

## Lesson Plan III: How Do I Read a Building?

Date(s):	Materials:

### Learning Objectives:

Understand the history of buildings and place through literacy skills to support cognitively-complex levels of thinking, *i.e.*, “How to Read Old Buildings.”

- Understand that the history of old buildings can be understood as a story that consists of characters, events, actions, cause and effect relationships, and outcomes that all interact and influence each other.
- Understand that like a story, a building’s history can extend past a finite ending and that present people and events are constantly shaping that history.
- Understand how higher-order historical thinking and literacy skills can be applied in order to interpret past events and issues.
- Understand that historical perspectives can vary widely amongst people with different ideas about cause and effect.
- Understand how to develop a building’s story in line with the norms and values of a time period.
- Understand the interpretation of timelines in developing a story.
- Understand how a building's story is impacted by individual and group decisions based on a range of factors, including economic needs and wants, events influencing the U.S. economic system, state and local economic activity, and the types of work local community members participate in over time.
- Understand the effects of geographic factors on a building’s story, including available construction materials, landforms, land and water exploration, seasons, climate, weather, environmental change and crises affect social and economic development.
- Understand the role of innovation on the development of historic buildings and places as influenced by cultural, scientific, and technological decisions of societies that change the way technology is used and the way people think about technological developments over time.

### Sequence of Instruction:

\_\_\_\_ Activity: Have two students volunteer to record the class discussion. The first student will act as the historian, the other the storyteller.

- Have the class choose a familiar, old, local building, one to which they have taken a field trip or the building you are located in, your school.
- Have the volunteer historian write down everything the class knows about that building based on clue questions presented in the Research Guide: facts, dates, people, developments, events, disasters, etc.
- Have the volunteer storyteller plot out the building’s story using the brainstorming chart at the end of the Research Guide. Encourage the student volunteer to use

visual markers.

\_\_\_\_\_ Discuss: Talk about the activity. Consider asking students the following questions:

- Did you find turning a building's history into a story more challenging than expected or easier? Why?
- Can you think of other ways building history might be like a story?
- What's the next building you want to write a story on?

\_\_\_\_\_ Homework: Have students read Scott Reynolds Nelson and Marc Aronson's *Ain't Nothin' But a Man: My Quest to Find the Real John Henry*, *National Geographic*, 2007. Have a follow-up activity in class the next day in which you either (1) discuss the similarities and differences between researching historical people and buildings, or (2) have students think metacognitively about their own research narrative by asking them to write about their own historical investigation experiences—ones conducted previously in class or outside.

**Teacher's Notes:**

