

# Changes Over Time

What is changing or staying the same outside our windows?

## Theme

This lesson explores how our neighborhoods change over time. Using one of the children's books recommended in the Resources list, students will use ideas gathered from their own classroom windows to view these architectural and seasonal changes over time.

## Student Objectives

- describe what is changing and what is staying the same outside a window
- name three things that changed in the story read to the class
- demonstrate an understanding of change over time by drawing the view from school and home windows

## Activities

draw and record the view outside the classroom windows

## Type

indoor, desktop activities

## Timeframe

two class sessions of 20 minutes each

## Materials

- a children's story concerned with a place that changes over time (*recommendations appear in Resources list*)
- **Handout A** - blank window frame
- toilet paper tubes or similar objects (*one or two per student*)
- crayons

## Teacher Prep

- photocopy **Handout A** (*one per student*)
- gather one of the children's stories from the Resources list



## Vocabulary

**change** a difference from one time to the next

**past, present, and future** time gone by, time now, and time to come

**seasons** (spring, summer, autumn, winter)

**window head** the top of the window

**window sill** the bottom of the window

**window frame** the metal or wooden frame around the window

**window pane** the glass inside the window frame

**muntins** the thin metal or wooden pieces that divide window panes

## Discussion Points

- Talk about the windows in your classroom. What can you see when you look out your classroom windows?
- What kinds of changes can students recall seeing that day, that week, or during the school year? (possibilities include seasons, weather, demolition, construction in progress, etc.)
- Compare a window's frame with a frame around a picture.

## Interdisciplinary Connection

### Social Sciences

Have students bring one of their baby pictures to class. Post these photographs and talk about how the students have changed over time.



## Resources

**Window**, Jeannie Baker.

New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991.  
The inspiration for this lesson.

**The Backyard**, John Collier. New York: Viking, 1993. A young boy fantasizes about the exciting history his backyard has seen.

**The House on Maple Street**, Bonnie Pryor, Beth Peck, illust. New York: W. Morrow, 1987. Two young girls imagine how the area around their home has changed over the last 300 years.

**Island Boy**, Barbara Cooney. New York: Viking Kestrel, 1988. A little boy grows and watches his beloved quiet island homeland change into a busy vacation spot for tourists. He and his family attempt to preserve their traditions and respect the past.

**The Little House**, Virginia Lee Burton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, [1942] 1988. A Caldecott winner from 1943 shows a little house in the country watching the years go by, as the city grows closer.

**New Providence, A Changing Cityscape**, Renata von Tscharnier and Ronald Lee Fleming. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987. A picture book showing how one town square has changed since 1910.

**Prairie Town**, Bonnie Geisert and Arthur Geisert. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998. Illustrations show how one prairie town changes with the seasons. (Also by the same authors: *River Town*; *Desert Town*; and *Mountain Town*)

**When I Was Built**, Jennifer Thermes. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2001. An 18<sup>th</sup> Century house talks about all the changes it has seen and compares past and present lives of two families that called the house home.

## Background Information for Teacher

All the books listed in Resources have to do with an architectural landscape that changes over time. In some stories, the people change along with their surroundings.

The inspiration for this lesson was Jeannie Baker's book, *Window*. (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991.) It is a wordless book telling the story of a little boy growing up while the landscape and the view out his window also changes.

If possible, revisit Day Two of this activity two or three times during the school year. Compile the class drawings into a book and label it with the date and time of year. The books will provide a record of changes seen through the same window view.

## Activity Procedures

### DAY ONE

**1** Read the class one of the books listed in Resources. Talk about the changes that occurred in the landscape and the buildings. List some of these changes on the board as the students identify three things that changed in the story and three things that remained the same. Make the connection between the people in the story growing and changing and the neighborhood growing and changing. Have students retell the story in their own words.

### DAY TWO

**2** Give each student a toilet paper tube (or two tubes taped together) to focus their attention on specific objects outside the windows. Discuss what they can see outside the classroom windows. (If possible, use a window that does not have many muntins so that students do not have to distinguish the view beyond the window from the window components.)

**3** Give each student a copy of **Handout A**. Have them draw what they have viewed through the window. While students are finishing their drawings, have them dictate a few sentences to you to write on the frame around their window's view.

**4** Post the finished drawings around the classroom windows. Make predictions about which objects in their window drawings might stay similar over time and which objects might change or be temporary. (Example: a particular tree vs. a car parked on the street). In the weeks or months to come, point out the differences between what they drew and what now appears in the view out the window.

## Extensions

- Either photocopy the window frame template of **Handout A** onto heavy paper or draw a rectangle on old file folders. Have students cut out the center and use the frame at home as a viewer to look at small sections of the world.
- For a home project, send home another copy of **Handout A** and have students draw what they see from their bedroom window. When their drawings are brought back to class, talk about the similarities and differences.
- Talk about the different kinds of windows in your school or homes. Do the windows open and close? How? Why? What is the shape of the windows? Why do buildings have windows?



## Illinois Learning Standards and Benchmarks

**1B** Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.

**1.B.1a** Establish purposes of reading, make predictions, connect important ideas, and link text to previous experiences and knowledge.

**1.B.1c** Continuously check and clarify for understanding (e.g., reread, read ahead, use visual and context clues, ask questions, retell, use meaningful substitutions).

**1C** Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

**1.C.1d** Summarize content of reading material using text organization (e.g., story, sequence.)

**16A** Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.

**16.A.1a** Explain the difference between past, present, and future time; place themselves in time.

**16E** Understand Illinois, United States and world environmental history.

**16.E.1 (US)** Describe how the local environment has changed over time.

# Handout A

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