



VINTAGE CLASSROOM

Lesson 1: Introduction

Picture your school. Each grade has its own classroom. You leave your classroom for music in the music room, lunch in the cafeteria, and art in the art room. You have a library and special places for languages, and gym class. Your school is a pretty big place, with offices for the principal and the nurse, and quiet rooms for teachers to take a break. Now, let's travel back in time to 1895 (125 years ago!).....

[Click here for a short video about the schoolhouse](#)

There isn't a bus to take you to school, but don't worry, there are lots of schools on the Island so no one has to walk very far. You arrive at the school and wait outside for the teacher to let you in. When she steps onto the porch, you line up- girls in one line, boys in another line. Each of you enters the school through a different door and sits on opposite sides of the school room.

In addition to girls and boys being separated, there are some other big differences from your classroom today. First, the schoolhouse is only one large room. Second, children from every grade attend the same school at the same time, meaning that you will be sharing a classroom AND a teacher with every grade from kindergartners through eighth grade!

Your teacher's name is Mrs. Abbot, she is a widow who lives with her sister next door to the schoolhouse. When she greets you, Mrs. Abbot will make sure you know the rules she expects you to follow. Read her greeting, then answer the questions below.

Mrs. Abbot: "Now boys and girls, today is our first day together and I'm going to tell you how I expect you to conduct yourselves in this classroom. When you first come in you will go directly to your seats and put your lunch pails under the bench. We will have hooks for your wraps and coats in the future, but in the meantime, just put them under your benches as you can. You will sit quietly – no gossiping, fidgeting, and fighting.

When I say 'Good Morning class' you will all rise, look at me with your eyes, and say 'Good Morning Mrs. Abbot,' then I will tell you to be seated.

When you wish to answer a question, or you have a question, you will raise your hand. There will be no interrupting. When I call on you, you will rise and start your answer or question with "Ma'am, the answer is..." or "Ma'am, my question is...". Every time you address me you start with "Ma'am." Remember to elocute, that is, speak clearly and slowly. Stand straight, and look at me. Pronounce your words clearly, do not mumble.

Do your lessons faithfully and accurately. Be polite, considerate, obedient and respectful. Be truthful and honest."

Take a few minutes to picture what it would be like to attend a one-room schoolhouse and answer the following questions:

- 1) With so many kids in one room, what classroom rules would be important? Name three rules not already mentioned by Mrs. Abbott.
- 2) What would your teacher need to do differently to be able to teach kids from all grades in the same classroom?
- 3) List three activities that you do in your school that would not be possible in a one-room schoolhouse.
- 4) What would be the hardest thing about sharing a classroom with kids from all the grades? What would be the best thing?
- 5) List 10 things in your classroom that you would not find in a one-room schoolhouse 125 years ago?