
"DESIGN A WALKING TOUR"

TO THE TEACHER:

Designing a walking tour of your town's historic neighbourhoods is a great way to learn more about architecture and the importance of heritage buildings. It also provides students a chance to do some original research as well as learn about their community's development!

This project may be used to enhance a history unit which emphasizes community heritage and/or the transmission of culture. This activity is geared toward the upper elementary grades (4-7) but may be easily adapted to fit the student's age, skill level or special interests.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- learn why heritage and history are important
- stimulate an awareness of the community
- explore how buildings relate to the community
- develop communication (written and verbal) skills
- learn how to gather information from a variety of sources & present it in different ways

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- detailed community map
- clipboards, pencils and paper
- parental supervision
- art supplies (construction paper, glue, yarn, felts, crayons, etc.)

ACTIVITY:

(grades 4-7)

- Step 1 In class, locate the historic districts in your community on a map. Discuss what makes them historic and why they are considered special. Try and think of what kinds of buildings make up that particular area (residential, public, commercial, religious, etc.). Pick one or more (depending on the size of the area and the class) of these areas and visit it/them.
- Step 2 During your visit have each student pick a favourite old building or other feature: bridge, statue, park or garden. This will become the item they research for the walking tour. In some cases there might not be enough buildings in one area for each student to have their own. The class may either pair up on buildings (groups of two or three) or the tour may be expanded to include more than one historic area.

Have the students either take photographs (one camera will do-the teacher can take the photographs) or make drawings of their building. Don't forget to take note of the address! This will be important later on during research and construction of the booklet.

Step 3 Each student then researches their building or structure. The following list suggests what type of information the class should look for:

- Who was the original owner? Was it someone important to the community?
- What was the owner's occupation?
- What style is the building/structure?
- How old is the structure?
- What was the original use?
- Does it still have the same use?
- Did a special event happen there?
- Was it designed by an architect?
- Does the structure have a name?
- Interesting stories attached to the house.
- Historic photos of the building (with people if possible).

NOTE: *keep in mind that not all students will be able to find the answers to all these questions and that's OK! Students are encouraged to include all interesting or unusual information they discover.*

Step 4 After all the information has been gathered, have the class write a small paragraph or two about the building. If the students are sharing a building, have each of them write a brief paragraph on something different. Don't forget to include the address/location of the building/structure being described!

Step 5 Include a map (or section of a map) of the neighbourhood where the tour will be. Mark the houses in the tour on the map with a number and dot. The map can be either hand drawn, or a photocopy of a property map (available from the local city or municipal hall). Make sure the address for each building has a number by it which corresponds to the number on the map.

e.g. ⑦ 1516 Heritage Lane (the 7 in the circle will correspond to the 7 on the map)

Step 6 Combine the photographs, drawings (if the students are doing drawings they may need another visit to their buildings to polish them up) and archival photos with the text to make a booklet.

Have each student design the layout for their own page. Encourage them to be creative (adding borders to their pages, cutting text out in fun shapes, etc.). While the booklet is being put together, make sure the map is first for easy reference. Allow one page for each building or feature. Three hole punch the pages and put them in a binder.

Step 7 Display the pages along the wall outside the classroom, in the local museum, community centre, or city hall. After the display, put the booklet in the school library as a record of the project.

MORE THINGS TO DO:

A. Religious Buildings

Research historic religious buildings (churches, synagogues, temples, etc.) in the area. They offer a unique perspective on the history of Canada's expansion and are a great way to learn about different architectural styles and cultures.

B. Street Names

Research historic or unusual street names in your town. What is their significance? Why was the street given that name? Write a biography of the person or event connected the street name. This is a fun way to study the founding pioneers and history of your town.

Follow the same instructions as you would for the walking tour booklet for these two projects.