



Lesson 1: Buildings in the Neighbourhood

This lesson explores the range of building types found in the community.

Support material: Worksheet B1, Information Sheet 1 “Scrapbook Instructions”, Information Sheet 5 “Irish Houses”. Worksheet A4 may also be useful.



Spotlight

Looking at my neighbourhood



Key Concepts

Building types and categories. Ordinary and special buildings.



Activity 1– Sensory “walk”

Describe each of the following situations to the students, telling them to rely on their senses and their powers of recall and observation. After they have had sufficient time to think and visualise, they quickly record their “observations” in their sketch pads.

1. Close your eyes. Imagine you are at home and walking towards the front door. Open the door and step outside. Look left, right and straight ahead. What do you hear/smell/see? How do you feel? Record this information.
2. Now move away from your house/flat/apartment. Walk down the path/driveway. Look all around you. What do you hear/smell/see? What kinds of buildings can you see? Record this information.
3. You want to buy an ice cream or rent a video. Think about where you would go to do this. As you walk down that street, what can you see? What kinds of building can you see? What do you smell/hear? Record your observations.

Review of work

Discuss the results of the students’ “observations”. Record their responses on the board.

- List the house **types** they “saw” — bungalows, flats, terraced, semi-detached, detached, farmhouses etc.
- List the range of other buildings **types** “seen”.
- Were there any types of buildings which they did not “see”? List them — library, hospital, church, cinema etc.



Activity 2 — Worksheet B1

This list of building “types” can be sorted into five **categories**, according to their use — **Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Recreational and Transport**. For example, houses and flats are residential; a pub and a dry cleaners are both commercial.

Distribute copies of Worksheet B1. Discuss Tasks 1 and 2, then complete them in class.

Review of work

Discuss Tasks 1 and 2 on Worksheet B1 with the class. What kinds of buildings did students categorise as Residential, Commercial etc.?

Discussion — Ordinary and special buildings

Cities and towns have both **ordinary building** and **special buildings**.

Most building — houses, shops, offices, factories — are fairly ordinary and there are many of them.



Ordinary buildings and a special building

Special buildings are “out of the ordinary”. They differ from surrounding buildings in various ways.

What “special” buildings do we have in our community? How do we distinguish “special” buildings from “ordinary” buildings? Use headings such as these to guide the discussion.

- **Size** — They are sometimes much bigger or much smaller than the average.
- **Shape** — Their shapes may be different.
- **Materials** — They are sometimes constructed from more costly materials.
- **Location** — They may have a special relationship with the street itself. They are sometimes set farther back, surrounded by grounds, or have ground floors at a higher level.
- **Numbers** — There are fewer special buildings.
- **Impact** — They are usually the ones we remember most easily.

Ask the students whether there are any buildings with these characteristics in their town/neighbourhood. What reasons might there be for a building being thought of as special?



- Showing the **power** or **status** of the owners — palace, great house or stately home
- Representing the **community** — town hall, council building
- Expressing people's **values** — church or other place of worship
- Representing **culture** — museum, gallery or library
- Symbol of **authority** — courthouse, garda station
- Symbol of **respect** — place of worship, cemetery, monument/statue
- Providing for **entertainment** or **celebration** — cinema, restaurant



Activity 3 — Complete Worksheet B1

Refer to Worksheet B1, Task 3. Ask students to highlight, with coloured pencils or markers, those building types which they think deserve to be treated as “special”.



Activity 4 — Memory drawings

If there were no signs to read, how would students recognise a house, a shop and a church? Students make a memory drawing of an ordinary building and a special building in their own neighbourhood to demonstrate the differences. Consider the following Key Concepts both before and after completing the drawings.



Key Concepts

Shape and size of the building. Shape and size of features such as windows, doors, steps, porches. Applied art — symbols, decorative painting, carving, stone or metal work, advertising.

Homework

1. Students should complete their memory drawings if they were unable to finish them in class.
2. Before the next class, ask students to have a closer look at the two buildings they drew from memory (Activity 4). If they have omitted any important details, they should correct the drawing or make a new one. They should list the materials used in their construction and decoration, as well as the range of textures and colours. (Teachers may wish to photocopy and distribute Worksheet A4 which lists a range of construction materials.)
3. Distribute and discuss Information Sheet 1 “Scrapbook Instructions”. Refer students to Worksheet B1 for their first **Scrapbook** assignment.
4. Tell students to dedicate a section of their ring binder to a **Vocabulary File**, inserting new words and definitions as they encounter them.



Cross-Curricular Connections

1. Art — Select *one* building type from *each* of the five categories in Worksheet B1. Visit examples of these types of buildings. Take photographs and/or make drawings of them.
2. Art — Create a series of clay tiles, lino prints or textile designs based on the shapes and patterns found on one of the buildings facades in your memory drawing.
3. History — Try to find out when one of the buildings you studied in your Memory Drawing was built and by whom. For what purpose was it built originally?
4. History/Art — Collect copies of sketches, paintings, and photographs which show your community in the past.
5. Art/Design/Construction Studies — Design a small shop-front. First, choose the type of shop — chemist, clothes, videos, books, newsagent. . . . Make sketches, then scale drawings and working drawings, showing materials and construction.