

# Be a Building Detective!

## Learn more about your community's history

Learning from local and statewide historic places through social studies and visual arts



Students from Valley View Intermediate School explore the Old State House.



**ARKANSAS HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

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**An Agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage**

# Contents

Teaching “Be a Building Detective” .....	2
Grade Levels.....	3
Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks (Social Studies).....	3
Social Studies Grade 4.....	3
Social Studies Grade 7.....	3
Arkansas History Grades 7-8.....	3
Arkansas History Grades 9-12.....	3
Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks (Visual Arts).....	3
Visual Arts Grades K-8.....	3
Visual Arts Appreciation Grades 9-12.....	3
Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks (Family and Consumer Science).....	4
Lesson Objective .....	4
Material/Resources.....	4
Introduction/Focus .....	4
Instructional Strategies .....	4
Enrichment/Differentiation .....	5
Be a Building Detective! Worksheet .....	6
Guide to Researching Historic Buildings .....	10

## Teaching “Be a Building Detective”

## **Grade Levels**

Social Studies: 4, 7-8, 9-12

Visual Art: K-8, 9-12

Family and Consumer Science: 9-12

## **Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks (Social Studies)**

### **Social Studies Grade 4**

H.12.4.1 Create historical narratives using chronological sequences of related events in Arkansas and the United States (e.g., exploration).

### **Social Studies Grade 7**

WST.1.7.4 Analyze how environmental and cultural characteristics of places and regions have changed over time.

### **Arkansas History Grades 7-8**

H.7.AH.7-8.9 Examine social and cultural transformations in Arkansas (e.g., counterculture, drug culture, breakdown of the family, feminist movement, music, art, clothing).

H.7.AH.7-8.10 Research contributions made by Arkansans in the fields of art, medicine, politics, science, and technology in the 20th and 21st centuries. [Relevant if the buildings you examine were built after 1899].

### **Arkansas History Grades 9-12**

Era6.6.AH.9-12.2 Examine effects of social and cultural transformations on various segments of the population across Arkansas (e.g., counterculture, drug culture, breakdown of the family, feminist movement, music, art, clothing).

Era6.6.AR.9-12.5 Research contributions made by Arkansans in the fields of art, medicine, politics, science, and technology.

## **Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks (Visual Arts)**

### **Visual Arts Grades K-8**

CR.1.4.3 Investigate man-made environments (e.g., airports, parks, transportation systems, towns) as inspiration for works of art.

R.8.VAI.2, R.8.VAII.2, R.8.VAIII.2, R.8.VAIV.2 Describe varied subject matter, signs, symbols, icons, and/or ideas from a variety of perspectives: media, styles, techniques, history, culture, and aesthetics.

### **Visual Arts Appreciation Grades 9-12**

R.1.VAA.3 Identify art media, processes, and terminology: architecture (e.g., skyscraper, glass box, drafting, stadiums, minimalism, load bearing, arch, post and lintel, flying buttresses, keystone, dome, floor plan).

## **Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks (Family and Consumer Science)**

3.2.1 List and recognize the elements and principles of design as related to housing.

### **Lesson Objective**

Students will survey a local historic building and the man-made environment around the building to determine how it impacts their community and research how their community has changed over time.

### **Material/Resources**

One copy of the “Be a Building Detective! Worksheet” per student; One copy of the “Visual Survey Form” per student; Two blank sheets of paper per student; one pen or pencil per student.

### **Introduction/Focus**

Buildings identify a place. Their style, design, age, history, materials, sophistication, and relationship to each other and to the landscape of the area identify your city, town, rural area or urban neighborhood as one specific and special place—unlike any other.

This activity invites students to learn more about a historic building in their neighborhood or city. Most students travel around their town without thinking about the architecture and history of the houses and buildings they encounter. An in-depth study of a historic building should foster an appreciation of that building. Hopefully, this will lead to an interest in both local history and historic preservation.

Your students will “adopt” a historic structure—a building with which they would like to become better acquainted. The entire class could choose the same building and take a field trip (or walk) to visit it, or students could choose a building on their own and visit it as homework or for extra credit.

For a listing of properties in your area that are on the National Register of Historic Places, visit our website at [www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com). Click on the “Properties” tab, then click on National Register of Historic Places to search the database by county, town or property name. If there are no National Register-listed structures accessible to your students, have them choose a building that is at least 50 years old.

This lesson plan is more effective if the students have a basic understanding of architectural styles. AHPP’s Historic Architectural Styles lesson plan can be downloaded from the Education page of the website [www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com).

### **Instructional Strategies**

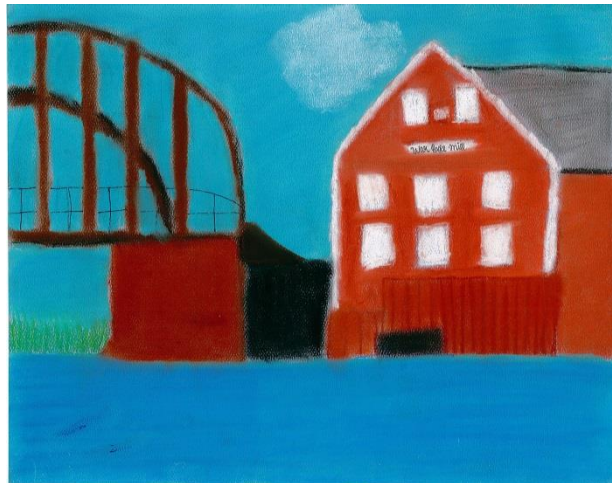
1. Decide which building(s) the students will visit. If a field trip to a historic district is not possible, students can visit buildings individually as homework or extra credit.

2. Contact the AHPP or visit our website at [www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com) to get a list of properties in your communities that are on the National Register of Historic Places.
3. You may want to divide the students into groups and have them visit all of the buildings on a historic street.
4. Determine whether or not students need to get permission from the buildings' owners before doing this activity.
5. Hand out copies of the Student Worksheet. Preview the worksheet with the students.
6. Give each student a Visual Survey form. Preview the Visual Survey form with the students.
7. At the site of the structure, have the students answer the Student Worksheet questions and fill out the Visual Survey form.
8. When the students return to class, let them discuss their findings.

## **Enrichment/Differentiation**

- Create a list of questions, and have the students interview senior citizens about their memories of your community's historic buildings and the community's past (see the AHPP lesson plan Preserving the Past with Oral History).
- Discuss the importance of preserving your community's historic buildings. What would your community lose if these historic buildings were destroyed?
- Invite an architect or builder to class to discuss his/her career.
- Invite a local historian or long-time resident to class to discuss the community's past.
- Create a bulletin board of the students' building sketches.
- Write a play about a typical day in your community 100 years ago, trying to imagine how different life was before cars, malls and suburbs.
- Create a mural of your town as it looked 100 years ago, learning about it by studying old maps and photos. See the Guide to Research Sources for research information.
- Take a walking tour of your community's historic downtown or a historic neighborhood. Invite a local historian or the AHPP to lead the tour.
- If there is an interesting historic building in your community that is not on the National Register of Historic Places, contact the AHPP to find out how your class can nominate that building for the National Register.
- The students may want to share their findings with the buildings' owners or your local city government.

- Visit the *Teaching with Historic Places* website at [www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/](http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/) to download lesson plans about historic sites around the country. The site also teaches you how to write lesson plans about historic places in your own community. The lesson plans are classroom-ready, and cover a wide variety of themes such as African American History, Science and Technology, Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, and Health and Medicine. Teaching with Historic Places is a program of the National Park Service.
- The non-profit organization CUBE, Center for Understanding the Built Environment, produces an excellent curriculum called *Box City*. *Box City* is a great way to teach students about architecture, city planning and community. For the culmination of the *Box City* unit, students use their new knowledge to build a city from boxes. The curriculum, which includes boxes, is reasonably priced. For more information, call CUBE at (913) 262-8222 or visit their website at [www.cubekc.org](http://www.cubekc.org).
- Visit the AHPP website's Youth Education page for more architecture education websites: [www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com).
- If your students draw or write essays about the property they have chosen for these activities and they are in the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades, have them enter their work in the Preserve Our Past Art & Essay Invitational run every year by the AHPP. You can find information and past winners at: [www.arkansaspreservation.com/Learn-More/preserve-our-past-contest](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/Learn-More/preserve-our-past-contest).



War Eagle Bridge and Mill, Everett Kirkman, 3rd Place,  
7th/8th Grade,  
Preserve Our Past Art & Essay Invitational 2013


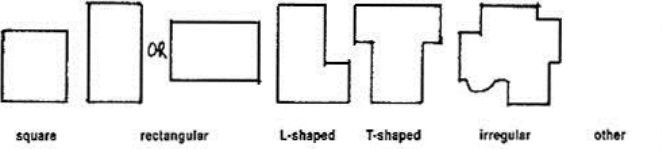
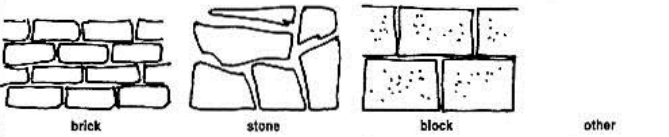
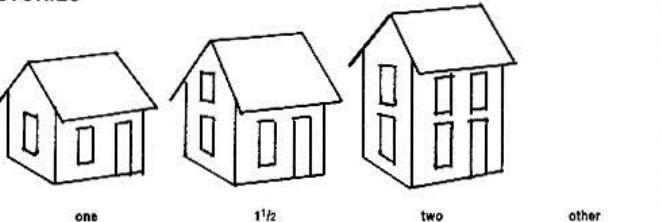
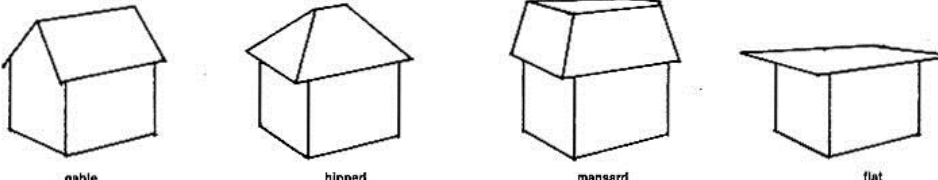
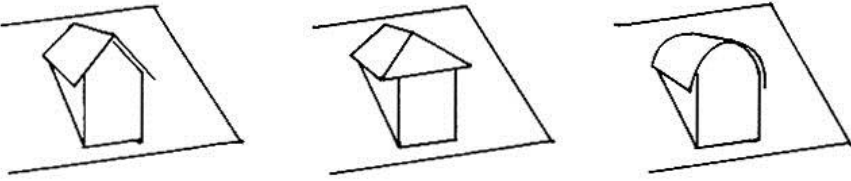
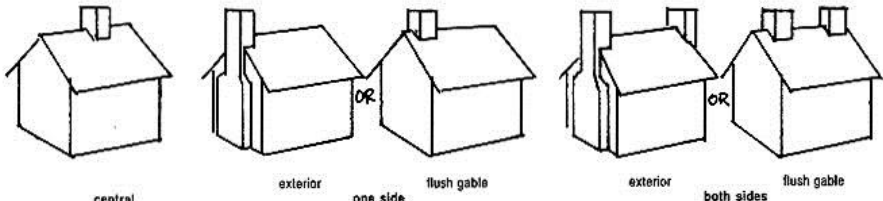
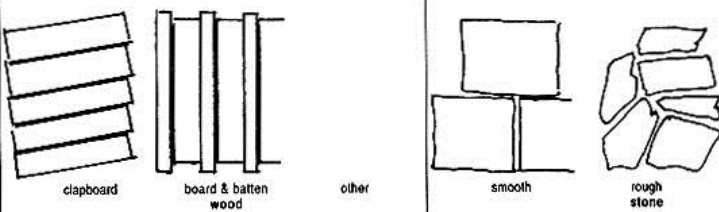
## Be a Building Detective! Worksheet

Buildings identify a place. Their style, design, age, history, materials and relationship to each other make your community a special place, unlike any other in the world! Begin your adventures in architecture by learning more about a historic building in your neighborhood or town.

**Use a separate piece of paper to answer the questions below.**

1. What is the name and address of the building?
2. With what materials is the building constructed?
3. What does the building feel like to the touch? What is the texture of the building?
4. Do you see any patterns or shapes repeated on the building? For example, spirals, circles, arches, curved lines, straight lines?
5. What adjectives would you use to describe the building's "personality" (fun, serious, scary, etc)?
6. If you are able to visit the inside of the building, describe the building's interior.
7. What makes this building different from or similar to other buildings in the neighborhood?
8. You may skip this question if you have not studied architectural styles: Can you identify the architectural style of this building? What clues help you determine the style?
9. Look at the area around the building.
  - a. What man-made objects do you see? Look for things such buildings, roads and train tracks.
  - b. What naturally occurring features do you see? Look for things such as trees, hills and water.
10. Do your observations from Question 9 give you any clues as to what this area was like in the past?
11. What do you think the future holds for this building?
12. How would the loss of this building affect the neighborhood and community?
13. On a blank sheet of paper, draw a sketch of your building.

# Visual Survey Form

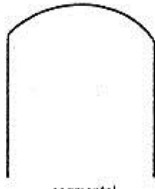
<p><b>LOCATION</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">urban                      suburban                      rural</p>	<p><b>LANDSCAPING:</b> sketch or describe the main features (fences, trees, bushes, etc.)</p>
<p><b>FORM</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">square                      rectangular                      L-shaped                      T-shaped                      irregular                      other</p>	<p><b>FOUNDATION</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">brick                      stone                      block                      other</p>
<p><b>STORIES</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">one                      1 1/2                      two                      other</p>	
<p><b>ROOF SHAPE</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">gable                      hipped                      mansard                      flat                      other</p>	
<p><b>DORMER WINDOW</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">gable                      hipped                      arched                      other</p> <p style="text-align: right;">none</p>	
<p><b>CHIMNEY</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">central                      exterior                      one side                      flush gable                      exterior                      both sides                      flush gable                      other</p>	<p><b>CHIMNEY MATERIAL:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">none</p> <p style="text-align: center;">brick</p> <p style="text-align: center;">stone</p> <p style="text-align: center;">other</p>
<p><b>WALL MATERIAL</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">(sketch the pattern) brick                      clapboard                      board &amp; batten wood                      other                      smooth                      rough stone                      other                      other material</p>	



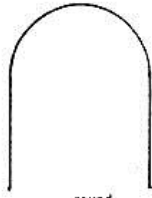
WINDOW OPENINGS



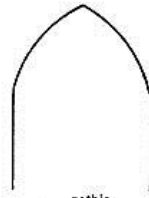
flat



segmental



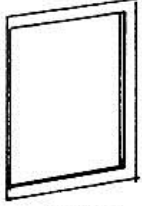
round



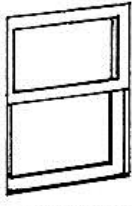
gothic

other

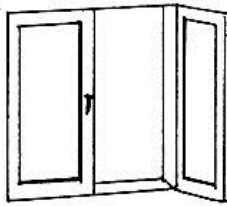
MAIN WINDOW DIVISION



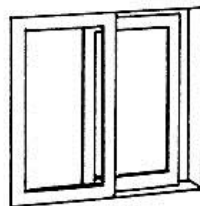
fixed sash



doublehung sash



casement



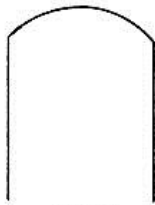
horizontal

other

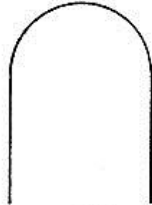
DOOR OPENINGS



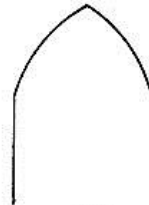
flat



segmental



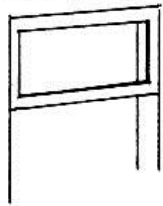
round



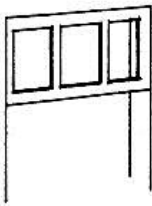
gothic

other

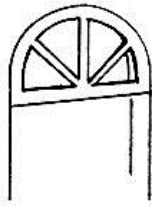
DOOR TRANSOM/SIDELIGHTS



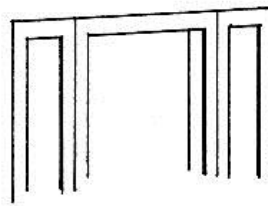
one light



multilights



fanlight



sidelights

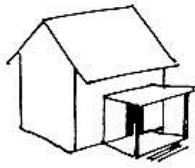
none

other

PORCHES



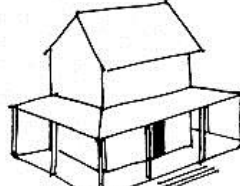
stoop



portico



verandah

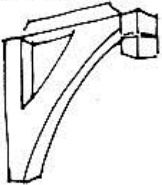


wraparound

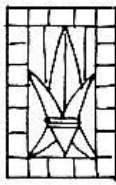
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other

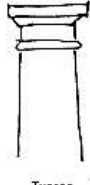
DECORATIONS



brackets



stained glass



Tuscan



Doric



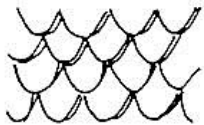
columns



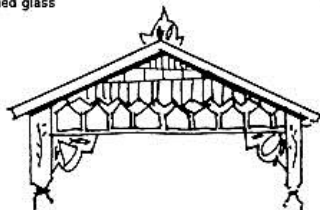
Ionic



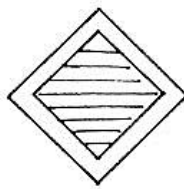
Corinthian



fishscale shingles



gingerbread



vent

others

# Guide to Researching Historic Buildings

## Source Type

## Where to Get the Source

## Information Type

Sanborn Maps	Arkansas State Library, or any local library	Shows locations and uses of buildings in the past, from the 1880s through the 1940s.
Community/County Histories	Local libraries Local historical societies	Information about people, events, places, celebrations, photographs, etc.
Genealogical Records	Local libraries and Ancestry.com	Family stories, biographies, photographs, census records, military records, etc.
Newspapers/Sunday Supplements	Local and regional libraries State archives	Advertisements, news stories, photographs.
Estate records (wills, appraisals, etc.)	County Courthouse Local historical societies	Property value, property changes, family relationships.
Church records	Parish offices	Biographical details of people associated with a particular property.
The AHPP National Register Listing database (Properties in Arkansas listed on the National Register of Historic Places)	<a href="http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/Historic-Properties/National-Register/national-register-of-historic-places">www.arkansaspreservation.com/Historic-Properties/National-Register/national-register-of-historic-places</a>	National Register nomination forms, which describes the property physically and offers a short history of the property.
The AHPP Arkansas Register Database	<a href="http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/Historic-Properties/arkansas-register-of-historic-places">http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/Historic-Properties/arkansas-register-of-historic-places</a> (Properties listed on the Arkansas Register of Historic Places are not eligible for listing on the National Register, but have local importance).	State nomination form with a description of the property and a short history.
Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture	<a href="http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/">http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/</a>	Some historic buildings in Arkansas have entries written about them in the encyclopedia.
Local Historic Society Journals	Local historical societies (google your county name and historical society for contact info) Local libraries You can also search contents of local journals at: <a href="http://arkindex.uark.edu/">arkindex.uark.edu/</a>	Local historical society journals offer articles about the history of specific counties and towns in Arkansas.
Local Historical Society Files	Local historical society archives (google your county name and historical society for contact info).	Many local historical societies in Arkansas keep records about the history of specific towns and counties in Arkansas.
Local History Museums	Google your county name and museum to find out if your county has a local history museum.	Many local museums house photographs, artifacts and other items that might help with research about historic properties.