

Build Your Own Classroom Landscape

The built environment affects the way people view the landscape around them. Humans have altered their landscape to suit their needs throughout history, and it has become so natural to us that we rarely take note of it. In this activity students will be able to recreate a built environment within their classroom. This activity will focus on the landscapes students encounter on the way to and from school, but this landscape can be substituted if desired. The most important point is for students to understand that human action changes their surrounding landscape and that changes made in the landscape serve a purpose for the people who make them.

Directions:

- 1) When introducing the activity, ask students to pay attention to the landscape around them on their way to and from school. Ask them to pick one building along their route (a house, barn, or any other man-made structure along their travel route). They will then construct a model of their chosen structure.
- 2) With the materials provided, ask students to make a model of the building they chose.
- 3) Clear a space within the classroom to serve as the “natural landscape.” Explain to the students that before the built environment there already was a natural landscape, and that humans manipulate it to suit their needs.
- 4) Have the students place their models on the now “built landscape” and ask them to explain how their building serves people. They should think critically about what purpose the building serves and why that type of building is found where it is.



Images courtesy of Dan Grzesiak & Laurie Stein

Materials:

Poster board
Construction paper
Glue or paste
Colored markers
Popsicle sticks
Straws
Pipe cleaners
Scissors