Objectives

Students will:

☒ Observe clues in a classroom.
☒ Infer how the classroom is used and who is using it.
☒ Evaluate the applicability of “reading the classroom” to other buildings.

Student Instruction

⇒ Ask students:
  If I walked into your bedroom, what would I know about you?
  Would I know if you were a boy or a girl?
  Would I know what your interests are?
  Would I know if you share your room?
  What clues would tell me this?

Student Activity/Product

Take your students to a classroom with which they are not familiar. You can use your own classroom if another is not available, but an unfamiliar classroom will work better. Prior to the activity, ask the teacher in the unfamiliar classroom to provide answers to the questions on the Mystery History of Room ___ Activity Sheet for comparison with students’ answers after they complete the activity.

Assign each student a partner. Tell students: Pretend that you are detectives who have never seen this classroom. Your job is to discover all you can about the people who use the room by examining what the room looks like, how it is arranged, and what is found here.

Pass out Mystery History of Room ___ Activity Sheet. Read the instructions and do the example as a class.

Teams complete the activity sheet. Monitor each team to make sure they understand what clues to look for and how to draw conclusions from the clues.

Optional: Points may be given for each clue and conclusion.
As a class, go through each question on the activity sheet sharing clues and conclusions. If students completed the Mystery History of Room ___ Activity Sheet in an unfamiliar classroom, compare student conclusions with the actual situation in the classroom as described by the teacher. Students should be able to see that many of their conclusions are correct.

Ask students:

Do you think every building has a Mystery History just like our classroom? What are some things that buildings can tell us about the people who live or work in them? (Lifestyle, working conditions, values, style preferences, pastimes, etc.)

Links

Lesson 4: What Does Your House Say About You? Pre-Tour
Mystery History of Room

Solve the Mystery History of this classroom! Look around the room for clues that tell about the people who use this room every day. Use the clues to draw conclusions. See the example below.

Example

How old are the people who use this room?

**Clues**

1. The coats on the rack fit young people.
2. The desks and chairs are the kind used in the upper elementary grades.
3. The math and reading books are for 4th graders.
4. There is one teacher desk and chair.

So we think the people using this room are approximately 10 years old, and one teacher, age unknown.

1. How many people use this room?

**Clues**

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________

So we think ________ people use this room.

2. What activities take place in this room?

**Clues**

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________

So we think that ___________________________________________ happens in this room.
3. What subjects are taught in this room?

Clues
-1- __________________________________________________________________________
-2- __________________________________________________________________________
-3- __________________________________________________________________________
-4- __________________________________________________________________________

So we think that ____________________________________________________________________
are taught in this room.

4. What are some things that the people using this room care about?

Clues  What personal objects do you find? What is there a lot of?
-1- __________________________________________________________________________
-2- __________________________________________________________________________
-3- __________________________________________________________________________
-4- __________________________________________________________________________

So we think that ____________________________________________________________________
is valued by people using this room.

5. What is the room leader like?
Can you tell anything about him/her by examining how the room is decorated, what is found on the main desk, or special objects belonging to the leader? What is important to him/her?

Clues
-1- __________________________________________________________________________
-2- __________________________________________________________________________
-3- __________________________________________________________________________
-4- __________________________________________________________________________

So we think that the room leader is  male  or  female. (circle one)
The leader likes ________________________________________________________________

The leader feels that __________________________________________________________
is important.

6. Extend your study: What is the purpose of the building?
   Look for clues in the hall, the office, and on the grounds.

   Clues
   - 1- ________________________________________________________________________
   - 2- ________________________________________________________________________
   - 3- ________________________________________________________________________
   - 4- ________________________________________________________________________

   So we think that this building is used for ______________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________