Symbol of the City

Objectives
Students will:

- Make observations from examining an historic photo.
- Develop questions for historical inquiry.
- Research answers to their questions in a reading packet, on a field trip, and in other lesson activities.

Student Instruction
1. Show City and County Building Historical Photo overhead and pass out copies of photo to students. **Ask students:** Have you ever seen this building before? Where do you think it is located? What do you think the building is used for? Does the building look old or new? What clues tell you this? Make a list of observations on the board.

2. **Tell students:** The building in the photograph is called the Salt Lake City and County Building. It was built over 100 years ago. It is one of the most important buildings in Salt Lake City and there are many exciting stories about it. We are going to explore the City and County Building by reading, doing activities, and taking a field trip.

3. **Ask students:** Before we begin exploring, tell me what would you like to know about this building? List student questions on the board.

Student Activity
1. Pass out the Symbol of the City Reading Packet to each student and start reading as a class. **Students will not be able to finish the packet in one sitting.** Take time to discuss the bolded vocabulary words and do the activities found in the reading. The reading packet and activities are necessary as background information for students going on the tour.

2. Refer back to the questions students developed prior to reading the packet. In teams or as a class, students answer as many questions as possible based on the information in the reading packet. Students record any questions they could not answer to ask their guide on the tour. They may also add new questions that came up in the reading. Students may find answers to some of their questions as they complete additional lessons in the teacher’s guide. Likewise, they may add questions to their list to ask on the tour.

Resources
For a more complete history of the City and County Building, visit Salt Lake City’s Web site at: www.ci.slc.ut.us/info/ccbuilding/ccbuilding.htm
Your class will go on an exciting adventure!
You will visit one of the most important buildings in Salt Lake City—the Salt Lake City and County Building. It was built over 100 years ago.

If a 100-year-old building could talk, imagine the secrets it would tell! You will learn that during its long life, the City and County Building:

- Had bats in the clock tower.
- Has floors with Native American designs.
- Is covered with stone people and animals.
- Has a sculpture of two children.
- Was almost torn down.
- Sits on springs like giant slinkies.
- Holds the offices of Salt Lake City’s government leaders.

The Old City Hall

Salt Lake City’s first city hall was built in 1864. At this time, Salt Lake City was still a small farming community. The old city hall is a square, two-story building made of red sandstone. It has a wood tower with a bell that was the city’s fire alarm.

Salt Lake City grew rapidly and so did the job of the government. Twenty years after the old city hall was built, it was too small to house all the people who helped run the city. Everyone agreed that Salt Lake City needed a new building where both the city and county government could have offices. Plans were drawn, a site was selected, and workers began to dig the foundation.

We Disagree!

Do family members always agree? Of course not, and neither do citizens in a community. In fact, the City and County Building has always caused a lot of debate!

Soon after work began on the new city hall, a new mayor and city council were elected. They didn’t like the plans for the new city hall and put a stop to the project. They felt the design was too expensive and the structure might even be unsafe. They abandoned the first building site and started over. City officials now decided to construct the new city hall on Washington Square.

Washington Square

What do you think of when you hear the name “Washington Square?” Who do you think the square was named after? Is it a good name for the site of a city hall? Why or why not?

Washington Square has an interesting history! It was one of four city blocks set aside as public spaces when Salt Lake City was planned. It was originally called Emigration Square. When settlers first arrived in the valley, they needed a place to stay. Emigration Square was a campground where settlers stayed in wagons or tents until they had a better place to live. Later, the people of Salt Lake City used the square as a circus ground and a baseball diamond. Occasionally, it was even used as a dump!

Look at the photograph of Washington Square on the next page. City officials wanted the square to look like a park when the City and County Building was finished. Forty-five different kinds of trees were planted on Washington Square. Fountains and benches were added to make it a relaxing and beautiful place.
Look at the photo of a monument on the west side of Washington Square. Real children posed for this statue. Find the statue on your tour and learn how children helped the city long ago.

Students: If you want to learn more about Washington Square, ask your teacher to present Lesson 7: It Happened at Washington Square. If you want to learn more about the Children’s Monument, ask your teacher to present Lesson 10: Salt Lake City Kids Take Action.

Bigger and Better Plans

Now that they had selected a site, city officials had a contest to find the best design for the City and County Building. Fifteen architects entered. Many were famous for designing other buildings in the city.

Not everyone was happy when the city council announced the winning design. Some people called it ugly and old-fashioned. Others were angry because the bid of $377,978 was double what the first building would have cost! The city council, however, was confident that the design they selected would be a success.

The construction of the new City and County Building finally began in 1891. Builders placed a time capsule in the cornerstone. The capsule was a copper box containing objects that officials felt would be interesting to people in the future. The box contained pictures of city officials, money, and a belt buckle from the city fire department! What would you put in a time capsule to tell people in the future about your life?

Birth of a Landmark

When the building was finished in 1894, there was a great celebration! People came on horseback and in carriages to watch the ceremony and hear speeches. One city councilman said, “In the future, Salt Lake City and County will continue to produce fine buildings, but none upon which a people will look with greater pride.”

A portrait of George M. Scott, the mayor who approved the plans for the building, was presented to the city. This started a new tradition. After the City and County Building opened, most Salt Lake City mayors had their portraits painted and hung in the building.

People were proud of the City and County Building! By 1894, Salt Lake City was no longer a small pioneer community. It had become an important American city! The majestic new building showed that Salt Lake City had a bright future.

The City and County Building became a symbol for Salt Lake City and Utah. The city put a picture of the building on its official seal. You can see this picture on letters from city leaders and even on the side of city police cars. When people see the City and County Building, or a picture of it, they know it stands for Salt Lake City.

Buildings Can Be Symbols

How can a building be a symbol? If a building reminds you of a feeling or an idea, then the building is a symbol.
When you look at the City and County Building, how does it make you feel and what does it remind you of? City officials wanted the building to symbolize the power of government and a growing city. Architects worked hard to design a building that symbolized these ideas by using just the right material and design.

**Outside the City & County Building**

Architects planned many **carvings** on the outside of the City and County Building. On your field trip you will see stone carvings, including faces, animals, and **gargoyles**! Some of the carvings are symbols of stories from the history of Salt Lake City.

Find the photo marked *City and County Building Carving*. This carving is on the west side of the building. Make a list of all the objects in the carving. Then answer these questions:

- **Who are the two men? Can you tell by looking at what they are holding?**
- **Find the sun. Is the sun rising or setting? Why?**
- **How does this carving symbolize the history of Salt Lake City?**

On your field trip, you will see statues above each entrance and on the top of the clock tower. The statues are symbols representing important ideas. For example, one statue is called Justice. She holds a scale in her hand. On your field trip, find out the name of each statue and what the names mean.

Find the page with the *City and County Building Line Drawing*. Architects use shapes to design buildings. How many different shapes can you find on the City and County Building? Find and color the circles blue. Find and color all the triangles red. An arch is a curve that looks like an upside-down “U.” You often see them over windows and doors. Find and color all the arches green.

**Inside the City & County Building**

When you step inside the City and County Building, you know you are in an important place. The architects designed the **interior** to give it a majestic feeling. The building has high ceilings, tall windows, long hallways, and beautiful **domes**. Some of the walls are lined with yellow **onyx**, a stone that looks like **marble**. The drinking fountains are shaped like shells and even the bathrooms have gold lettering above the doors!

The architects also made sure that the City and County Building had the modern **technology** of 1894. Electric lights had recently been invented. People weren’t sure that the new lights were dependable. The **chandeliers** in the City and County Building could use either the “new” electricity or the “old” natural gas—just in case!

The building had some of the first elevators in the city. City workers were also excited to have ONE telephone! Instead of phones, offices had **speaking tubes**. People yelled through these tubes to talk to each other from floor to floor!

**How was the Building Used Long Ago?**

The City and County Building was home for both the **Salt Lake City** and **Salt Lake County Governments**. To keep the furniture and offices separate, everything on the city side was colored red and everything on the county side was green.

For more than 20 years, the building could have been called the “City, County and **State** Building!” The **Constitutional Convention** met in the City and County Building to write **Utah’s Constitution**. The **governor** and **state legislature** had their offices there until the Utah State Capitol Building was finished in 1916.
Symbol of the City
The City & County Building Teacher's Guide
This photo shows people in the 1940s coming to the City and County Building to buy license plates for their cars. What other government services were offered at the City and County Building?

Salt Lake City citizens came to the building to pay water bills, buy license plates for their cars, check out books from the library, and even get married. The City and County Building was like a “one-stop shopping mall” for government services.

**How is the Building Used Today?**

Can you check out books in the City and County Building today? No, the city government is now so large that it needs all the space. The county government moved to its own building in the 1980s. Officials decided to keep the building’s name the same even though only the city uses it today.

The offices of many important city leaders are in the City and County Building. On your field trip, you will see the offices of the city council and the mayor. The city council is the legislative branch of Salt Lake City government. It passes all the laws for the city. The Council Chambers, where the city council meets, is the one room in the building that has been used for the same purposes since the building was constructed.

The mayor leads the executive branch. He or she puts the laws into action by assigning committees or departments to handle the needs of the city. It takes many different departments to make sure that the city runs well. You will pass offices for these departments on your tour.

**Students:** If you want to learn more about city government, ask your teacher to present Lesson 5: Who Runs the City?

**Changes and Neglect**

Do you think that the City and County Building has stayed the same over the past 100 years? No, buildings change and get old just like people do.

Imagine an office long ago. City workers didn’t use a lot of equipment. They had desks, chairs, and bookcases in their offices. Now, picture a modern office. Think of all the equipment used in offices today!

Over the years, the building became more crowded and less effective. People began to change the building. The ceilings were lowered, the domes were covered, and big rooms were divided into smaller ones. After a while the inside of the building lost its majestic feel.

On the outside of the building, the carvings wore down and chunks of sandstone began to fall on the sidewalks. People worried that the building might collapse in an earthquake. Some people complained that the building was too outdated to represent the city.

You know how important it is to take care of your body and your favorite things. Imagine what would happen if you didn’t brush your teeth for a month! Yuck!

Buildings need regular care too. No one spent the time and money needed to make important repairs to the City and County Building. By the 1980s the building was in bad shape.

**Students:** If you want to learn more about the importance of caring for resources, ask your teacher to present Lesson 6: A Gift from the Past—Reflecting on the City & County Building.
The Big Debate

The City and County Building had reached a crisis! People had to decide whether to restore the building or to tear it down and construct a new one. Salt Lake City citizens debated what to do. Some people said that the building was too old and would cost too much to fix. Many people loved the old building and saw it as the symbol of the city. They argued that the building should be saved.

Mayor Ted Wilson encouraged restoration and appointed a Restoration Committee to develop a plan. The committee took a poll (or survey) to find out what citizens wanted. The poll showed that most people wanted to keep the building. Next the committee hired experts to study whether the City and County Building could be restored.

The experts found that the building could be saved at about the same cost it would take to build a new one. Their report also showed that the building could be made safer in an earthquake and that it would function well as a city hall when it was restored. Based on this information, the city council voted to restore the City and County Building.

Students: If you want to learn more about historic preservation and decision-making, ask your teacher to present Lesson 3: Making Tough Choices.

As Good As New

The restoration of the City and County Building took over two years. One goal of the project was to restore the majesty of the City and County Building. Outside the building the stonework was repaired. Craftsmen made new carvings to replace the ones that had worn down.

Inside the building, craftsmen fixed the old wood and painted the walls the same colors as when the building was first built. They uncovered the domes and high ceilings. Soon the building was as beautiful as it had been 100 years ago.

Making the City and County Building safer in an earthquake was another important goal of the project. Engineers decided to set the whole building on over 400 boxes called base isolators. Inside the boxes are layers of rubber and steel that act like a giant slinky. During an earthquake, the base isolators will move with the earth and absorb the shaking. The City and County Building will move very little. This will keep the building from falling over or being damaged.

The City and County Building was the first historic building in the world to use base isolators. Engineers and architects come from all over the world to see it. You will see the base isolators in boxes beneath the building on your tour.

Students: If you want to learn more about the work of craftsmen at the City and County Building, ask your teacher to present Lesson 9: Be a Craftsman! If you want to learn more about base isolators, ask your teacher to present Lesson 2: Rock, Rattle, & Roll—Preparing the City & County Building for an Earthquake.

Celebrate the City

The City and County Building restoration was completed in 1989. When the building re-opened, thousands of people came to the celebration. Past and present government officials gave speeches and met the people. School children got involved by giving
tours of the building during the celebration. The people were thrilled to see the beauty of the City and County Building restored.

In cities throughout the world, the city hall and town square are the center of public life. The Salt Lake City and County Building has filled that role for over 100 years. Festivals and important announcements continue to be held here, bringing the people together.

After all the controversy that followed the City and County Building throughout its life, everyone agrees that it is a magnificent symbol of the city.