

HOUSES THEN AND NOW

Cynthia Stout
Educational Services Center
Jefferson County Public Schools, Golden

Sandra Stokely
Ellis Elementary School, Denver

OVERVIEW

Students will investigate the houses of early farmers in Colorado in terms of their materials, size, furnishings, and interior décor. They also will compare early farmers' houses with their own.

STANDARDS

- History Standard 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.
- History Standard 3: Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time.
- Geography Standard 2: Students know the physical and human characteristics of places and use this knowledge to define and study regions and their patterns of change.
- Geography Standard 6: Students apply knowledge of people, places, and environments to understand the past and present and plan for the future.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Identify differences in building materials between early settlers' houses and houses today.
- Identify differences in size of houses then and now.
- Identify differences in furnishings, interior finish and decor of early settlers' houses and houses today.
- Express values and opinions about the importance of historic preservation.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What kinds of materials did early settlers in Colorado use to build their houses?
- What size were the houses of early settlers?

Doing History/Keeping the Past Project
Inquiry Activities

- How did early settlers furnish and decorate the interior of their houses?
- How do early settlers' houses differ in these respects from our houses today?

PROCEDURE

A. House Materials, Size, and Interiors

1. CD-ROM/Internet Use: The following photos for the Farming/Ranching topic will be used by the whole class and by small groups of students:
 - The photos of houses in the Shelters sequence
 - The photos in the Interiors sequence
2. Show the students the above photos on a multimedia projector or as transparencies on an overhead.
3. Discuss the building materials, size, or interiors for the house in each photo.
4. Hold a whole-class discussion or brainstorm about the differences between the houses of early settlers and ours today.
5. Divide students into small groups to decide why these differences exist. Make one or more copies of the CD-ROM disk available in the classroom to allow students to inspect the photos close-up.
6. Have the small groups report back for a whole-class discussion of the reasons.

B. Historic Preservation

1. As a continuation of the above activity, introduce students to examples of early houses available in your own locality. For example, the metro-Denver area includes the sod house at the plains Conservation Center (a reconstruction), log and frame houses at the Littleton Museum farm, and the road station/farm house at Four Mile House Park. Use photos and brochures, if available.
2. Brainstorm reasons why these places have value in today's society (archaeological, historical, civic responsibility and pride, economic benefits or reusing structures, tourism).
3. Plan a field trip to one or more of the sites listed above to let students experience a part of their heritage first-hand.