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# "DESK FACADES"

## TO THE TEACHER:

This activity investigates the importance and function of building exteriors. "Desk Facades" may be done in conjunction with other activities in this kit such as, "Neighbourhood Walk", used as an alternate activity in "Model Town" or as an independent lesson. It would also fit well with an existing unit dealing with local history.

This exercise works best if the class has a chance to tour their town beforehand. However, if a tour can not be arranged, use photographs or slides of buildings in the community to illustrate the architectural features being discussed. Have the students draw imaginary buildings using the facade details discussed in class rather than actual ones.

The difficulty level depends on what elements of the facade are chosen and how detailed the teacher wants to be. For younger students, concentrate on a few basic elements like doors, windows, and porches. For older students, increase the number of terms and make them more complicated (e.g. bay window, bracket, pilaster).

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- explore the built environment
- gain an appreciation of architectural aesthetics
- discover connections between architecture and the community
- develop visual communication and image design skills

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- stiff paper or cardboard, glue, tape, scissors
- pencils, felts, crayons, paint, pencil crayons
- texture elements (fabric, yarn, tin foil, straw, sandpaper, etc.)
- "About My Building" & "My Building Looks Like..." worksheets (K-7)
- parental supervision

## ACTIVITY:

(grades K-7)

Step 1

In the classroom, introduce the students to the basic vocabulary of facade elements, such as brackets, bay window, dormer window, gable, awning, etc. (see "Illustrated Glossary"). Photos, slides or drawings are extremely handy for illustrating unfamiliar architectural terms.

Emphasize the importance of the facade. Discuss what it's purpose is and how it relates to the type of building (e.g. a store front has to have big display windows in order to attract customers, a firehall has big front doors so the firetrucks can leave).

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Step 2 Go on a neighbourhood walk and have the class note the different kinds of buildings (residential, commercial, industrial, public, religious). Find as many of the facade elements discussed in class as possible on each building.

Have each student pick a favourite building (all on the same block) and using either "My Buildings Looks Like..." or "About My Building..." have them record what they see. Encourage the class to study the building carefully and to include as many details as possible. Don't forget to note down different colours and textures! If there is not enough time to do a good drawing, have the students do a quick sketch that illustrates the important architectural elements and write down the smaller details (e.g. if the building is brick, label it "brick" instead of drawing in each one)-these can easily be added later on.

Step 3 Back in the classroom have the students redraw their sketches on cardboard or stiff paper large enough to cover the front of their desks-including elements that they may not have had time to add before. Try working with different sizes of cardboard.

Add colour to the drawing. This can be done using paint, felts, crayons, pencil crayons, and texture elements. Experimenting with different types of texture is encouraged (e.g. plastic wrap for windows, striped fabric or paper for awnings).

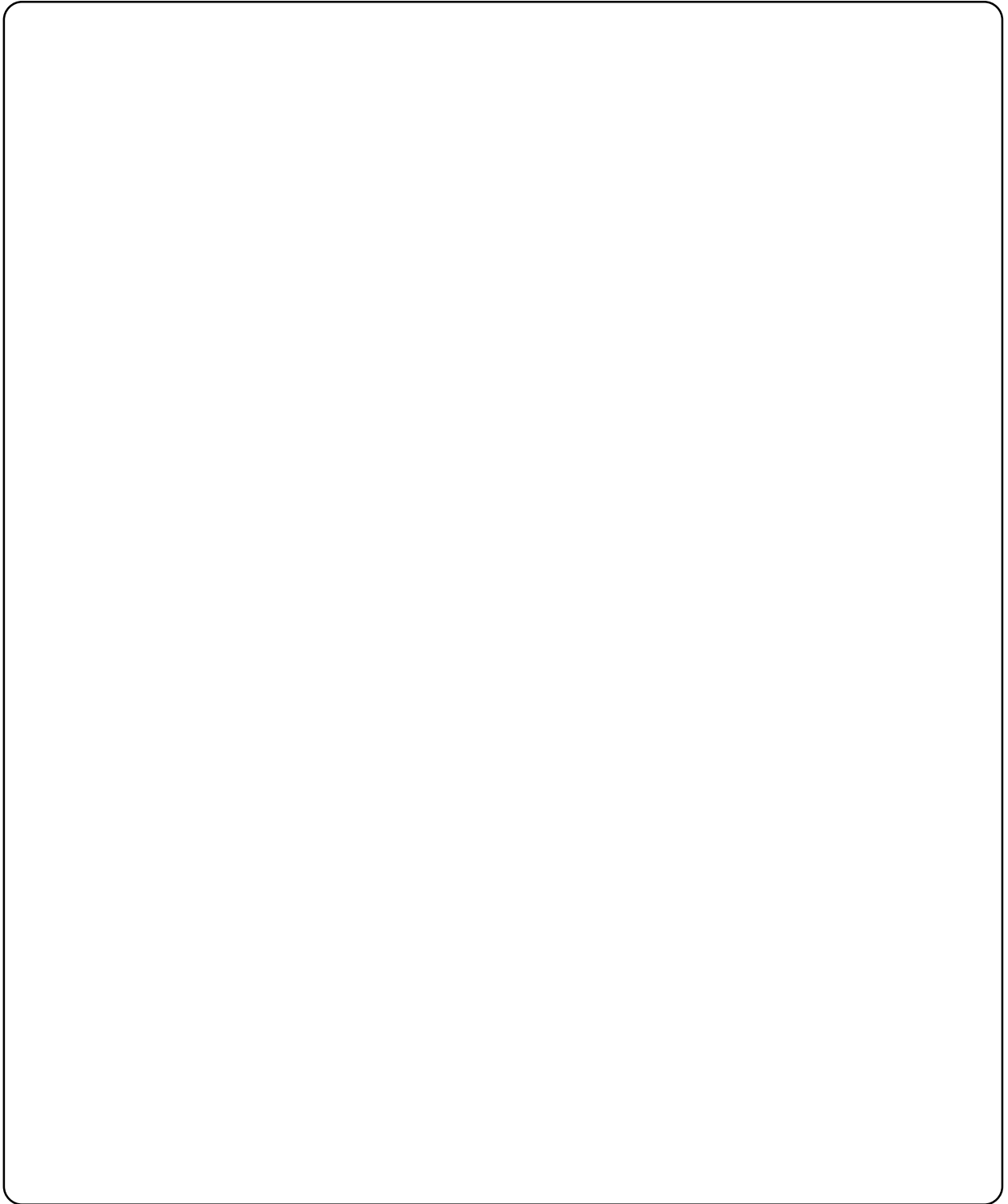
**NOTE:** *using different textures is a good way to demonstrate how paint and other coverings/materials can either hide or enhance the architectural features of a building.*

Have the class tape their completed cardboard facades to the front of their desks. Rearrange the desks and have fun making different streetscapes! Or try taping the facades around the classroom to make an indoor city.

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# "MY BUILDING LOOKS LIKE..."

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



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# "ABOUT MY BUILDING..."

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. My building is located at: \_\_\_\_\_

2. My building is used for: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. This is what I can see on the front of my building:

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