
"CREATIVE WRITING"

TO THE TEACHER:

The following two activities are designed to encourage students to think about architecture in a new and creative way. Instead of looking at buildings passively, students bring architecture to life by putting themselves inside the building and pretending it's a living being.

This activity would fit well with a unit that emphasizes the relationship of culture to the environment, and Canadian cultural preservation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- look at buildings from a new perspective
- discover the problems older buildings face (activity 2)
- gain an appreciation for older buildings and architecture
- develop knowledge of historic and cultural preservation

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

-nothing

ACTIVITY 1:

My Home (grades K-3)

Have the class visualize their home as a living person and ask the following questions:

1. Is it wrinkled and ready for retirement?
2. Does it need a complete facelift, or just a slight make-over?
3. Is it muscular or frail? Does it sag in the middle?
4. Is it tall or short?
5. Are it's colours snappy?
6. Is it plain or fancy?
7. What is it's most interesting feature?
8. What type of personality does it have?
9. Where does it live? Does it like it there?
10. What can it see from the front? From the back?

When the questions are answered (a sentence or two per question), read the responses to the class. Ask the students what kind of house or building they would like to be and where they would want to live. Have the students draw and colour the kind of building they would like to be.

If possible, have the drawings displayed outside the classroom or in the library with a short story explaining why "This is the Building I Want to be".

ACTIVITY 2:

Old Building, New Building (grades 4-7)

In this activity, have the class imagine a conversation between two buildings. One building is old, falling apart and about to be torn down. The other is a new, sleek, modern building across the street. The buildings can be any type or combination (e.g. an old house and a shopping mall, an office tower and old theatre, an old house and a new house).

Here are some things the buildings might talk about:

- Are these buildings friends? How long have they been friends?
- Is the building being torn down sad? If so, why?
- Why do people like new buildings?
- Are new buildings better? If so, why? If not, why?
- How come old buildings get torn down?
- Are old buildings valuable?
- What can you learn from old buildings?
- Is the new building sad or glad the old building will be gone?
- In what kind of neighbourhood do the buildings live?
- Is there lots of other development going on? Are there other old buildings being torn down?
- Should some old buildings be saved? If so, why? If not, why?

Talk about and expand on the essays in class. Read quotes from the students work to help generate discussion. Compare the essays to each other, demonstrating the students' different points of view. Discuss some of the more important points, such as: Do old buildings have value?; Why preserve the past?; Why do old buildings get torn down?; Is it worth saving and restoring them?; and What would our town be like without older buildings?, in more detail.

MORE THINGS TO DO:

A. Heritage Debate (grades 5-7)

Try using this same theme except in a debate format. Have one half of the class argue for tearing down old buildings to make way for the new and the other argue for historic preservation.