

My House

Subjects: Social Studies, Reading, Writing

Suggested Grade Levels: 1–2

Time Frame: Variable

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Overview

Students will visit Philadelphia and learn about the early housing of the city. They will discuss how housing has changed and how their own homes compare to the early homes in Philadelphia.

Students will read *My House* by Arthur Dorros. They will investigate the different types of housing in which children live around the world and discuss possible reasons for variations and similarities in houses. (For instance: “Why is that house on stilts?” might lead us to investigate the geography of New Guinea.)

Students will write a descriptive piece about their own home and draw their house, apartment, room, condo, etc. Teacher can discuss with students what “home” means to them and if they have more than one “home” (ex. Mom’s house, Dad’s house, Grandma’s house), make sure they can incorporate those homes into the lesson.

Connection to Philadelphia World Heritage Tool Kit’s Goal

Students will investigate Philadelphia’s early housing and determine why this type of housing first made sense based on materials available, the space available and how it fit into the ‘plan’ for the city. They will then examine how their own homes fit into that early structure. What has endured? What has changed? Why?

Core Curriculum Standards

- 1.2.1.D: Make inferences and draw conclusions citing evidence from the text to support answers.
- 1.4.1.B: Write informational pieces using illustrations when relevant (e.g., descriptions, letters, instructions).

Objectives

Students will become more aware of how children live around the world and describe how housing around the world can be vastly different or very similar to their own. Most importantly, students will learn that culture, environment and necessity determine housing structure as much as available capital, and no one way of living is better than another.

Essential Question

Do children around the world live similar lives? What does housing say about a society? Consider environment, physical needs, and culture. How are societal values reflected in housing?

Materials Needed

Slides of early Philadelphia showing grid structure of the city and early housing, *My House* by Arthur Dorros, writing paper, drawing paper, pencils, crayons and colored pencils

Procedure

Day One: Look at slides of early Philadelphia and talk briefly about how the city was settled, the original grid plan and housing ideals, options and choices.

Day Two: Students take a field trip to Philadelphia to look at specific examples of early housing. Discuss own homes within this context. How have things changed? Are there any early influences in students' housing?

Day Three–Five: Partner read *This is My House* by Arthur Dorros. As a class, share big book of the book and discuss observations (new and from partner reading). How are the houses similar? How are they different? Why do you think they are different? Follow student inquiry and investigate areas raised—geography, climate, resources, culture, etc.

Day Six: Discuss students' housing. How similar? How different? What makes each special? What are favorite parts of his/her home? Each student makes a list of at least 10 things that describe her/his home, keeping in mind our earlier discussions and those things that are important/special to the student. Share lists with a partner and as a whole group.

Day Seven–Ten: Each student writes a descriptive piece about his/her home, using the compiled list to facilitate writing and to ensure details are included. Focus on the need to include details in descriptive writing. This writing will be for publication so there will be a student-teacher editing conference before the final copy is written.

Day Eleven–Twelve: Each student draws a picture of her/his home, trying to fill the paper and use details from their lists/writing. Students share their drawings and writing followed by a class discussion about what the students notice about our community's housing and that of children around the world.

Outcome/Assessment

Teacher can assess students' *My House* writing and drawing. Teacher can observe students' understanding through discussion.

Special Education and English Language Learners Accommodations

Lesson is planned for these differences, but should be adapted according to individual needs.

Additional Resources

Print:

The Skin You Live In, Michael Tyler ISBN-13: 978-0975958001

Hello World! Greetings in 42 Languages Around the Globe, Manya Stojic ISBN-13: 978-0439362023

Children Around the World, Donata Montanari ISBN-13: 978-1553376842

Children Just Like Me: A Unique Celebration of Children Around the World, Anabel Kindersley

ISBN-13: 978-0789402011

Same, Same But Different, Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw ISBN-13: 978-0805089462

A Life Like Mine: How Children Live Around the World, DK and UNICEF ISBN-13: 978-0756618032

National Geographic World Atlas, National Geographic ISBN-13: 978-1426213540