

City by Design

This lesson was created as a supplement to the *City by Design* program at the National Building Museum. It is designed to be used in your classroom independently, or as an activity before or after a school program at the Museum. For more information about and to register for the National Building Museum's school programs, visit <http://www.nbm.org/schools-educators/school-visit/>.

The *City by Design* program introduces kindergarten through sixth grade students to city planning. It encourages young people to explore the complexity of cities and helps them understand the impact of people's everyday decisions on the places where they live, work, and play.

National Building Museum

Created by an act of Congress in 1980, the National Building Museum explores, celebrates, and illuminates achievements in architecture, design, engineering, construction, and planning. Since opening its doors in 1985, the Museum has become a vital forum for exchanging ideas and information about such topical issues as managing suburban growth, designing and building sustainable communities, and revitalizing urban centers. A private, nonprofit institution, the Museum creates and presents engaging exhibitions and education programs, including innovative curricula for school children.

Over the past two decades, the Museum has created and refined an extensive array of youth programming. Each year, approximately 50,000 young people and their families participate in hands-on learning experiences at the Museum: 2-hour-long school programs for grades K–9; major daylong festivals; drop-in family workshops; programs helping Cub and Girl Scouts earn activity badges; and three innovative outreach programs, lasting between 30 and 60 hours, for secondary school students. The Museum's youth programming has won the Washington, D.C., Mayor's Arts Award for Outstanding Contributions to Arts Education and garnered recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts.



NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM
401 F Street, NW Washington, DC 20001
202.272.2448/www.NBM.org
Red Line Metro, Judiciary Square

Where You Live: Take a Closer Look



Treasuring Trees

Trees provide benefits that many communities value such as shade and beauty. Walk around your community and conduct an inventory of the trees by recording the number and type of trees (use a botany/tree book). Based on the number of tree stumps you see, how many trees are missing? Contact your local government to find out where trees are needed in your community. Then ask a local nursery if it will donate trees to plant in the neighborhood, or do a fund-raiser in your school to collect money for them. As a class, plant them.

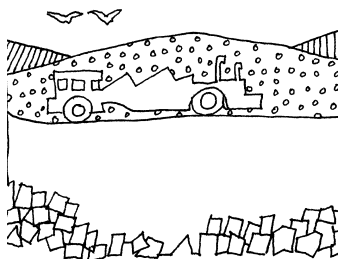
Resource: Casey Tree Endowment, www.caseytrees.org, neighborhood associations, and local departments of public works.



Locating Power, Water, and Waste

How is it possible that when we turn on the faucet, clean water comes out; that the lights turn on with a flip of a switch; and that streets are not full of trash? Local taxes help pay for a community's infrastructure—the services that help our cities work such as trash pick-up, power, recycling, and water. Try to imagine what happens beneath the streets to help your community operate. Walk around the block and locate manhole covers and meter boxes. How are they labeled? Water, sewer, telephone, other? Record how many you find in a given block. Are paper, plastic, and glass recycled at your school? Where do these things go? Visit a recycling plant and/or landfill to better understand how trash is discarded and recycled material is reused.

Resource: Local departments of public works.



Rebuild or Preserve?

What should be done with an old building? This is an issue faced daily by city planners, developers, and architects, as well as people interested in preservation. Students can identify a deteriorated old building in their community and find out about any plans for its future. Ask your class about the advantages and disadvantages of tearing down and replacing the building versus renovating the existing one for another purpose. What factors will influence the decision? For example, budget, the citizen's voice, taxes, safety, etc. Who should make the decision? What actions could the students take to influence the decision?

Resources: National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.nthp.org, and state and local preservation offices and organizations.



Making Meaningful Monuments

Monuments and memorials allow people to recognize, celebrate, and remember significant moments from the past and celebrate their community. Some memorials depict important figures and events in American history, while others celebrate ideals and values. Monuments are everywhere—on streets, plazas, parks, and gardens. Show the class images of monuments from around the United States. Have students try to explain what and how each one commemorates a significant event, person, or thing. Assign different events in history to students. Ask each group to design a monument representing that event. Or, create a monument for your community or school. What or who would it commemorate? Where would you place it?

Resource: Save Outdoor Sculpture!, www.heritagepreservation.org.

