

Grade Level **3-8**

Class Periods **2**

Goals/Objectives/Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Learn about the types of shelter that people have constructed to protect themselves, their possessions, and their activities.
- Understand the choices involved in the construction of such buildings.
- Learn about the effects of climate, topography, and architectural style on types of building materials and housing costs.
- Learn about the changing functions of buildings and rooms within buildings.

Materials:

1. Newspapers with real estate advertisements.
2. Photographs of many kinds of buildings.
3. History books showing buildings from earlier times in our history.
4. Yellow pages in a telephone book showing the different kinds of companies, suppliers, and craft workers needed to construct a building.
5. Floor plans and architectural drawings of buildings.
6. Time to tour your town to see the buildings.
7. List of buildings in your state that are on the National Register of Historic Places.
8. Magazines that show buildings from other places.
9. Tour maps to historic and interesting buildings.

Background:

All people share a need for safe shelter. Of course housing becomes more crucial when the weather becomes more extreme. As earlier people gained more resources and time, types of shelter became more complex. Complexity also increased in specific architectural elements, including size, shape, internal arrangements of space and rooms, development of specialty rooms, and addition of color, detail, and ornamentation. Different choices of designs, materials, and

styles provided wide variation in the appearance and uses of buildings. New skills were developed to care for buildings constructed of stone, brick, wood, and other materials.

Certain styles became popular and then waned. Occasionally the primary use for buildings—shelter from the weather—almost disappeared, and builders constructed impractical designs. Decoration and ornamentation sometimes can identify the era of construction and the builder's ethnic origin. Whether found locally or imported, building materials were manufactured and used in increasingly imaginative new ways. The story of how humans have provided shelter is one of the ways by which we can understand our history.

Procedure:

This thematic lesson plan is intended to introduce this particular topic to students. The activities are intended to introduce students to the process of inquiry that can be applied to the study Iowa history. In many cases the same activities can be used to explore the topic in a variety of Iowa history time periods. This lesson plan can also be used in conjunction with other topical areas in this curriculum.

These thematic lesson plans underscore basic skills such as reading, writing, communicating orally, and collecting reference sources. Many of the activities will give students practice in using higher skills as in reading, writing, communicating orally, collecting reference sources and using a library; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; using charts and timelines; and developing vocabulary. The teacher can introduce higher level skills through these activities such as collecting information from a variety of sources through observation and questioning; compiling, organizing, and evaluating information; comparing and contrasting; drawing conclusions or inferences from evidence; considering alternative conclusions; making generalizations; recognizing points of view; understanding how things happen and how things change; recognizing how values and traditions influence history and the present; grasping the complexities of cause and effect; developing a chronological sense; and understanding events in context.

Activities:

1. Draw a picture of the building in which you live.
2. Draw a picture of your favorite room in the building where you live.

3. List all of the rooms in the building in which you live.
4. Compare the kinds of materials used to construct buildings today with those used at other times during the past 150 years.
5. Discuss why the buildings in your region have certain shapes and sizes. Would building shapes and sizes be different if you lived somewhere else?
6. Compare how rooms were used at earlier times with how rooms are used today.
7. Look at the want ads for real estate in a local newspaper and notice the variety of buildings for sale and their prices.
8. Discuss the specialized occupations necessary to construct a building, finish it, and furnish it.
9. Discuss whether a building would be different if you had to construct it yourself rather than hire someone to build it for you.
10. What buildings do we have today that would have been unknown 150 years ago? What buildings were known 150 years ago that we do not have today? Why?
11. List the tools, machines, and equipment necessary to construct a building. How do homes differ from business buildings?
12. List all of the specialized buildings that are constructed to contain only one function, activity, or role.
13. Discuss why we have so many rooms in our houses and what activities take place in each room. Why do we call the rooms in our houses the names we do?
14. Discuss the work of architects and how they influence what buildings look like.
15. Take a trip through your town and identify as many different styles, materials, colors, and functions of buildings as you can.
16. Visit a historic building and list the differences between it and a building constructed more recently.
17. Discuss the use of ornamentation and decoration on the outside and inside of a building.

Resources:

Contact the Iowa History Resource Center at the State Historical Society of Iowa for a list of books, videos, organizations and ideas for studying Iowa history. Write to: Education Coordinator, State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

Assessment of Outcomes:

1. List as many different kinds of buildings in your town as you can.
2. Draw a map that shows where to find these different kinds of buildings.
3. Draw a picture of a building that you would like to live in.
4. List everything needed to construct a building.

Extensions and Adaptations:

Most of the activities listed under procedures can be easily adapted to meet the learning needs of most students at various ages. Many of the listed activities can be used as art, music, writing, math, or science projects. Be sure to draw on teachers within your school and resource people in your community. The folklife section of this curriculum provides a list of community resource ideas.