

Working Hard to be Useless K-5

Activities for Before, During and After a Field Trip to UMOCA

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Grades: K-5

Utah Core Standards: See Appendix page 5

Objective: Students will recognize the existence of defensive architecture. Students will think critically about how defensive architecture influences different communities within an urban ecosystem. Students will also design and create an innovation to combat defensive architecture in order to bring communities together within an urban space.

Materials:

(Optional) Field Trip Engagement Activity Sheet - see Appendix page 9

Post-Field Trip Math Challenge Activity Sheet - see Appendix page 10

(Optional) Collage materials such as: magazine clippings, newspaper clippings

Glue

Scissors

Paper

Crayons

Key Vocabulary:

- Defensive Architecture / Hostile Architecture:
Subtle design choices that alienate some communities while making space for privileged others. There are both intentional and unintentional consequences of defensive architecture for the homeless community, skateboarders, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- Rough Sleepers:
Rough sleepers are people sleeping or bedding down in the open air. This includes the streets, doorways, parks, bus shelters, buildings and any place not designed for habitation.
- Ecosystems:
A community of living (biotic) organisms interacting with their nonliving (abiotic) environment

Teacher Background: See Appendix page 8

Pre-Field Trip Activity: (20-30 minutes)

Discuss with your class what makes a city. Ask questions such as:

- How is a city different from a small town or suburb?
- How many people live in our city (or the nearest large city)?

Write the definition for an ecosystem on the board:

- Ecosystems: a community of living (biotic) organisms interacting with its nonliving (abiotic) environment.

Engagement Tip: As you discuss the following components of an ecosystem, have students brainstorm in pairs or teams. After pairs/teams share with each other, share 1 or 2 as a whole class.

Write on the board:

- Abiotic elements in the urban ecosystem -
 - Ask: What evidence of water is there in a city? (ponds, fountains, sewers, canals, gutters, etc.)
 - Ask: What man-made structures are there in a city? (buildings, sidewalk, bridges, pavement, parking garages, statues, etc.)

Write on the board:

- Biotic organisms in the urban ecosystem -
 - Ask: what evidence of plants are there in a city? (grass, parks, trees, parking strips, potted plants, weeds, etc.)
 - Ask: What about animals, bacteria or fungus? (people, stray animals, squirrels, birds, spiders, rats, mice, insects, molds, other microorganisms, etc.)
 - Ask: What is a group of people called? (A community)
 - What different communities are in our cities? (cultural, ethnic, social classes, business community, labor community, homeless community, skateboarders, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, etc.)
 - Where do the communities interact with each other?
 - How do these communities interact with each other?
 - How do the abiotic (non-living) elements in an urban ecosystem affect communities?

Optional Multi-Media Connection:

Watch the following video of homeless people sharing their experiences.

A Note to Teachers: preview these videos and decide which one(s) are most appropriate for the demographic of your students

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gB-BQxDf-b8\>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZi6KwfBGS8>

After students have watched the video, have them discuss 1 thing they learned from the video and 1 emotion they felt while watching the video.

Field Trip Activity: (45-75 minutes at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art)

Optional Field Trip Engagement Activity:

See Appendix page 9 for worksheet

See Appendix page 12 for scheduling a field trip at UMOCA

If you feel your students need a tool to connect with the exhibit, you can utilize the field-trip engagement activity. Within that activity, students will pick a piece of defensive architecture from in exhibit, or in or around the building and draw it. Students should be prepared to share with the class.

Post-Field Trip: (20-30 minutes)

See Appendix page 10 for worksheet

Distribute the Post-Field Trip Engagement Activity. Have students look closely at the picture to figure out what part of the bench is “defensive architecture.” Have your students share their ideas with their table/group. Instruct students, draw or collage a new structure on top of the picture to make it easier for people to use the bench. Collage materials are optional if they are available.

Cross Curricular/Extension Activities:

- **Reading:** Read this article as a class to develop a deeper understanding of and empathy for the community defensive architecture affects the most, the homeless community.
<https://newsela.com/read/homeless-children/id/6452/>
- **Writing:** Students can write an opinion piece persuading their local representative why their innovation (from the Post-Field Trip activity) should be applied to similar defensive architecture locally.
- **Engineering:** Have students bring recycled materials (boxes, paper towel rolls, container, etc.) from home to engineer a 3D version of their innovation from the post-field trip activity.

Appendix K-5

Utah Core Standards:

Social Studies K-2 Thematic Strand Citizenship Standard 2:

Second Grade Students will recognize and practice civic responsibility in the community, state, and nation.

Objective 1: Examine civic responsibility and demonstrate good citizenship.

- c. Identify and participate in a local civic activity. (e.g. community cleanup, recycling, walkathons, voting).

Social Studies 1st Grade Self, School, and Neighborhood Citizenship Standard 2:

Objective 1: Describe and demonstrate appropriate social skills necessary for working in a group.

- a. Describe behaviors that contribute to cooperation within groups at school and in a neighborhood.
- c. Participate in a group activity modeling appropriate group behavior.
- e. Articulate how individual choices affect self, peers, and others.

Social Studies 2nd Grade Self, School, and Community Standard 3 (Geography):

Students will use geographic tools and skills to locate and describe places on earth.

Objective 1: Identify common symbols and physical features of a community, and explain how they affect people's activities in that area.

- b. Describe how geographic aspects of the area affect a community and influence culture (e.g. river, mountain, and desert).
- c. Describe ways in which people have modified the physical environment in a community (e.g. building roads, clearing land for homes, and mining).

Social Studies 2nd Grade Self, School, and Community Standard 1 (Culture):

Students will recognize and describe how people within their community, state, and nation are both similar and different.

Objective 2: Recognize and describe the contributions of different cultural groups in Utah and the nation.

- a. Identify various cultural groups within the state and the nation.
- b. Describe contributions of cultural groups to our state and nation.

Health 3rd Grade Standard 3:

Objective 2: Model behaviors that foster healthy interpersonal relationships.

- a. Examine the benefits of healthy relationships among peers, family, and community members.
- b. Model ways to contribute to healthy relationships among peers, family, and community members.

Social Studies 3rd-6th Grade Standard I:

Students will understand how geography influences community location and development. Benchmark: The geography of a community influences the cultural development of the humans who inhabit the community. There are relationships between climate, natural resources, and other geographic characteristics and a community's cultural development. The unique characteristics of an area influence where and how communities develop, their relative wealth and power, and how they adapt to changes.

Objective 2: Describe how various communities have adapted to existing environments and how other communities have modified the environment.

- b. Identify important natural resources of world ecosystems.
- c. Describe how communities have modified the environment to accommodate their needs (e.g. logging, storing water, building transportation systems).
- d. Investigate ways different communities have adapted into an ecosystem.

Objective 3: Analyze ways cultures use, maintain, and preserve the physical environment.

- a. Identify ways people use the physical environment (e.g. agriculture, recreation, energy, industry).
- b. Compare changes in the availability and use of natural resources over time.
- e. Make inferences about the positive and negative impacts of human-caused change to the physical environment.

Social Studies 3rd-6th Grade Standard II:

Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community. Benchmark: All people exist within cultures, or the way of life of a group of people. All human communities have cultural attributes. These attributes change over time in response to changes in the world around them. Indigenous cultures in North and South America demonstrate these attributes, and teachers are encouraged to select examples from these rich cultural traditions.

Objective 1: Evaluate key factors that determine how a community develops.

- d. Identify and explain the interrelationship of the environment (e.g. location, natural resources, and climate) and community development (e.g. food, shelter, clothing, industries, markets, recreation, and artistic creations).
- e. Examine changes in communities that can or have occurred when two or more cultures interact.
- f. Explain changes within communities caused by human inventions (e.g. steel plow, internal combustion engine, television, and computer).

Social Studies 3rd-6th Grade Standard III:

Students will understand the principles of civic responsibility in classroom, community, and country. Community members have rights, and with those rights come responsibilities. Recognizing and considering the viewpoints of others is essential in a community.

Objective 3: Apply principles of civic responsibility.

- a. Engage in meaningful dialogue about the community and current events within the classroom, school, and local community.
- b. Identify and consider the diverse viewpoints of the people who comprise a community.
- c. Demonstrate respect for the opinions, backgrounds, and cultures of others. Social Studies language students should know and use: right, responsibility, symbol, tradition, patriotic, government, civic, respect.

Teacher Background:

- Defensive Architecture is urban design most typically associated with aggression against the homeless in the form of "anti-homeless spikes" — studs embedded in flat surfaces to make sleeping rough uncomfortable and impractical.
- Defensive Architecture often targets the city's most vulnerable, both intentionally through anti-loitering measures and unintentionally by making the cityscape hostile to all parts of the public, especially seniors, people with disabilities, and children.
- Other forms of behavior which are commonly prevented by defensive architecture include skateboarding, loitering, and urination which are deterred with methods including sloped window sills to stop people from sitting, benches with armrests positioned to stop people from lying on them, and water sprinklers that "intermittently come on but aren't really watering anything."
- Although there are positive aspects of the current push for urban development and densification of city centers, the questions arise of who benefits from that development and who does it negatively affect. Public spaces become less public with the inclusion of well-designed but also well hidden "defensive architecture," dictating who can and cannot use the space. Walkability, which is defined by the final destination and not by the act of leisurely wandering the city, is touted as the ultimate goal, but walkability to where and why? To work, to shopping centers, or to public parks? Does use become prescribed in these new spaces? If so, how do we react to these restrictions?
- UMOCA's exhibition, *Working Hard to be Useless*, examines these issues through the lens of Situationist International ideas and aesthetics. The Situationists were a group of artists and theorists that operated in Europe during the 1960's and 1970's. Their work critiqued what they called "advanced capitalism" and the related "spectacle of commodity" in urban centers. They developed strategies for resisting the spectacle including Anti-Art, the Dérive, Detournement, and Psychogeography. Each action allowed the artists to subvert the status quo they felt was damaging everyday life.
- The artists in *Working Hard to be Useless* carry on the practices of the Situationists, incorporating their strategies as a way to evaluate current urban design and growth.

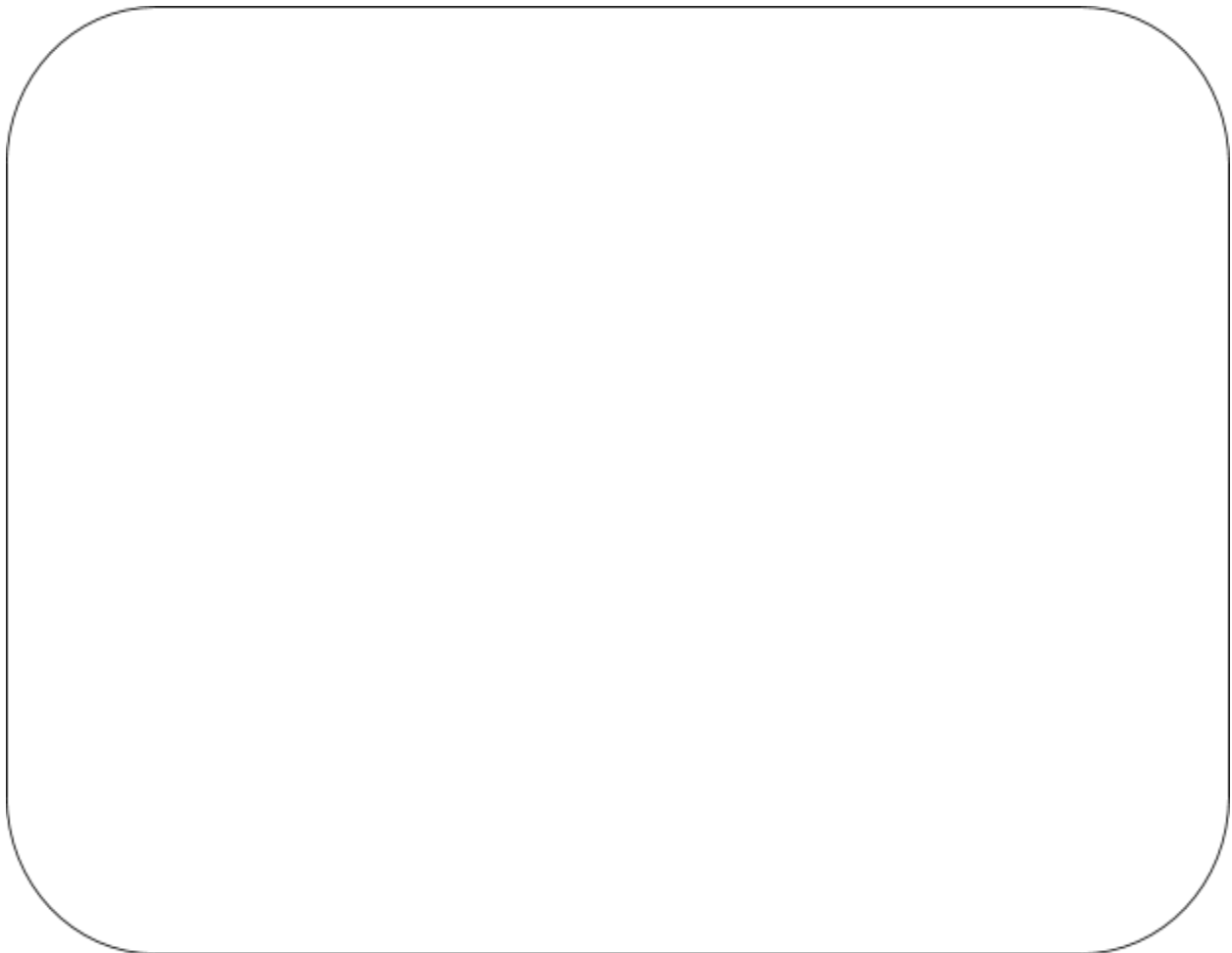
Working Hard to be Useless

Field Trip Engagement Activity at UMOCA

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Pick a piece of defensive architecture from in the exhibit, or in or around the building and draw it in the box. Please be prepared to share with the class.



Working Hard to be Useless K-5

Post-Field Trip Engagement Activity after UMOCA

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Look closely at the picture to figure out what part of the bench is “defensive architecture.” Share your ideas with your table group. On your paper, draw or collage a new structure on top of the picture to make it easier for people to use the bench.

What communities are most affected by this bench design?

How does your structure help people better use this space?



Selected Artworks from *Working Hard to be Useless*:

Nils Norman, *The Urbanomics Archive Trailer*, 2008
<http://www.dismalgarden.com>

This digital video points out the pervasiveness of defensive architecture design and our lack of awareness of how often it is used to control how we interact with places that are designated for public use.



Sara Ross, *Archisuits*, 2005-2006
<http://www.insecurespaces.net>

Ross' *Archisuits* were created as a response to defensive architectural structures found in urban centers. Each suits allows the wearer to fit into or onto structures designed to deny them.



Nathaniel Russell, *Fake Fliers*, Ongoing
<http://nathanielrussell.com>

Russell's photocopied fliers use collaged found images and handwritten messages to create humorous calls-to-action for those who feel disenfranchised from everyday life.



Field Trips at UMOCA:

The Working Hard to be Useless exhibit is on display at UMOCA until December 29, 2018

- Free guided tours of the galleries are available for all ages. Please schedule tours two weeks in advance. Tours are limited to a maximum of 60 students, and we require an adult chaperone to student ratio of 1:10.
- To schedule a school field trip to UMOCA, download the field trip request form at: www.utahmoca.org/school-tours-2
- For questions about school field trips and to submit your tour request form, contact Elly Baldwin at: 801-328-4201 x124 or elly.baldwin@utahmoca.org

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