

Lesson Title: Understanding Our Community Through Photography¹

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will develop a deeper understanding of “their community” and the idea of community through photos.
- Students will take photos with disposable (or digital cameras) that document important spaces and places for them and in the community.
- Students will write short descriptions of their photos and place them on larger group map or poster-board of their community.

Curricular Connections: Social Studies (map community resources), Language Arts (write descriptions of photos and place), Art (photography, creating visual presentations)

Duration of Activity:	Can be a multi-week unit on community, requires minimum 3-4 fifty minute class periods for project set up and completion which includes 1-2 sixty to ninety minute “walking field trips” to take photos. This is a great activity to do before students start formal public achievement.
Supplies Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• poster-board• funds to purchase cameras / develop photos (can be donated)• disposable / digital cameras (enough for students to work in groups of 2-3)• markers / crayons• map of neighborhood• permission slips• adult volunteers are helpful, but not necessary
Age Range:	Any, but works well with 4-8 graders, students need to be able to use cameras responsibly.

Activity Day 1:

- A. Preview Project on Community (hand out permission slips)
- B. Discussion
 - a. What does community mean to you?
 - b. In what ways do we define community differently?
 - c. What makes their community unique?
- C. Writing Project: Describe your community (neighborhood, where you come from, where you live) without using proper nouns? (grades 5 and up)
- D. **Reflection**
 - a. What was the hardest thing to describe without proper nouns?
 - b. How did you think of their community differently by writing their descriptions?
 - c. How do you think of community differently by hearing other's descriptions?

Activity 2:

- A. Have students identify possible things to photograph:
 - a. I.e. places that define your community, i.e. fun places, places that young people feel safe, places that young people feel powerful, assets (positive things) of your community, places where there are problems, places where people gather, places where people play, places where you can meet people, magical places, scary places, defining places.
- B. Creation of map of community
 - a. students can create maps of their surrounding communities, labeling the places that they

¹ Developed by: Roudy Hildreth, based on work by John Gwinn, Santi Bromley

- are going to photograph
- b. teachers can provide maps for students
 - *For more on making maps see page 88 of <http://www.publicachievement.org/pdf/techtools/pac-itt.pdf>
 - **A good resources for street maps and directions are MapQuest
www.mapquest.com, Map Blast www.mapblast.com, Yahoo Maps <http://maps.yahoo.com>, Maps on Us www.mapsonus.com

Activity 3:

- A. Lesson on how to use cameras / Practice using cameras.

Activity 4:

- A. This may require volunteers
- B. Make “shot list” with map, though let students know that they may find other places to photograph as they walk.
- C. Discuss rules for walking the neighborhood and taking photos
- D. Have students work in small groups to take photographs. This can either be done as a class or in small groups sequentially.
- E. **Reflection**
 - a. What was it like to walk around your neighborhood with cameras?
 - b. Did people take that they did not plan on taking? Why these? What do they capture?
 - c. How did people see their community differently when they were taking photos?

Activity 5:

- A. Students sort photos, labeling each one and deciding which 1-3 are best.
- B. Each student or group of students can then place photos on map, or on poster-board defining community.
- C. For each photo they select, students will then need to write a paragraph describing the photo, why they took it, and what it represents in their community.
- D. Photos can then be placed on large map of community or poster board.
- E. **Reflection:**
 - a. What was it like to do a project that required many steps
 - b. Do you think about the finished product? Is this what you imagined it would be?
 - c. How do you think about your community differently as a result of this project

Optional Activity:

- A. Students can enlarge photos and hold a art exhibit (in school or community).
- B. In addition to putting photos and descriptions on walls, make sure to have an “art opening” inviting parents and community members (possibly those who students interacted with on their project). Students could then answer questions about their photos.

Reflection:

1. See above

Assessment:

1. Students' initial and final written work can assess students growing understanding of community
2. Student discussions represent depth of understanding.
3. Final product can be assessed in terms of presentation, information, clarity, etc.