

Adopt A Building Activity

Christopher Imhof
Montessori School of Denver

OVERVIEW

Using primary and secondary sources, students will learn about local history and the methods to preserve the past.

STANDARDS

- History Standard 2.2: Students know how to interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources of information.
- Reading and Writing Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will expand their knowledge of local history by "adopting a building" in their community.
- Students will photograph, and or sketch the building, learning about the architectural aspects of their building.
- Understand the history of their building by conducting interviews with long-time residents, employees or owners.
- Research the functional history of the building with old directories, maps, and possibly old photographs at the library or local historical society.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What year was the building constructed?
- Who built the building? Who was the architect?
- What materials were used to build it?
- What is the style of architecture?
- What was the building used for?
- Who lived in the building?
- How has the building changed over the years?

PROCEDURE

1. Take a walk or drive through your neighborhood or town with class. Look carefully at the oldest buildings in the area. Choose one as a class or have a group choose a structure they find interesting. This will be the

building (s) that you will adopt. See entries on the CD which relate to descriptions of houses that match what students observed. Examine buildings on the CD-ROM or Project web site which look similar to those the students adopted.

2. Take photographs of the building (s) from different angles, or try to sketch the building. Point out to students the architectural features of the building. Have students take close-up photos of these, or detailed drawings. These might be the stairs or railing, cornerstone, foundation, brick pattern, window frame, door style.
3. Students will then endeavor to learn everything they can about the history of their building by using the library, and/or local historical society, and interviewing long-time residents, employees, or owners of the building. Interview questions can originate from inquiry questions, but more questions should develop with in-class discussions. Questions and answers should be written in a notebook.

In the process of researching the history of their building, students may be lucky to uncover old photographs of their building, or their building on an old map, newspaper, old phone book or directory. If possible, copies of these should be made.

4. Have students put all their research together: arrange photographs, sketches and other information into a scrapbook or poster board.
5. Presentation Ideas:

Ask the students to address one of the main inquiry questions.

Introduce preservation methods and have students explain why their building should be preserved.