

The LEGO® Americana Roadshow: Building Across America

American Landmarks

Subject: American History/Civics

Grades 4-8

The LEGO Americana Roadshow: *Building Across America* provides a unique opportunity for teachers to develop an engaging lesson plan for their students. Iconic landmarks intricately recreated using LEGO bricks, are the basis for a variety of discussion topics for students. Ranging from American History to architectural designs to government and civics discussions, teachers can create lessons plans inspired by a well-known medium – LEGO bricks.

Example Lesson Objectives:

Students can research and understand

- Seminal moments in American History (Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary War, Supreme Court decisions, Immigration, etc.)
- Civics discussions: 3 branches of our government
- How and why people build structures
- How structures can reflect cultural beliefs and values
- Understand some reasons on why landmarks happen
- Investigate memorials or landmarks in their community
- What are some of the landmark decisions to come out of the Supreme Court in the last 100 years?

Inquiry Questions and Setting the Stage:

- Why do people build structures?
- Name some important structures in your city or state.
- Structures usually serve a function but also serve as a symbol that identify a place or represent a cultural belief or value of a place and become landmarks.

Putting it All Together: Activities

Students can work independently or in groups to research some of our nation’s famous landmarks. Select from the list of landmarks below that are in The LEGO American Roadshow. All of these landmarks are LEGO builds that can be viewed at the show.

Capitol Building – the Legislative Branch of our government White House – the Executive Branch of our government Supreme Court – the Judicial Branch of our government

Jefferson Memorial – the “author of the Declaration of Independence” and 3rd President of the US

Washington Monument – “The Father of Our Country” and 1st President Statue of Liberty – “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...” Discuss immigration

Old North Church – “One if by Land, Two if by Sea” Paul Revere and his midnight ride...the Revolutionary War

Lincoln Memorial – The Civil War and our 16th President

Independence Hall – Location of the signing of the Declaration of Independence

Liberty Bell – “Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof,” ...discuss other symbols country’s use to celebrate freedom

As they look for information for their oral presentation, consider themselves as tour guides and what information would they believe is important to tell visitors while touring the building. Be creative.

During oral presentations class should take notes to be able to write on index card a recap paragraph on why the structure was built including date of completion. Then each student can arrange the cards in order of their completion date.

The Statue of Liberty is in New York Harbor, in New York City. It was dedicated on October 28, 1886 and was a gift to the United States from France. President Grover Cleveland, the former New York governor, presided over the event. This colossal copper stature has stood as a universal symbol of freedom and democracy and greeted immigrants entering the United States from all over the world. In 1933, the statue was transferred to the National Park Service. If you want to visit the visit the Stature of Liberty today is Ellis Island Ferry system. Private vessels are not allowed to dock at Liberty and Ellis Islands.

Have a follow-up discussion so students can compare and contrast what they learned about the landmarks

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1. For what different reasons do people build amazing structures?
2. What are some of the common reasons people build landmarks?
3. Which landmark do you believe is the most spectacular? Why?
4. How have characteristics, or features, of landmarks remained the same throughout history? How have they changed?
5. Discuss landmarks in different parts of the world. How are they alike? How are they different?
6. What do you think is the most important characteristic that a landmark must have?

Related Information

National Register of Historic Places
The Great Buildings Collection