Neighborhood Explorers
Program Overview

Grade Level: First

Focus: Neighborhood building types and functions

Sessions: Three, including one introductory classroom session, one neighborhood walking tour, and one classroom session with final project.

Common Core Learning Standards:
• Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners around grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups (CCSS English Language Arts SL.1.1)
• Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly. (CCSS English Language Arts – Literacy SL.1.4)
• Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings. (CCSS English Language Arts – Literacy SL.1.5)
• With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. (CCSS English Language Arts – Literacy W.1.8)
• Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another. (CCSS Math Content 1.MD.C.4)

Description: Explore the buildings in the neighborhood surrounding your school and discover the different components that make up a community. In what types of buildings do people live? Where do people shop and eat? What services do they need? Students design and map their own “ideal” communities, act as official surveyors as they take a walking tour of the neighborhood, and create a three-dimensional streetscape model of the local community.

Goals:
• Students will gain knowledge of the architectural structures that form their community
• Students will consider the layout and design of urban neighborhoods
• Using a checklist of building types, students will survey the buildings in the blocks surrounding their school and discover why particular neighborhoods have more or less of certain types of buildings.
• Using knowledge of local structures and architecture, students will create building façades which, when grouped together, will form a neighborhood model.
Neighborhood Explorers
Lesson 1: Mapping a Community

Goal
To get students thinking about the buildings in their neighborhood. Thinking about places to live, learn, shop, play, eat, etc., students will make a list of places in their neighborhood as a class, and will individually create color-coded maps of a neighborhood of their own design.

Materials
• Whiteboard or 1 sheet of easel paper
• Markers – 4 or 5 different colors
• Blank Neighborhood Maps, 1 per student
• Pencils
• Colored pencils, crayons, markers

Space
Classroom meeting area and classroom tables

Procedure
1) Educator explains that today, we will talk about the parts of a neighborhood, and the types of buildings that every community needs. Ask, “What is a neighborhood?” Often, the class will have discussed communities beforehand, and may have created a definition together.

2) Ask, “What does a neighborhood need?” As students raise their hands with ideas, create a list on easel paper or the whiteboard. A good list should include the following: apartment building, school, pharmacy, hospital, grocery store, restaurant, library, post office, transportation such as subways and buses, park, playground, store, doctor’s office, etc. Some students will suggest things like airports or zoos, so clarify by saying that we are thinking about our local neighborhood – things that you can walk to. A large city needs an airport, but individual neighborhoods do not. Can also ask “what is your favorite part of your neighborhood?” or “what places in your neighborhood help you to recognize it as your neighborhood?”

3) Show the students the blank map and tell them that they are going to create a map of their “ideal” neighborhood. Explain to students that they are making a map of an urban (meaning city) community, so the map should be dense and full of buildings with very little blank space.

4) Model the activity. Point out which parts of the map are the blocks and which parts are the streets. On the map, draw several apartment buildings. Ask, “How will we know what type of buildings these are?” Explain the map key – it helps unlock the map. Choose one color to outline the buildings, fill in one of the key boxes, and write “apartment building” next to it. Do the same for another type of building, and have students repeat the steps that follow.

5) Students return to their seats and design their own neighborhoods. Allow 20 minutes.

6) If the teacher chooses, have a class share. Ask students to describe what they did and to tell why they added certain types of buildings to their neighborhood.

Evaluation
• Did students’ maps contain varying types of buildings, reflecting an understanding of the components of a neighborhood?
Neighborhood Explorers
Lesson 2: Neighborhood Walk

Goal
For students to discover their neighborhood and the types of buildings that are in it. A neighborhood walk and tally activity allows students to see the variety of buildings in the blocks surrounding their school.

Materials
• Walking Tour Worksheet, 1 per student
• Clipboards, 1 per student
• Pencils, 1 per student

Space
Classroom meeting area and the immediate surrounding blocks

Procedure
1) Hand out worksheets to students in the classroom prior to leaving for the walk. Explain that they are going to go on a walk around the block, and they are going to record what they observe in the neighborhood.

2) Students will use tallies to count different types of buildings and stores. Make sure that they know about tallies and ask one student to explain how you count with tally marks. Point out to students that they should place their tally marks in the blank rows next to the numbered items on the worksheet, NOT in the “Total” column. At the end of the walk, students are going to count their tallies and put the totals in the “Total” column.

3) Have students read down the list on the worksheet and make sure they know what each item is. Briefly go over the clues that we will look for to determine the different types of buildings (signs, looking in windows, etc.) When out walking, help to point out architectural details that make the buildings and places unique and identifiable (building materials, ornaments like columns or sculpture, types of doors on buildings and stores – things that the students may wish to add to their buildings in lesson 3).

4) Line up and head outside. It’s best if students don’t record as they’re walking. Instead, have them hold their pencils and clipboards at their sides, walk to the first stop, and then record what they saw on that portion of the walk while they’re stopped. (Note: decide before you start walking whether the students will be surveying both sides of the street or just the side on which they are walking.)

5) Most likely, students will make different observations and, thus, will have different numbers of tallies. It is difficult to have students focused enough on a walking tour to have them all make the same tallies, and is best to simply point out things at the various tour stops.

6) When students return back to the classroom, have them count and total their tallies. Ask students what they saw the most of and least of. Ask them if there was anything they didn’t see that they expected to see.

7) Tell the class to keep looking around them because in the next session we will be making a neighborhood, and the more types of buildings we include, the better.

Evaluation
• Did students get a fairly accurate tally of buildings in the neighborhood?
• Did they observe things that they had not noticed before?
Neighborhood Explorers
Lesson 3: Building a Neighborhood

Goal
For students to draw on their own knowledge of and experience with buildings in the community to create a model. Each student will create one single building façade, which will come together as a streetscape when placed together.

Materials
• 30 sheets of 9x12” cardstock, different neutral colors
• Pre-cut windows and doors, different colors
• Extra scrap colored paper
• Student scissors, 1 pair per student
• Glue sticks, 1 per student
• Pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons
• Cereal boxes, milk cartons, etc., brought in by students (optional)

Space
Classroom Meeting Area/Classroom Tables

Procedure
1) Explain to the students that today, we will be constructing our own buildings. We’re going to create a neighborhood that has many different types of buildings. As a refresher, ask them to recall the different types of buildings that we saw on our neighborhood walk.

2) Show students the supplies they will be using: Cardstock, which will be the base of their building (they can leave it that size or cut it smaller), pre-cut windows and doors, etc., and drawing supplies. Still in the meeting area, create at least the beginning of a sample building. Ask students to think about what type of building they are going to make, and the clues they will add so that we know what it is – a sign or decoration. If students have difficulty choosing which building to create, make a list of choices and assign them to students.

3) Students go to their tables and begin working. Allow 30 minutes.

4) Optional: As a final step, students can tape or glue their facades to a small cereal/tissue box/milk carton. The buildings can then stand together as a neighborhood block.

5) Optional - Conclude with a discussion of, “Why is it important to protect our neighborhoods?” Every building is important – neighborhoods are made up of many different types of buildings, all of which support each other.

Evaluation
• How did students draw on their background knowledge and experiences from the neighborhood walk?
• Did the class create a variety of different buildings?

Keeping the Past for the Future: LANDMARK WEST! Please contact landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org for reproduction permission.