



Architectural Historian: Native American Architecture

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like an architectural historian and judge four proposals that plan to restore four original houses associated with different Southwest Indians tribes.

Activity

Teacher note: This activity can be completed across multiple days. Complete Steps 1-3 on one day and Steps 4-5 on another day.

Step 1: Background Information on Architectural Historians and Native American Houses (10 min)

- Show [Video: Native American Houses](#).
- Explain to students that many different Native American groups have lived and continue to live in Arizona and the Southwest. Ask students if they can identify any Native Americans that live in Arizona (e.g., Pueblo, Navajo, Apache).
- Discuss with students how environment plays a role in how people build their houses. For example, people who live near a forest would have plenty of wood to use for building, but people living in a desert may not.
- Ask students to think about the following:
 - What resources would people living in Arizona be able to use when building houses or settlements? (e.g., clay from the ground to make adobe bricks, building on top of mesas for protection)
 - How does the environment in Arizona limit what building resources are available? (e.g., there are not as many trees for wood)
- Show [Handout: Examples of Southwest Native American Houses](#). As you review the handout discuss the following:
 - How might the environment help decide what kinds of houses Native Americans built? (e.g. people would make use of available natural resources to construct their buildings).
 - How might housing types differ among Native American groups that travel from place to place compared to those groups that settled in one area? (e.g., groups that travel need shelter that is portable, while groups that live in the same place, can build bigger and/or more permanent buildings).
- Explain that architectural historians study the history of buildings. This helps them to understand how buildings can be repaired or rebuilt so that the buildings are historically accurate. This means that a building looks much the same or exactly the same as it did when it was first built.
- Ask students how they think architectural historians can provide important suggestions on how to restore or rebuild Native American houses in a historically accurate way. Show [Handout: Being an Architectural Historian](#). Discuss how architectural historians are experts on understanding how a building was used by the people who built it. They also know about materials used to build historic buildings, and what these buildings would look like.

Step 2: Activity Explanation (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will be divided into groups and each given a proposal from different groups that want to rebuild one important Native American historic building. They will think like an architectural historian and carefully evaluate the proposal to determine whether the proposal should be used for a restoration project or whether it needs to be revised.
- Provide students with [Handout: Steps to Evaluate Proposals](#). As a class, read through the steps.

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Step 3: Evaluating Restoration Plan (30+ minutes)

- Divide students into groups. Provide each group with one proposal and source sheet from [Handout: Group Assignments](#). Groups will also need [Handout: Steps to Evaluate Proposal](#) to write on.
- Have students complete steps 1 and 2 on the handout. As students working, ask the following questions:
 - How do the sources provide additional information that you can use to judge whether the proposal you are given is a good idea?
 - Do you think that the plan to assess each building's problem has enough detail? For example, if your sheet said that the evaluator will spend one day at the site writing down a few notes, is that information sufficient enough to create an entire restoration plan?
- Next, have students complete step 3 on the handout. As students are filling out their proposal evaluation rubrics, ask the following questions:
 - Do you think that there needs to be extensive changes made to the proposal you are reviewing?
 - What do you think is the most important item that needs to be fixed in the proposal?
 - What would happen if architectural historians didn't review these proposals?
 - Is there additional information you wish you had to analyze the proposal?
 - Would it be helpful to consult with another type of professional?
- Teacher notes:
 - You can have groups submit their rubrics to you for feedback. See [Handout: Teacher Key](#) for feedback and ratings on each proposal. While there are no right or wrong scores, we suggest providing groups with questions to consider and notes on what other architectural historians might think about if they were evaluating the proposal.
 - If you are not going to have groups submit their rubrics, continue on to next step and students will present their evaluation to the rest of the class.

Step 4: Committee Discussion (25 minutes)

- Explain to students that the class will now act as a committee that is reviewing proposals.
- Have students complete step 4 on the handout to prepare for their presentation.
- Each group will come to the front of the class and give a recap of the proposal that was submitted. Then, groups will describe how they evaluating the proposal, what the most prominent concerns were, and the overall score they gave.
- After groups have presented, discuss the following:
 - Were proposal scores close or far apart?
 - What factors contributed to the difference in scores?
 - Did group members disagree on what score to give for a proposal?
- Tell students though architectural historians all want to do what is best in taking care of historic buildings, not everyone will agree on what is the best way to do this.

Step 5: Building a 3D Model (25+ minutes)

- Teacher note: this step is optional!
- Now that students have evaluated a proposal, have groups build a 3D model of what they would build if they had submitted the proposal.
- Provide students with art supplies and building materials

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- Allow students time to create a 3D model.
- Students should also use a separate piece of paper to list the materials that they would use to build the wall and their plan to restore it to make sure it is done in a historically accurate way.
- Groups can then present these models to the class, explaining the similarities and differences between the model they created and the proposal they evaluated.

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Native American Houses
- Handout: Examples of Southwest Native American Houses
- Handout: Being an Architectural Historian
- Handout: Steps to Evaluate Proposals
- Handout: Group Assignments
- Handout: Teacher Key

Not provided:

- Art supplies and building materials (ex: tape, scissors, popsicle sticks, recycled materials)

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