

## **Alike and Different: My Houston Home**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Since I was a little girl, I always dreamed about being a teacher. I enjoyed the evenings when I was assigned to tutor my younger cousins, and felt super when I used a chalkboard to teach letters, addition or subtraction. It was so much fun to pretend that I was a teacher, but I could only dream because I was only seven years old.

When I was 11, my parents decided to move from El Salvador, Central America, to Houston, Texas. I was in the seventh grade and in an inner city school. I did not speak any English, and that made my life very difficult because many students treated me like I was a dumb person. Many others laughed at me because I could not pronounce the words right. It felt awful, and I felt out of place in a new school, home, and society. I continued trying to learn as much as I could. I tried reading my science book and, even though I could not understand, I made an effort to look at the pictures and connect the words. After one whole year, I learned to communicate in English, and it felt wonderful! I could ask for permission to go to the bathroom on my own, without using sign language, and I also could ask for the food I wanted to eat in the cafeteria. Life became better, even though there were many problems in the school and the society around me. Many Hispanic students were ashamed of their culture and background because speaking Spanish and looking Hispanic were not well accepted. The students who were Hispanic and spoke English fluently denied that they were bilingual because they feared to be treated like they were not intelligent or important. Some students were punished for speaking Spanish, because many felt that they only used their own language to say bad words or make mean comments, which was not true.

All these problems affected the self-esteem of students like me, and in many instances, the result was a feeling of hate towards the school to the point where many chose to drop out. I felt for a long time like I was mute: I could not speak my language and I could not speak English. The teacher in the classroom is the key element in student achievement and success; he or she can make or break a student, sometimes without even knowing it.

My ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher in the seventh grade took us on a field trip to the University of Houston so that we could see the campus and think about what we wanted to do when we grew up. I did feel that this teacher, Mr. McManus, really felt that we were smart and that we had the potential to be anything we wanted to be; his attitude inspired me. It was then, at 12 years old, that I decided that I was going to grow up to be a teacher so that I could help many kids who, like me, came to this country

with only hopes and dreams. I went to college and graduated with honors from the University of Houston, and I thank my teacher Mr. McManus for that.

I am very happy now because I am a bilingual teacher, and I now have the wonderful opportunity to help many students who are learning English. I try to help my students in many ways so they do not suffer so much in the process of learning a new language. I teach them to read and write their own language and learn English at the same time, and this is what we call bilingual education. My students are happy about being in school, and everyday they take risks and try to speak English. In my classroom nobody is allowed to make fun of other students who do not pronounce words the right way. Instead, in my classroom, students are a community of learners and friends who help one another. I have my room arranged into four groups. Four tables are placed together to form a group. In each group, there are children of all ability levels so that they can help each other learn.

I want to design a unit to teach my students to observe the characteristics of each other in order to learn to respect our similarities and differences, in hopes that our society will be more tolerant. I intend to write a unit about the different types of families that make up our society and the different homes they live in. The name of my unit is *Alike and Different*, and I plan to teach it in the course of four weeks. I usually do units in four weeks each because I feel that this gives my students enough time to learn about a certain topic without being bored. This unit integrates social studies, reading, writing, math, and social science in order to make the time with my students more useful. Integrating subjects will help me cover many objectives and will make my teaching more meaningful and effective.

When I was a student at the University of Houston's College of Education, the most important aspect of lesson planning was integration, which means covering as many subjects as you can. The professors I had the opportunity to meet and learn from strongly believed that integration helps the teacher and the student at the same time because the students are being exposed to many subjects at one time. For the teacher, integration helps because he or she can get all the grades that are needed for the different subjects and can take them from one lesson or unit. A lot of teachers I have spoken with agree. It is hard to get grades for science or social studies when you have to worry about teaching the students how to read and recognize letters and their sounds. If a teacher instead tries to teach those same reading skills using the science book, for example, there are two things happening at one time.

Since I am a first grade teacher, this unit will benefit mostly the lower grade levels – kindergarten through second grade. I intend to use this unit as part of the social studies curriculum but it will also integrate science and ESL (English as a second language).

Before I go on, I would like to discuss the importance of integrating ESL in lessons for bilingual classrooms. There is controversy over the bilingual education program,

because many people argue that since we live in the United States, everybody should speak English. They believe in the “sink or swim” theory, which states that a child should be thrown into an all-English classroom, where he or she will either learn to speak English and be part of the school culture, or will simply sink, or drop out of school. I was in this situation; I had to learn to speak and integrate into the main culture at a rapid pace, without respecting or acknowledging my own heritage. Many people do not understand that the bilingual education program is not a language maintenance program, but a program designed to help students learn the new language through a comfortable and tolerable environment. This setting helps by building a vocabulary background in the students’ first language, enabling a connection to English. In other words, it makes life easier for those students who are in a new country and a new culture. It also helps students to keep up in academics and learn what they need to learn in their particular grade. The objectives for bilingual classrooms and English classrooms are the same. This means that students learn the objectives because they understand the concepts in their own language.

Once the students have spent enough time in the school setting and have learned the new language, they automatically transfer the knowledge into the new language. They will know how to write a sentence in English because they know how to do it in their first language. When the students leave the bilingual program and go into English classrooms, they do not have any more reinforcement in their native language; but the transition was easier for them.

My lessons will include hands-on activities for every learning style. I chose the theme Alike and Different: My Houston Home, because it will help children observe characteristics and understand comparisons of the homes that are around them. I feel that going beyond the basic reading requirements for first grade is important. In this manner, my students can “go places” through books and literature, which will also help them increase their vocabulary skills in English and Spanish. That is why I am interested in including a variety of texts about the houses and architecture of the Houston area.

## **UNIT CONTENT**

As I mentioned earlier, this unit is going to be taught over a period of four weeks, and each week will have a subtitle that will focus on the architectural design of some Houston areas and the history behind it.

Week one, which will be subtitled, “All About Me,” will have students observing each other’s physical characteristics in order to compare and contrast. In this part of the unit, each student will complete a booklet with his/her personal information. It will start with his/her name, age and a portrait of him/herself. A page with his/her address and phone number will also be included. This information is vital for students in the first grade to know; I have been a first grade teacher for four years now and I have noticed that most of the students in my classroom do not know their personal information. This

booklet will also include favorite foods, hobbies, and portraits of family members. This is the week in which I am planning to use the lesson about bricks, which is added at the end of this paper. This lesson's main goal is to pay close attention to the characteristics of bricks and how those characteristics are important.

The book *A House is A House for Me* by Marry Ann Hoberman will be used at the end of the first week in order to help students start thinking about the different types of homes that exist around them. This book is very interesting because it does not just focus on homes for people, but on all types of homes for animals and things. The word "home" comes alive for children.

My students are very fortunate because my school buys the Scholastic Magazine for children. I will use one of these issues because it is about exploring and observing the rooms inside a house and the building structure. It is important because "the home is the most central place in a child's life. Homes are much more than physical structures. They are places where families gather, eat, talk, and learn, and they account for a significant part of a child's early learning experiences (Scholastic Inc.)." The Scholastic Magazine for children states that vocabulary can be developed and expanded by exploring the home environment because it builds on the student's prior knowledge, all children are familiar with this topic. As a class we will study the different rooms in a house and their purpose. The students will "name and describe what they see in the issue (Scholastic Inc.)." The students will also list the purpose of each room inside their own home and they will explain what they use it for.

In week two, "My House," students will bring pictures of their houses in order to observe and compare as well. The pictures will be used to make an album, which will be kept in a special place in the classroom for students to see any time they want. For me, it's very important to engage my students in a learning experience that will make them use and expand their imagination. It will be great to expose my students to new knowledge and to observe and study the architectural history in our school's neighborhood. The architectural characteristics of the home buildings will be observed and discussed in order to look for similarities and differences and why those are important. Woodrow Wilson Elementary is located in the middle of the Cherryhurst community, in which many bungalows are found. Students will learn the definition of a bungalow and a cottage, and they will be able to tell the difference between the two. In first grade, students study money in the form of coins, but also we study how money is used and why it is important. During this week, I intend to have math problems about buying a house using the prices of the early nineteen hundreds to make it easier for the students.

The lessons will incorporate the following math objectives, which are stated in the Houston Independent School District's Project CLEAR Objectives binder. In objective 1.1.c, the students will incorporate the use of words to describe the value of individual coins such as the penny, dime, nickel, and quarter. They will do this when they build a

house using milk cartons. After they build it, we will have a “real estate agency” in the classroom. The students will put a price on the house they created, and we will invite the parents to come to the classroom and purchase their children’s creations. The prices of these houses will not exceed twenty-five cents, so that the students can play with coins and learn their value. In first grade and kindergarten, students have a hard time understanding coins and their value, so I feel that this activity is a fun way for students to learn through play and pretend.

Students may not understand the exact price of a house, but they will have the concept of the cost of a house. After reading the books chosen for the unit and the articles, as a class we will read about, observe and discuss bungalows. As discussed in “American Bungalow Style,” at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, bungalows:

...took America by storm. These small houses, some costing as little as \$900, helped fulfill many Americans’ wish for their own home, equipped with all the latest conveniences. Central to the bungalow’s popularity was the idea that simplicity and artistry could harmonize in one affordable house. The mania of the bungalows marked a rare occasion in which serious architecture was found outside the realm of the rich. Bungalows allowed people of modest means to achieve something they had long sought: respectability. With its special features-style, convenience, simplicity, sound construction, and excellent plumbing- the bungalow filled more than the need for shelter. It provided fulfillment of the American dream. The bungalow was practical, and it symbolized for many the best of the good life. On its own plot of land, with a garden, however small, and a car parked out front, a bungalow provided privacy and independence. To their builders and owners, bungalows meant living close to nature, but also with true style. (Winter)

This week will be important because social studies will be heavily incorporated. The book *The Araboolies of Liberty Street* will be the focus of the lessons because it deals with a neighborhood and the problems in it. The objective in this week will be to talk about being a good neighbor. There are many problems going on in the neighborhood discussed in this book, and students will have to think of ways to solve them and state why they feel their method could work. In this book, new neighbors move in, and it is obvious that these people are different from everyone else. This activity will help the students develop their problem-solving skills and think about all the possible ways to solve one problem.

Another activity during this week will allow students to construct a neighborhood using milk cartons and their imaginations, with the purpose of helping kids understand how a neighborhood is formed and how it fits in a community and a neighborhood. It is also very important for children to understand that even though other families are different from ours, we need to respect them and not try to get rid of them or hurt them in

any way. “Find the House” picture cards will be used so that students can find the right house using specific clues that deal with the architecture of a house.

During week three, “Neighborhood Homes,” all students will take a field trip around the Cherryhurst community and will discuss the different architectural styles of the homes in the area. The area around our school is changing constantly, and there are many new houses and buildings being constructed now.

I am planning to take a field trip throughout the neighborhood in order for my students to observe the architecture of the homes built thirty years ago and the homes being built now. There are many buildings being constructed at this time around our school. The new buildings are mostly town homes, which do not have big yards and do not fit the architectural style of the homes around the area; the older bungalows, on the other hand, *do* have big yards and spaces between each house. As a teacher, I have learned so much about architecture that I did not know before this Houston Teachers Institute class. I learned to appreciate architecture, and now I have an “eye” for art and designs. I was driving through the Heights area the other day with my family when I spotted a “shotgun” style home. I felt so excited about actually seeing and recognizing this type of home structure that I had to stop and stare at it for a few minutes. There is a great deal of satisfaction when you feel you know something about a building and that you can tell someone else about it. Differences and similarities between buildings can be appreciated all around the community. We will also go over the history of how this community started and who founded it. We will study how the social economic environment affected construction designs.

It is important to have a history strand in social studies lessons because students need to learn that history is important. Because topics are not to be studied alone, the lessons will focus on how people, events, and issues from the past relate to the present and how it will influence the future. In first grade, students do not yet understand time; they cannot relate to yesterday, today or tomorrow. I feel that by studying the history part of the unit, students will have a clearer understanding of how time progresses, and it will help them understand timelines.

It is mentioned in the book *Ranches, Rowhouses, and Railroad Flats*, by Christine Hunter, that

During the early decades of the century, and especially after World War I, there was a nationwide shortage of homes and consequently a lot of experimentation in the design and production of affordable dwellings. Commercial builders as well as philanthropic housing groups undertook a wide variety of innovative developments. While freestanding houses did not predominate in these experimental projects, they were intermingled with other housing forms in ways that would become much less common after the enactment of zoning laws. (148-150)

We will read and study this excerpt from the book, and observe the floor plans and pictures of the homes in it, and use it to compare those homes to the ones in the community around our school. Please see the attachment at the end of the paper for an example of a floor plan.

As a class, we will observe home buildings and use their architecture to find shapes. In first grade, most children know and can identify shapes, but there are still students who can't and who need the review. For this reason, one of the activities will include cutouts of different shapes and sizes, which the students will use to glue together in order to make a building of some sort using their imagination. Children will get very excited to recognize a circle, a square, or any other shape in the structure of a house or a building. I think that this will help students visualize why shapes are important and how people use them in real life. I feel that this will be a fun way to review and use skills they learned in kindergarten and refresh their memories.

Some of our students' parents work in the construction business. I plan to contact them to ask them if they can come to our classroom and talk to my pupils about the construction process of a house or a building. Prior to this activity, I will photograph different buildings and houses around the Houston area. This will be done mainly to have a visual aid for the students. Parent participation is extremely important for students to be successful in their learning. When parents are involved in classroom activities, they start to feel a sense of comfort and closeness to the school environment. This makes them aware of what their children are doing at school and gives them an idea of what their children's day is like. After this presentation, parents and children will work together in building a chocolate house.

In week four, "Birdhouses," we will focus on the experience of designing of a house by designing and building a birdhouse. Students will use recycled materials such as plastic bottles, paint and milk or juice cartons and their creativity. Another important fact that students need to learn is why and how recycling helps our environment. They need to learn about what they can do to help our planet because of all the problems we are currently having. We will study what recycling means and how recycling helps our environment. As a class we will be looking at and observing different materials that we call "trash," and together will try to find uses for it. Many times what we see as trash can be used for something else. My students will become architects themselves because they will have the opportunity to go through the designing and building process. *The Great Birdhouse Book: Fabulous Designs You Can Build* will serve as a guide for students to get ideas and think about what they would like their birdhouse designs to look like. In the book, there are blueprints of birdhouses and great ideas on how to make a birdhouse a work of art. Woodrow Wilson Elementary has a beautiful garden area, in which many birds and other small animals can be observed. Children will feel important because they will be able to see how their projects can help the creatures around them.

This unit will include a poetry section. I will collect poems and read them to the students, who will analyze them. Students will talk and write about their feelings towards their home. Students will use their feelings in order to write poems of their own. As a class, we will explore traditional rhymes in Spanish. These activities will help students to understand poetry and how it deals with feelings and self-expression.

## **UNIT BACKGROUND**

Students will be observing all details in order to compare and contrast during all the activities. The purpose of the unit is to observe similarities and differences between each other, and the people around them; in order to give them a sense of how being unique is important. Students will start the unit by recognizing that they all have different names and by observing their names' letters and lengths. A child needs to realize that his/her name is very special and that it is important to be proud of it because it is a part of him/her and his/her culture that will always be there. Reading and understanding graphs is an essential skill for students to learn as well. In this activity, all names will be graphed according to how many letters each name has. After gathering and observing all the information, the different home types will be graphed in order to show uniqueness. The students will be asked to bring pictures of their homes to class. They will observe the architecture of each home and will also count windows and doors in order to graph the results. We will also graph and talk about the number of people in each family. The students will understand that all families are different but they are all special. The students will understand how diversity is important, and why they should respect different types of people. Songs, such as "I am special," will also be incorporated with these lessons in order to help students with oral development of the English language, which is crucial in the lower bilingual grade levels. As a bilingual teacher, I want to make sure all lessons incorporate an ESL component. This will give students many opportunities to learn to speak and write new vocabulary words, and hopefully help them to develop their oral language skills.

The students in the bilingual classrooms are expected to be in transition to all English classrooms by the time they get to middle school, and for this reason it is very important for them to practice speaking and writing English as much as possible. During this class, I will incorporate the ideas of Dinah Zike, author of *The Big Book of Books and Activities*. On page 23 of this book, there is an activity called "The Pocket Book." Students will make a pocket book, and inside it, they will have cards with vocabulary words. On each card, there will be one English vocabulary word and an illustration of what the word means. This will help the students learn and understand words better.

As mentioned above, comparing homes is another aspect of uniqueness I would like to incorporate in my thematic unit. For this part of the unit, the students will observe the different types of homes that people have today around the Houston area. My school is located in the middle of the Montrose and Cherryhurst communities; in these neighborhoods, different types of houses that depict interesting types of architecture can



be appreciated. We also have to discuss the apartment homes and their building structure. Students will be asked to use the architecture of a house to find geometric shapes. The students will be exposed to different books and literature about housing, including the history of why the sleeping porch became a standard feature of homes in the past, and how homes are built using different types of machinery and materials.

In this section of the unit, I will integrate one of the ideas I learned at a seminar I attended at Rice University this spring. The seminar was called *Acting Up In School*, and it was presented by Hope Shiver. In this seminar, I learned that moving around the classroom and acting out an idea, a vocabulary word, or a play helps students learn and retain the information for a longer period of time. This way of teaching helps students get involved in their own learning, giving the lessons a more hands-on approach. I am thinking about having the students create and direct their own play of how people and children lived in the 1900s. Of course, this will take research on our part, but I think that if I assign groups to go to the library and investigate with the help of the librarian, this will work. Students will also create a play about the process of buying a house from the beginning to the end.

Another way of incorporating history would be to observe the standard feature of sleeping porches in the houses built in the 1900s, because I feel that it is a part of our society that we must not lose. Studying sleeping porches along with making a timetable will aid students in understanding how things change over the years. This will go perfectly with the social studies history strands, SS1.1.History, which states that students have to explore the origins of their community. SS1.3.History states that students need to understand and relate to time, recognizing past, present and future, and arranging events in their chronological order. In order to improve self-esteem and to develop pride, students will acknowledge that there are many types of bricks that can be used to build a house. The bricks will then be observed and used as a metaphor: all bricks are alike and different, just like people. They all may look like bricks, but they come in different colors, made of different materials and different brands. What is important here is to work on developing the sense of respect and tolerance towards our differences as people.

## **STRATEGIES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Reading maps is a necessary life skill: my students will be required to understand map keys and use them to find places of importance to them such as, for example, their own homes. In the Project CLEAR Objectives, the history strand is about understanding and locating places, creating simple maps, and reading symbols. All these objectives will be studied in this part of the unit. Maps of the Houston area will also be incorporated in order for students to locate the different types of houses and become experts in reading maps. SS.1.6.a Geography requires students to understand the various physical characteristics of the environment and places such as landforms and bodies of water.

As a class, we will take a field trip to downtown in order to observe the first homes ever built in Houston. The students will get the opportunity to create a model of the different types of homes they have observed using their creativity. The students will also experience how a house is designed and built by making a birdhouse. *Houston's Forgotten Heritage*, a book by Dorothy Knox Howe, will be used in a lesson in order to allow the students to see houses that have been destroyed, but existed in our city in past decades. At the end of the unit, I plan to have a closure party with a guest speaker; in this case it will be someone with experience in the process of building a house and architecture. This is the day when all parents will be invited to join the classroom and help build the birdhouse projects. They will compare houses then and houses now. I feel that my students will experience the history of our city during the length of this unit, and it will allow them to expand their knowledge and creativity.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, I would like to say that I am confident that this unit will help my students learn to appreciate people's differences and similarities in order to create a respectful and peaceful environment. We are experiencing difficult times in our environment and country; therefore, children need to learn that being different should not be a problem, but rather an important and distinctive characteristic. Every day in my classroom, we discuss what it means to be a good citizen, friend, student, and neighbor, with the purpose of planting the seed of respect, love of life, and tolerance in children. To end, I want to include a poem that this year's class made up about their loving homes. The students and I came up with the words in Spanish, but this is the translated version:

### My House

My house, my house,  
My beautiful house,  
Cozy, small, white, and clean house.  
I love you; I love you, so, so much,  
At night when I see the stars,

I love you; I love you, so, so much,  
In the morning, when I wake up.

After this unit is over, I hope that students will have a new appreciation for themselves, friends, and family. Pride in and love for their way of life, and for who they are, will result as well.

## **LESSON PLANS**

### **Uniqueness**

#### ***Grade level***

First grade

#### ***Subjects***

Social studies, language arts, math

#### ***Objectives***

The students will recognize that people have different qualities and characteristics. The students will recognize different characteristics in their bricks. Each student will recognize a positive attribute about him/herself.

#### ***Rationale***

Students need to understand that it is okay to be different because that is what makes us special. Children need to learn to appreciate that people are alike and different in many ways and that this is a positive fact.

#### ***Focus***

First, the teacher will gather the students and make a circle. The teacher will show the students different types of bricks. The bricks will be arranged in a pattern – big, small, big, small. The teacher should ask the students if they can guess the pattern. After this, the children will be arranged in different patterns, such as hair or eye color, or boy/girl. Please allow students time to figure out the pattern. The teacher will explain to the students that the patterns are formed using the different characteristics people in the class have. Question: What were some of the characteristics used in the patterns we formed?

#### ***Activities***

The teacher will explain – while the students are still sitting down in a circle – that, just like bricks have different characteristics, people do as well. Next, he/she will explain to them that each student will get his/her own piece of brick. The bricks will be brought to school by the parents who work in the construction site. Students will take their piece back to their desks and will discuss with their groups what the brick looks like. They will use descriptive words from the word wall to talk about their bricks.

There will be a discussion, and the students will answer the following questions: What does my part of the brick look like? What color is it? How does it feel? After these questions are answered, all the students will walk around the room to observe all the bricks on the tables. Students will try to figure out if they can form one whole brick using their parts. Students will count the pieces that it took to form one whole brick. All the information gathered is going to be recorded in the students' notebooks.

### ***Conclusion***

Teachers should ask students to observe all the people in the classroom. What do they notice about each other? (They all look different.) Teachers will tell the children that the way we look makes us different from the rest of the people, and that this is good. It is good to be unique.

- Write sentences about each other.
- I know my friend \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ hair.

Children will come up with more sentences to describe attributes.

### ***Evaluation***

A= 90-100

On task, constantly involved in the activities and talking about the characteristics of people and bricks, completes the sentences and follows the teacher's instructions.

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

On and off task, participating sometimes, briefly talking about the differences of people and bricks.

D= 60-69

Off task, not participating, not discussing the differences previously studied, not following instructions.

## **Home Sweet Home**

### ***Grade level***

First grade

### ***Subjects***

Social studies, math, reading, and writing

### ***Objectives***

The students will observe the inside of a house. The students will identify the purpose of each room inside a house. The students will use descriptive words to describe the inside of a house.

### ***Rationale***

Students need to learn what descriptive words are and how to use them. By observing the inside of a house, students will be able to use the vocabulary learned and the meaning of the words. They will also understand the structure of a house inside and out.

### ***Focus***

First, the teacher should gather the students and make a circle. Next, he/she should show the students a poster from Scholastic magazine titled, "Home Sweet Home." After

observing the poster, students will discuss what they see. They will have three minutes to tell their fellow students what they observe. Question: Where are the people in the poster? What are they doing?

### ***Activities***

While the students are still in a circle, the teacher should ask them to describe each room of the house in the poster. The class will discuss what purpose each room serves. The teacher will make a list of the students' responses. Next, the students will go back to their desks to draw and write about their favorite room inside their home. The students will gather once more in a circle with the teacher in order to discuss their work. Together, the class will come up with a list of describing words that will be used to answer the following questions: Why do I like this specific room in my house? How does it make me feel? What is inside this room? How is the furniture arranged?

After all these questions are answered, each student will draw a map of his/her favorite room so that the class can have a visual. The visual will help the class understand why the student likes this part of the house so much. The teacher will read a traditional Spanish poem to the students titled "My Little House (author unknown)."

### ***Conclusion***

The students will look at the poster one more time. They will compare the poster to their own homes and discuss the differences and similarities between their own homes and the house in the poster. The teacher will read the poem one more time, and the students will find descriptive words and write them in their student notebooks. The students will rewrite the poem on a separate sheet of paper and will illustrate it using the descriptive words in it.

### **Evaluation**

A= 90-100

On task, constantly involved in the activities of the lesson and discussing the poster. Writing descriptive words and completing the poem and the illustrations.

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

On and off task, participating sometimes, briefly discussing the activities of the lesson.

D= 60-69

Off task, not participating, not discussing the topics in the lesson, and not following instructions.

### **Shapes**

#### ***Grade level***

Kindergarten, First grade

***Subjects***

Math, writing, and social studies

***Objectives***

The students will observe the structure of different houses. The students will recognize, name and draw different shapes. The students will look for shapes in the structure of a house. The students will graph the number of shapes in a house.

***Rationale***

Students need to understand patterns and read graphs. By doing these activities, children will be able to make and explain graphs. By learning how patterns are made using shapes, students will have an understanding of how number patterns work. Number patterns are sometimes a hard concept for children to grasp.

***Focus***

In this lesson the focus is a field trip. Students will walk around the Cherryhurst neighborhood, which is across the street from our school, in order to observe houses. The teacher will take pictures of several homes in the area so that students can look at them later in the classroom. During the walk, students will be asked to discuss with a partner what shapes they know, and which ones they can find in each house they observe.

***Activities***

The teacher will gather the students in a circle and show the students shape cards. He/She will also have the students name the shapes in the cards out loud. The students will then go to their desks and draw the shapes they saw on the cards. They will label the as many shapes as they can. Next, the students will come back to the circle to look at the pictures from the field trip. They will discuss with the class what they see in the pictures. The teacher will write a list with the students' responses. The list will be used to answer the following questions: What shapes did you find? What looks like a circle? What looks like a square? What other shapes can you find? The students will pick one house to observe and discuss. Together, they will make a graph of the house with the number of squares, circles, lines, triangles, and rectangles that it has. While students are sitting in their groups, each will get a picture of a house and, using the skills just learned, he/she will make a graph. As a class, the teacher should review the numbers from one to twenty.

***Conclusion***

Each group will present its work and explain it to the class. The teacher will read *How a House is Built*, by Gail Gibbons. Students will get a bag with cutouts. The cutouts will be shapes. Using their creativity, they will arrange the shapes in the form of a house. The students will write the number of circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles they used in order to make their houses.

### ***Evaluation***

A= 90-100

On task, constantly involved in the activities of the lesson and discussing the pictures. Making graphs, drawing and labeling the shapes. Using the shapes to make their houses. Discussing the topic and the book.

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

On and off task, participating sometimes, briefly discussing the activities of the lesson.

D= 60-69

Off task, not participating, not discussing the topics in the lesson, and not following instructions.

### **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Burton, Virginia Lee. *The Little House*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942.  
This book is great for children because it studies urban development and change, and how they affect a family.

Dillon, Mike. *The Great Birdhouse Book: Fun, Fabulous designs you can build*. New York: Sterling Publishing Company 1999.  
A book about designing colorful and beautiful birdhouses using blueprints.

Gibbons, Gail. *How a House is Built*. Holiday House Incorporated, 1990.  
This is a children's book about the exact process of building a house from beginning to end.

Hoberman, Marry Ann and Betty Fraser. *A House Is A House For Me*. New York: Puffin Books, 1982  
A children's book about different types of homes that fit every lifestyle and need.

Home How-To Institute. *Porch And Patio Ideas*. Minnetonka, MN: Cy DeCosse, Inc., 1996.  
A portfolio of porch and patio ideas which contains pictures of different types of gardens.

Hunter, Christine. *Ranches, Rowhouses, and Railroad Flats, American Homes: How They Shape our Landscapes and Neighborhoods*. New York: Norton and Company.  
This article has information about the development and construction of homes. It also has information about the costs of the different types of homes available.

Rylant, Cynthia and Brian Karas. *The High Rise Private Eyes: The Case Of The*

- Troublesome Turtle*. China: Greenwillow Books, 1998.  
This is a children's book about two animals who live in a city, in a high rise building.
- Seltzer, Usadore. *La casa donde vivo aqui en America*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1992.  
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- Swope, Sam and Barry Root. *The Araboolies Of Liberty Street*. New York: Dragonfly, 1995.  
A children's book about people who were disliked because they were different, and how they decorated the houses in their neighborhood.
- Tarsky Sue and Ayliffe Alex. *The Very Busy Building Book*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1998.  
A children's book about the machinery used in the construction of houses and buildings.
- Vandervort Don, Ed. *Patio Roofs and Gazebos*. Sunset, CA: Sunset Publishing Co., 2002.  
This is a collection of pictures of different kinds of patio roofs and gardens.
- Wood, Audry and Don Wood. *The Napping House*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1984.  
This is a children's book about people and animals sleeping during a rainy day inside a two-story house.
- Zike, Dinah. *Big Book of Books and Activities*. San Antonio: Dinah-Might Activities Inc., 1989.  
This is an activity book with many creative activities that can be used in any lesson. The activities found in this book helps teachers make lessons more hands-on for children.

## **Articles**

- Scholastic, Inc. *Let's Find Out: Hogar dulce hogar*.  
This is a poster about the inside of a house and how the rooms are used.



Winter, Robert and Alexander Vertikoff. "*American Bungalow Style.*" New York: Simon & Schuster.

This article explains how the economic environment affected construction of the architecture of the time. It also explains how the bungalows helped people to make their dreams come true.