

# A Gift From the Past

### Lesson Objectives

Students will:

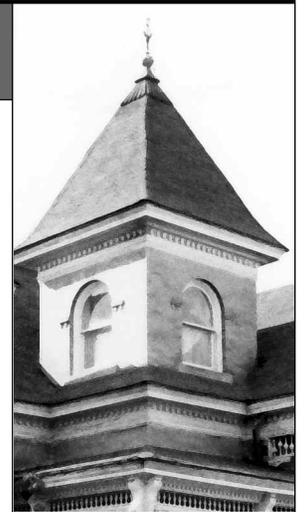
- Examine their feelings about the loss of a cultural artifact.
- Discuss citizens' responsibility to be good stewards of our resources.
- Identify and research gifts to their community.
- Develop a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of gifts to their community.

### Teacher Background

This lesson uses the destruction of an alleged family heirloom to elicit student reaction to the loss of an unique cultural artifact. For your “heirloom,” choose an item that looks old and will break easily when dropped or knocked over. You may want to make a trip to the thrift store to find it. We leave it to you to develop the story surrounding your “heirloom.” The more actual details of your family history you weave into the story, the more heartfelt and believable your delivery will be. Emphasize how the “heirloom” connects you to people in the past. (e.g., My great-grandmother used this cup. She died before I was born, but this cup is something we share. It connects our lives.) The lesson contains two Student Activity options from which you can choose.

### Setting the Stage

- 1. Tell students:** *Since we have been studying the history of Washington County, I want to share something special from my family history with you. Take out your heirloom and tell its story. Be sure to mention that it is a “gift from the past.”*
- 2.** Inadvertently break the heirloom during the course of your story.
- 3.** Ask students to share their feelings about the loss of the heirloom. After discussion, reveal that the item was not really a family heirloom. Ask students if they have family heirlooms that connect them to their past.
- 4. Ask students:** *If this really had been an heirloom, would its loss matter to people outside my family? What might we have learned about life long ago from this “heirloom?”*



### Duration

Two to four  
45-minute periods

### Supplies

An expendable china cup  
or other fragile object  
clipboards  
camera, optional

### Core Curriculum Objectives

#### 4th Grade

Social Studies  
6040-0401  
6040-0402

#### 7th Grade

Social Studies  
6100-0303  
6100-0503



### Student Instruction

1. Explain that the historic building(s) you have been studying is a gift from people who lived in the past. **Ask students:** *How does this building connect us to Utah's past? How does it make Washington County a better place to live? What is important about the building to you?*
2. Write the word "stewardship" on the board. **Explain:** *There is a word for the idea that we have a responsibility to care for things and pass them on to future generations. That word is "stewardship."*
3. Ask students to think of other "gifts" we have a responsibility to care for and list them on the board. (e.g. rain forests, wild animals, water, works of art.) As a class, discuss the following questions: *What will be the consequences if we are not wise stewards of these gifts? Can these resources be replaced?*
4. Write the following questions on the board:
  1. Do we have a responsibility to take care of gifts from the past? Why or why not?
  2. Is it important to show respect for people in the past by taking care of things they created?
  3. Do we have a responsibility to future generations to take care of gifts from the past?

Divide students into groups of four or five to discuss these questions. Explain that there are no right answers to the questions. In fact, people often debate questions like these. Tell students they will need to report back to the class the opinion or opinions of their group. After allowing at least five minutes for discussion, reconvene the class and ask groups to share their opinions.

### Student Activity Option 1

1. Prepare students for a walking tour of the neighborhood around your school to identify places that might be considered gifts to the community. Remind students to notice parks, open spaces, historic buildings, interesting new buildings, public art, beautiful trees, etc. On the walk, students will work in teams of two and bring clipboards, paper, pencils, and a camera, if possible. Assign them to record the name, location, and a brief description of each place they identify and photograph it if possible.
2. After returning to the classroom, ask students to share the places they identified and why they might be considered gifts. Compile a master list of the all the places identified by the class. Post students' photos and descriptions on a bulletin board.

**Student Activity Option 2**

1. Complete Student Activity Option 1.
2. Allow teams to select one place to research. Assign each team to create a visual image of their place (photo or drawings) and write text for a plaque that could be posted at their location to help others understand why it is a gift to the community. As a class, brainstorm a list of things that would be interesting to know about a place. The list might include: Who created this place? Why did they create it? How old is it? How do other people feel about it today? Students should answer as many of these questions as they can. Students may wish to go to the library and consult relatives and neighbors while researching their place.
3. Student will use their visual image and plaque text to increase awareness and respect for the gifts to the community they have researched. For example, students can create a “Gifts from the Past” walking tour guide of the neighborhood to share with their families. Alternatively, students can make a bulletin board display for the hallway with slogans about the importance of gifts from the past. If possible, ask the class to select one or two interesting places that are not well known in the community. Assign students to write letters to the mayor or planning commission about actually placing a marker at these sites to enhance public recognition of their significance.

**Extensions***Stewardship in Your Community*

As a class, explore how the concept of stewardship applies to resources in your community. Are there groups that work to promote stewardship? Find out what actions each citizen can take to be a wise steward.

*Raising Awareness of Respect*

Take students on a walk around the school interior, school campus, and/or the surrounding neighborhood. Students list any signs of disrespect or neglect they see. Look for graffiti, broken trees, damaged property, etc. After returning to the classroom, ask students to discuss how the examples of disrespectful behavior they saw impact the community. Assign students to design a public awareness campaign aimed at improving respect for public and private property in the community. Students will write and perform a speech, newscast, or radio talk show dealing with the issue. Students will also design a billboard promoting respect for “Gifts from the Past” or “Gifts to the Future.”



*Read about Stewardship*

Read one of these books about the importance of stewardship:

Eve Bunting, *Someday a Tree*

Susan Vizurraga, *Our Old House*

Janice Shefelman, *Victoria House*

Lisa Campbell Ernst, *Squirrel Park*

Marcus Pfister, *Milo and the Magical Stones*

Kristine L. Franklin, *When the Monkeys Came Back*

George Ancona, *Riverkeeper*

Agra Carment Deedy, *Agatha's Feather Bed*