

#### **Rules**

Rules are important for schools, organizations, and even families. Rules help people know the proper way to behave with each other.

1. Make a list of the rules that your school has.
2. Make a list of new or different rules that you would like your school to have.
3. Do you think the rules were similar during the days of the one-room schoolhouse in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries? How might they have been similar? How might they have been different?

### **ADDITIONAL POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

#### **Writing a Letter**

In a time before phones, email and texting, letter writing was a crucial skill and the primary means of communication. Ask each student to write a letter by hand to someone they do not live with, preferably someone who lives in another state or even another country. They should write as if they have no other way of communicating with this person, explaining everything that is going on in their lives.

Once the letters are written, help the children write an address and return address on an envelope and show them where the stamp goes. Then have them mail their letters.

Ask the family to request that the recipient of the letter let them know when the letter arrives.

Have a chart, noting where each letter was going and the amount of time it took. See if any of the recipients send a letter back. Once all the letters are in, discuss how writing and mailing a letter was different from other forms of communication more commonly used today.



## **Making Walnut Shell Ink [\*\*avoid this activity if you have any nut allergies in the class\*\*]**

Much like students of today, students in the 19th century were expected to bring their own paper and writing utensils to school. However, ink was not readily available. If it was purchased, it was very expensive. It was usually made at home by the students and their families. Here is a “recipe” you can follow to make your own ink, and then use it to write with a quill or dip pen. Quill pens that were used with the ink were plucked from white geese and cut on an angle at the bottom with a “pen knife,” a word that we still use today to refer to small knives that are used for carving and whittling.

### Materials:

Paper bag	Hammer	Small saucepan
Measuring cup & teaspoon	Cheesecloth or Strainer	Small containers with covers
4 empty walnut shells	1 cup water	½ tsp. salt    1 tsp. vinegar

### Directions:

Using a hammer, crush the shells in a paper bag. Put the crushed shells into a saucepan and add water. When the water is boiling, add the salt and vinegar. Turn down the heat and simmer for 15 minutes. To remove the pieces of shell, strain the ink through a strainer or a piece of cheesecloth over a container. Pour ink into small containers that have tight covers.

**If you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact the METC Education Department at 973-377-2982, x12 or [education@metc.org](mailto:education@metc.org)**