

Preserve Main Street Activity

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Overview:

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

Standards:

- 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.
- History Standard 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.
- History Standard 4: Students understand how science, technology, and economic activity have developed, changed, and affected societies throughout history.
- Reading and Writing Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Objectives:

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Expand their knowledge of local history by learning about the function of "Main Street" or the main street in their community, past and present.
- Photograph and/or sketch the store fronts of main street, learning about the architectural aspects of their building.
- Understand the economic history of the buildings past and present by conducting interviews with long-time residents, employees or owners.
- Research the history of the buildings with old directories, maps, newspaper advertisements and possibly old photographs at the library or local historical society.

Inquiry Questions:

- Where is Main Street?
- Who built the buildings? Who were the architects?

- What is the style of architecture?
- What are the buildings used for now? How were they used in the past?
- How has the building changed over the years?
- How would you describe the location?
- What is the difference between Main Street and a downtown area, or a mall?
- Are the oldest buildings in the area located on Main Street?

Procedure:

1. On a map in the classroom or on a walk or drive in your neighborhood or town with class try to find Main Street. If old maps exist try to identify a "main" street in the past. Students can find examples of Main Street photographs on the CD, or entries discussing a Main Street-like area. Discuss the hallmarks or features of a Main Street. Compare/contrast.
2. Take photographs of the buildings on Main Street. Students should learn everything they can about the function of the buildings along Main Street for the present. Utilize signs, library, newspapers, advertisements, Business directories, Business record, maps, and interviews. All information should be kept in a notebook.
3. In the process students may also learn the past history of buildings along Main Street as well. Students may be lucky to uncover old photographs. Analyze the photographs (refer to "Reading Photographs").
4. Discuss why photographs have changed or stayed the same. Examine the research material and how businesses have changed, and how other local business or malls may have influenced changes on Main Street.
5. Have students put all their research together: arrange photographs, information into a poster board or scrapbook.
6. Presentation ideas:

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

Introduce preservation methods, and have students explain why Main Street should be preserved.

Doing History/Keeping the Past
Lessons Plans

Create a "Then and Now" poster which can be displayed in stores on Main Street.

Create a timeline of the evolution of Main Street buildings or businesses.

April 24, 2003

This activity was developed with funding from the State Historical Fund.