

Lesson 9

Building Buildings and Community: Gilded Age Replicas

Subject Area: Building/Architecture

Grade/Group: 5th/6th

Lesson Overview:

This lesson explores buildings of all kinds and their importance in creating a sense of community. Students take a Newport tour, identifying the functions of the buildings within it. Specific attention is given to the materials used and how they impact the buildings' appearance and durability. Students then apply what they have learned by creating a community of buildings made from recycled materials.

Time Frame: Five 45-minute periods

Objectives:

Students will:

- build a structure with small materials.
- identify the different functions of buildings in a community.
- tour the community to identify the functions of buildings.
- create a building for a community using recycled materials.
- design a building in a community.
- discuss connections between the community designed and the Gilded Age of Newport

NCSS Standards:

1 d. explain why individuals and groups respond differently to their physical and social environments and/or changes to them on the basis of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs.

3 g. describe how people create places that reflect cultural values and ideals as they build neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, and the like

3 k. propose, compare, and evaluate alternative uses of land and resources in communities, regions, nations and the world

4 b. describe personal connections to place—as associated with community, nation, and world

5 a. demonstrate an understanding of concepts such as role, status, and social class in describing the interactions and social groups

10 j. examine strategies designed to strengthen the “common good,” which considers a range of options for citizen action

Materials:

For weeks before this lesson, discuss recycling and have students bring in as many materials they can use as possible. Create a poster of possible recyclable materials to collect from home—and to see how many they could locate without having to buy them. In a previous lesson students will write a letter home for this.

Wooden blocks, flexi-stix, architectural blocks, Lincoln Logs, and/or LEGOs

Camera and film (optional)

Tubes and small boxes such as shoe, cereal, and gift boxes; clean juice cartons (collected by students)

Scissors

Yarn

Markers

Crayons

Colored construction paper

Masking tape

Glue

Glue guns

The Little House by Virginia Lee Burton

Alexander, Who's Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!) Going to Move by Judith Viorst

Blank paper and lined paper

Clipboards

Sources:

Websites: <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2362/>

For community building survey:

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2362/2362_communitybuild_survey.pdf

For the assessment rubric:

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2362/2362_communitybuild_rubric.pdf

For student vocabulary page:

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2362/2362_communitybuild_vocab.pdf

Print Resources:

Burton, Virginia Lee. *The Little House*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942, 1969.
 Gibbons, Gail. *How a House is Built*. New York: Scholastic, 1990. Grimshaw, Caroline and Hussain, Iqbal. *Buildings*. Chicago: World Book, 1995, 1997. Haslam, Andrew. *Building*. Ocala, FL: Action Publishing, 1994. Hoberman, Mary Ann. *A House is a House for Me*. New York: Scholastic, 1978.

Taus-Bolstad, Stacy. *From Clay to Bricks*. Minneapolis: Learner Publications Company, 2003.

Viorst, Judith. *Alexander, Who's Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!)* Going to Move. New York: Scholastic, 1995.

Newport Then and Now—book of photographs available from Salve Regina University

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Motivational Activity:

Try an idea from CUBE, called “archiHats.” This idea is borrowed from CUBE (Center for the Built Environment). <http://www.cubekc.org/>

Raid the wastebasket for recycle materials and build your dream house! Initiate your lesson wearing an “archihat.”



Lesson Development:

Divide students into groups of four. Give each group small building materials such as wooden blocks, flexi-sticks, architectural blocks, Lincoln Logs, or LEGOs. Tell students that they must work cooperatively to build a structure. Give students five minutes to plan and then five minutes to build.

When the groups have finished, have the class tour the structures. Ask students to consider the following questions as they observe the structures:

Do any of the structures have roofs?

○

Are any of the structures tall?

○

Which structures look sturdy? Why?

○

Do any of the structures look fragile or unsteady? Why?

○

Is there any structure that really stands out because of the design?

○

Does it seem like the builders built the structure with some function or purpose in mind?

If so, what was it?

If desired, photograph the structures and record the builders, materials used, and function (if any) of the structure. After all are photographed, put away the small building materials.

Read *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton, the story of a country house that remains largely unchanged over time despite rapid development. More and more buildings are built around the little house, until ultimately, the house is abandoned between two skyscrapers and falls into disrepair. When the original owners' great-granddaughter sees the plight of the little house, she moves it back out to the country and restores it.

As you read the story aloud, have students look at the illustrations and listen for information about buildings and communities. Discuss the story. Ask students, "What buildings are in the story? What is the function or purpose of each building? Record students' responses on the board in categories. Answers may include: a house, barn, roadside stand, gasoline station, apartments, drugstore, school, garage, store, train station, and/or skyscraper. Ask students to consider other buildings and their functions; give them 30 seconds to record their ideas. Invite volunteers to add to the list of buildings on the board.

Ask students to consider the following:

What materials were used to build the Little House? (Brick, glass, shingles, and wood.)

Is the Little House durable?

How does she hold up under the weather elements and the changes around her? (The structure still stands, but the paint is peeled and the windows are broken.)

Do you think the Little House's design is appropriate for the climate? Why or why not? (It snowed where the Little House was located. She had a hip roof — a roof that consists of four sloping planes that meet at the peak, allowing snow and rain to fall off. Also, she was made of brick, which made her sturdy.)

What other materials can be used to construct a building? (Cement, concrete, steel, siding, mud, canvas material, and paper) How durable are these materials?

As the story of the Little House unfolds, does her appearance change? Does she blend in with the other buildings in her community? (By the end of the story, her appearance is poor. She does not fit in with the other parts of the community.) Isn't it interesting they call the house she/her?

Does the function of the Little House remain the same throughout the story? (She is still a house.)

Tell students that they are going to explore the buildings in their own community.

Show pictures of Newport from "Then and Now" book. Look at a Newport map—talk about how the community of Newport existed from a variety of perspectives, and where the different neighborhoods or communities existed during the Gilded Age. Who lived in those different neighborhoods? Bellevue area, wharf area, Touro Street area ?

Distribute a Community Buildings Survey workbook to each student. Read the directions with students and review the example of the school building provided. This survey is available at this website: http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2362/2362_communitybuild_survey.pdf

If possible, take students on a walking tour of a Newport neighborhood. **IN THIS UNIT THIS LESSON CAN HAPPEN AFTER THE FIELD TRIP LESSON.** Give each student a clipboard, a Community Buildings Survey and a pencil. Instruct students to look for five buildings, each of which must have a different function. Buildings might include houses, offices, stores, doghouses, tree houses, backyard sheds, etc. Allow students time to sketch each building and record the **FUNCTION, MATERIALS, DURABILITY, and APPEARANCE** for each building. (Alternatively, you may wish to have students photograph favorite or unusual buildings.) Have the students think back in time over the Gilded Age to discuss the function, materials, durability, and appearance of the structures visited. Have students return the completed workbooks to the classroom and discuss findings. Allow students to compare and contrast observations about the function, materials, appearance, and durability of the buildings in the community.

ONE OPTION Read aloud the book, *Alexander, Who's Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!) Going to Move*. In the book, Alexander does not want to move because he hates the thought of leaving his favorite places in the community: his house, his neighbors' houses, the drycleaner's, and the market. He considers living in one of these places, or perhaps constructing a tree house, or putting up a tent. What Alexander needs is a feeling that his new community will be as welcoming as the old one. Tell the class that their discussion of the story will be to describe how to create a current Newport community that will make Alexander comfortable and welcome. (Then it will be built!)

OPTION TWO Share the book on Newport Houses. Share a picture of a visual survey of Victorian Homes. Have students identify and sketch 5 ideas to replicate the Marble House or Breakers after a visit there. Show the features they hope to incorporate into their buildings.

Start Building. Distribute a variety of small boxes and tubes, along with art supplies such as colored construction paper, yarn, glue, and scissors. Students can use any of these materials to create a building. The building must have a specific function, and the materials selected should be durable. (It is okay if more than one person is making the same kind of building; this happens in real communities as well.) Tell students that they have until the end of the class period to complete the building. Students should also describe the materials they used, and the reasons for selecting them.

While the class is building, place yarn or masking tape lines on the floor. As the buildings are completed, have students place them around the yarn or tape paths. After building and clean up is finished, have each student sit behind the building he/she made. Allow each student to describe the function of the building and justify its reason for being in the community.

Lesson Closure:

From Option 1: What does our class think is important in the community we built for Alexander? Do we have those options in our own communities? How would Alexander have felt living in the Marble House or The Breakers with his family? Would this type of community be desirable for other families or children, other than Alexander, why? Did this sort of community exist in Newport in the late 1800's early 1900's? Why or Why not? During the Gilded Age who would have benefited from such a community as we have built for Alexander?

From Option 2: How does our new community look the same or different of the Gilded Age community from 1880 to 1914? What elements did we incorporate into our community? What are the elements of Beaux Arts? What are the elements of Neoclassicism? What elements were essential to make your structures stand?

Assessment:

Use the accompanying Assessment Rubric to assess student understanding. The rubric can be found at the following website: http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2362/2362_communitybuild_rubric.pdf

Follow-Up Activities/Extensions:

As a homework assignment, have students design a building that

(a) Alexander would find in his new community (a house, a business, an office, a school, a market, etc.) Students should then write a brief description of the building, its function, and the materials that would be used to construct it. Place the drawings and descriptions on display with the buildings created for the new community. Invite other classes, parents, or administrators to tour the new and planned community buildings.

(b) Build an “archihat.” <http://www.cubekc.org/>

(c) Talking Buildings: Buildings tell us about the materials that were available locally for construction and the technology and craftsmanship of the builders. They also reflect the economic status, politics, practical needs, aesthetics, taste and fashion of the time in which they were built. Choose two contrasting buildings or two similar ones and create a conversation between them. Have the buildings discuss who built them, why, when, the materials used in their construction, their overall appearance, events in the town's history they have witnessed, people who have lived or worked in them, and their future. If students prefer, they may develop a comic strip or write a song, poem, or a story. Remind them to let the building be the narrator or the main character. If available, use a walking tour brochure or locate other reference materials in the local library, historical society, or preservation organization. Contact your state historic preservation office (go to Resources by State) for information on buildings on the National Register of Historic Places in your community and county. To learn more about a building, interview a past or current resident or owner. This extension idea is borrowed from: **The Heritage Education Network at the following website:**

<http://architecture.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mtsu.edu%2F%7Ethen%2FArchitecture%2Fpage35.html>
(a wonderful website!)

To Contact / Comment to the Heritage Education Network, see the address, below.

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