

DISCOVERING DETAILS

Grade Level: 3 to 5

IN THIS LESSON

Students will explore the details of architectural ornamentation by comparing and contrasting antique and modern artifacts. They will then create their own shoebox interior design.

OBJECTIVES

- To learn about the design and function of architectural elements
- To develop visual acuity and improve visual literacy
- To develop creativity and artistic skills

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information.

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States, and other nations.

FINE ARTS

Goal 26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

SUGGESTED ARTIFACTS

Architectural elements should span a range of time and materials so students can compare and contrast:

- Doorknobs
- Hinges
- Locks/keys
- Brackets
- House numbers
- Mailboxes
- Plumbing fixtures
- Finials

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- Shoeboxes
- Art supplies
- Architecture/interior design magazines

This lesson is part of the History Connections & Artifact Collections project, made possible by a generous grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation.

This lesson was developed and written by Aspasia DeMeros.

DISCOVERING DETAILS

ACTIVITY

DAY 1

1. Distribute artifacts in contrasting pairs to each student: for example, an antique hinge and a modern hinge.
2. Have students make a Venn diagram comparing/contrasting their artifacts. What are the differences in material, design, detail, function, beauty, and quality?
3. Have each student present their artifacts and Venn diagram to the class.
4. As a home connection, have students find an example of the same architectural element in their own home (e.g. a hinge) and draw a picture of it.

DAY 2

1. Give students a shoebox and have them decorate it with clippings from architectural or design magazines, fabric and wallpaper scraps, and other art supplies.
2. Display for the class or the entire school.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Go on an architectural “expedition” to do rubbings of building details and materials at your school. Create labels for the drawings and display them as a “mini-museum” exhibition.

DISCOVERING DETAILS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For a general introduction to architecture, see *Architects Make Zigzags: Looking at Architecture from A to Z* by Diane Maddex and Roxie Munro (Preservation Press).

The following resources offer information about architecture in Chicago:

Chicago Then and Now by Elizabeth McNulty

Chicago Visitor's Map and Guide by Irving Weisdorf & Company

Eyewitness Travel Guide to Chicago by DK Travel Writers

Chicago's 50 Best Places to Take Children by City and Company

VanDam Street Smart Chicago (map)