



Communityscape: Our Built Environment Page 1 of 3

45 Minutes

Description

In this lesson, students explore the built environment and its role in their lives. They identify the types of buildings in their community and work together to create a “communityscape,” a visual project showing their knowledge of the buildings in their community.

Objectives

- Students will define and use this vocabulary term: architect.
- Students will identify the types of buildings they see daily as part of their built environment.
- Students will create a visual representation of their built environment.
- Students will discuss the importance of making their community more sustainable.

Materials

- Vocabulary Card: Architect
- large roll of white art paper
- non-toxic black permanent markers (one per student)

Background

There are many types of buildings around us, and they all have different functions. Some are meant to be places of learning, such as schools. Others are places where we buy things, like stores. Architects design buildings based function, as well as location, climate, and other factors. Having students observe and become aware of their community is a first step in helping them understand why sustainability is important in their own daily lives.

Advance Preparation

Cut paper from the large roll into several different sizes as follows: ten sheets each of 3x5-inch, 3x8-inch, 4x10-inch, and 6x6-inch, and five sheets each of 6x12-inch and 4x15-inch. Be prepared to cut custom sizes during the lesson as students find necessary. While the lesson does not formally teach scale and proportion, it is important for students to be aware that there are different sizes of buildings in their built environment.



Communityscape: Our Built Environment Page 2 of 3

45 Minutes

Do Now

Hold up the vocabulary card. State the word, and have students repeat it. Ask students if they have heard it before, and what they think it means. Encourage students to brainstorm their own ideas. Reveal the definition on the vocabulary card. Consider posting to a Word Wall for students as reference.

Mini-Lesson

1. Have students generate a list of the types of buildings they see each day in their community. Help facilitate the discussion by asking the following questions:
 - What is the biggest building you have seen?
 - What is the smallest building you have seen?
 - What types of buildings do you see every day?
 - What purposes do these buildings serve?
2. Record student responses on the board or on a piece of chart paper. Make sure the list is easily visible and accessible to the students.
3. Tell students that they will think about the buildings they see every day by creating a “communityscape” as a class. Explain to students that a communityscape is a visual representation of what they see and know about the buildings in their community.

Activity:

1. Tell students that each of them will draw one of the buildings they see in their community. Show students the different sizes of paper and ask the following questions:
 - Why do you think there are different sizes of paper?
 - If you want to draw a skyscraper, which paper would you choose?
 - If you want to draw a house, which size would you choose?
2. Explain to students that they may choose what type of building to draw, and their drawing must fill their entire paper. If necessary, you can cut custom sizes for them.
3. Place the different sizes of paper on the table and allow the students to choose their size based on the building they want to draw. Help students with their sense of scale by pointing out that a stadium, for example, is not the same size as a house, and should have a much larger paper for the communityscape.



Communityscape: Our Built Environment Page 3 of 3

45 Minutes

4. Give each student a black marker and monitor students as they complete their drawings. When completed, have students cut out their drawings.
5. Cut a long sheet from the paper roll and post on the classroom wall or floor. Have students gather around the long sheet with their drawn buildings. Working together as a class, arrange the buildings on the long sheet to create their communityscape. Have students secure their buildings with glue or glue sticks.

Assessment

Facilitate a class discussion about the communityscape. Ask the following questions:

- What do all of these buildings have in common?
- In what ways are they different?
- Are there other buildings we should add to the communityscape?
- Based on the communityscape, what are three adjectives you would use to describe the community in which you live?
- Why do you think it is important to protect and preserve your community?

Homework

Invite students to pay special attention on their way home from school to find a building they do not remember seeing before. Have students draw that building and add it to the communityscape. (Note: As students increase their awareness of the built environment, the communityscape can be expanded over time.)