

Neighborhood and Community



4. Bonnard



5. Crite



11. Hassam



13. Jones



15. Klee



20. Lawrence,
Panel No. 47



22. Phillips



26. Shinn

Neighborhoods and community involvement provide an important balance to urban isolation and anonymity. Artists in the *Art of the City Teaching Kit* have interpreted how we define ourselves as a community. This thematic grouping illustrates community sports events, festivals, and entertainment from Phillips's *Night Baseball* to Crite's Boston neighborhood in *Parade on Hammond Street*. Artists like Jones, Shinn, and Hassam observed our everyday neighborhood activities—living near each other, conversing on the sidewalks, or even sleeping on the rooftop (in very close proximity to one's neighbors!) on a hot summer's night.

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies: Have students use the works of art in this thematic grouping to define the term community. Is a community necessarily where a person lives? What is the personal impact of belonging to a community? Does it improve life?

SS 4, 5

Social Studies: Looking at *Night Baseball* and *Parade on Hammond Street*, have students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of experiencing activities and events as a community versus as an individual.

SS 4, 5

Social Studies: Have students make a list of the ways that people are participating in their community in each of the works of art and then analyze these activities.

SS 4, 5

Visual Arts/Social Studies: Artists like Crite, Lawrence, and Shinn used art to record the daily lives of people in their neighborhoods. Have students create and illustrate a calendar of community events for their city.

VA 1, 3, 4, 6 SS 2, 4, 5, 7

Visual Arts: To study diversity in communities, have students collect advertisements, photos, and drawings for different ethnic restaurants, markets, and shops in their city. Then have students create a collage, gluing clippings into a city work of art.

VA 1, 2, 3, 4

Language Arts/Social Studies: Have students discuss the city dwellers sleeping outside on a hot night in Everett Shinn's *Tenements at Hester Street*. Why are these people outside? How would this scene be different in a rural area? Have students write a short story from the point of view of one of the figures, describing this experience. Students could describe how an occurrence like this would affect one's relationship with others in their community.

LA 5, 6 SS 3, 4

Language Arts/Social Studies: Several of the artists featured in the *Art of the City Teaching Kit* used their community resources for research and inspiration. Jacob Lawrence conducted research for *The Migration Series* at the 135th Street Public Library in Harlem, New York City. Crite went to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Kane visited museums and libraries in Pittsburgh. Have students research the types of resources available in their community and then plan field trips to those places.

LA 8 SS 1, 5

Visual Arts/Language Arts: Many artists are inspired by their surroundings and travel with their materials almost everywhere they go. Marjorie Phillips often took her sketching materials with her to baseball games (see figure 30, Tab 4—Primary Sources). John Kane carried sketching materials with him on his regular jobs around Pittsburgh, and Everett Shinn went on newspaper assignments with pen and paper to illustrate interesting people, places, and events (see figure 8, Tab 4—Primary Sources). Have students tour their school neighborhood, take notes, and sketch interesting people, places, and activities, and then write descriptive essays based on these observations.

VA 1, 3 LA 5

Social Studies/Visual Arts: In this thematic grouping, there are several images that show where communities gather, whether in a sports stadium, on a neighborhood sidewalk, or in homes. What is the impact of having a place to gather as a community? Have students draw their ideal community meeting place.

SS 4, 5 VA 1, 3

Social Studies/Language Arts: Have students document community events in their city or neighborhood and compile them into a “What’s Happening” newsletter or Web site.

SS 4, 5 LA 11

Social Studies: After discussing Crite’s *Parade on Hammond Street*, have students research and discuss occasions that we celebrate as a community, such as parades and fairs. Why are such events important to the community? What purpose do they serve?

SS 4, 5

Social Studies: Have students research and discuss why neighborhoods differ. Have students design their own community.

SS 4, 5

Language Arts/Visual Arts/Social Studies: In *Here Is New York*, E. B. White described the neighborhood character of New York: “each area is a city within a city within a city” (see Tab 4—Primary Sources for excerpt). Have students compare and contrast the neighborhoods in Hassam’s *Washington Arch*, *Spring* and Shinn’s *Tenements at Hester Street*.

LA 1, 3 VA 3, 4, 6 SS 2, 3

Visual Arts/Social Studies: Lawrence always said that he considered his artwork to be a “portrait of my peers, a portrait of myself.” Have students create a community collage or mural. Have each student create a portion of the community—buildings, forms of transportation, members of the community, and signs. Students could then put all of these elements together to “build” their own community.

VA 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 SS 4, 5

Social Studies: Have students conduct a community interview with a person who has been a resident for more than two years (see Tab 3—“Community Interview” worksheet). Some sample questions could be: When did you first move here? How is your community different now from when you moved here? Within your community, who has been a mentor or someone you looked to for advice? Did this person affect the career you have chosen today? How so? How do you feel about your community? Does it need change or should it stay the same? Describe. In their interview report, students could include quotes that they have written down or recorded as primary sources.

SS 2, 4



Allan Rohan Crite,
Parade on Hammond Street,
1935, oil on canvas board

Community Interview

You can learn a lot about your community by talking to some of the people in your neighborhood. Think about someone in your community that you would like to know more about. Consider someone from the “Who to Interview” list. Interview one person who has been a resident in your community for more than two years.

Name of Interviewee: _____

Interview Questions

Before the interview, prepare five questions including the questions below. Be creative when making up your own questions.

1. How long have you lived in this community?
2. How has your community changed? Please be descriptive in your answers (include specific people, street names, parks, stores, etc.).
3. How do you feel about your community? Does it need to change, or should it stay the same? Describe.
4. _____
5. _____

On Your Way to the Interview

On your way to the interview, study the building in which this person lives or works. How does the building match the job or life of the person you are interviewing? For example, if you interview someone who works in a store, what does the building tell you about the store? What might the store tell you about your interviewee? Is it a big store? What does this person sell?

Who to Interview?

family member
(grandmother,
aunt, uncle, etc.)
neighbor
fireman
counselor
store owner
policeman
Metro worker
teacher
local doctor
friend
artist
cab driver
mailman
musician
principal

Record It!

It is important to take notes or tape record your interview. (Make sure to ask your interviewee if it is OK to tape record your interview!) Occasionally, try to write down the exact words that he or she said. These quotes are a very important part of an interview.

Excerpts from *The Color of a Great City*

by Theodore Dreiser, 1923

Neighborhoods

Yet before I was fifteen years in the city, all of the additional bridges, other than Brooklyn Bridge which was here when I came and which so completely served to change New York from the thing it was then to what it is now, were already in place—Manhattan, Williamsburg, Queens Borough Bridges. And the subways had been built, at least in part. But before then, if anything, the great island, as I have said, was even more compact of varied and foreign groups, and one had only to wander casually and not at any great length to come upon the Irish in the lower East and West Sides; the Syrians in Washington Street—a great mass of them; the Greeks around 26th, 27th and 28th Streets on the West Side; the Italians around Mulberry Bend; the Bohemians in East 67th Street, and the Sicilians in East 116th Street and thereabouts. The Jews were still chiefly on the East Side.

Being fascinated by these varying nationalities, and their neighborhoods, I was given for the first year or two of my stay here to wandering among them, as well as along and through the various parks, the waterfronts and the Bowery, and thinking, thinking, thinking on this welter of life and the difficulties and the strangeness of it. The veritable tides of people that were forever moving here—so different to the Middle-West cities I had known. And the odd, or at least different, devices and trades by which they made their way—the small shops, trades, tricks even. For one thing, I was often given to wondering how so many people could manage to subsist in New York by grinding hand organs alone, or shining shoes or selling newspapers or peanuts, or fruits or vegetables from a small stand or cart.

Going to Work

Have you ever arisen at dawn or earlier in New York and watched the outpouring in the meaner side-streets or avenues? It is a wondrous thing. It seems to have so little to do with the later, showier, brisker life of the day, and yet it has so very much. It is in the main so drab or shabby-smart at best, poor copies of what you see done more efficiently later in the day. Typewriter girls in almost stage or society costumes entering shabby offices; boys and men made up to look like

actors and millionaires turning into the humblest institutions, where they are clerks and managers. These might be called the machinery of the city, after the elevators and street cars and wagons are excluded, the implements by which things are made to go....

Already at six and six-thirty in the morning they have begun to trickle small streams of human beings Manhattan or cityward, and by seven and seven-fifteen these streams have become sizable affairs. By seven-thirty and eight they have changed into heavy, turbulent rivers, and by eight-fifteen and eight-thirty and nine they are raging torrents, no less. They overflow all the streets and avenues and every available means of conveyance. They are pouring into all available doorways, shops, factories, office buildings—those huge affairs towering so significantly above them. Here they stay all day long, causing those great hives and their adjacent streets to flush with a softness of color not indigenous to them, and then at night, between five and six, they are going again, pouring forth over the bridges and through the subways and across the ferries and out on the trains, until the last drop of them appears to have been exuded, and they are pocketed in some outlying side-street or village or metropolitan hall-room—and the great, turbulent night of the city is on once more.

Six O'Clock

To me, personally, there is no hour which quite equals that which heralds the close of the day's toil. I know, too, that others are important, the getting up and lying down of men, but this of ceasing after a day's work, when we lay down the ax or the saw, or the pen or pencil, stow our machine, take off our apron and quit—that is wonderful. Others may quit earlier. The lawyer and the merchant and the banker may cease their labors an hour earlier. The highly valued clerk or official is not opposed if he leaves at four-thirty or at five, and at five-thirty skilled labor generally may cease. But at six o'clock the rank and file are through, "the great unwashed," as they have been derisively termed, the real laboring man and laboring woman. It is for them then that the six o'clock whistle blows; that the six o'clock bell strikes; it is for them that the evening lamps are lit in millions of homes; it is for them that the blue smoke of an evening fire curls upward at nightfall and that the street cars and vehicles of transfer run thick and black.

The streets are pouring with them at six o'clock. They are as a great tide in the gray and dark. They come bearing their baskets and buckets, their armfuls of garnered wood, their implements of labor and of accomplishment, and their

faces streaked with the dirt of their toil. While you and I, my dear sir, have been sitting at our ease this last hour they have been working, and where we began at nine they began at seven. They have worked all day, not from seven-thirty until five-thirty or from nine until four, but from seven to six, and they are weary.

You can see it in their faces. Some have a lean, pinched appearance as though they were but poorly nourished or greatly enervated. Some have a furtive, hurried look, as though the problem of rent and food and clothing were inexplicable and they were thinking about it all the time. Some are young yet and unscathed—the most are young (for the work of the world is done by the youth of the world)—and they do not see as yet to what their labor tends. Nearly all are still lightened with a sense of opportunity; for what may the world not hold in store? Are not its bells still tinkling, its lights twinkling? Are not youth and health and love the solvents of all our woes?

These crowds when the whistles blow come as great movements of the sea come. If you stand in the highways of traffic they are at once full to overflowing. If you watch the entrance to great mills they pour forth a living stream, dark, energetic, undulant. To see them melting away into the highways and byways is like seeing a stream tumble and sparkle, like listening to the fading echoes of a great bell. They come, vivid, vibrant, like a deep, full-throated note. They go again as bell notes finally go.

Excerpts from *A Moveable Feast*

by Ernst Hemingway, 1964

A Walk to the Seine

There were many ways of walking down to the river from the top of the rue Cardinal Lemoine. The shortest one was straight down the street but it was steep and it brought you out, after you hit the flat part and crossed the busy traffic of the beginning of the Boulevard St.-Germain, onto a dull part where there was a bleak, windy stretch of river bank with the Halle aux Vins on your right.... Across the branch of the Seine was the Ile St.-Louis with the narrow streets and the old, tall, beautiful houses, and you could go over there or you could turn left and walk along the quais with the length of the Ile St.-Louis and then Notre-Dame and Ile de la Cité opposite as you walked....

I would walk along the quais when I had finished work or when I was trying to think something out. It was easier to think if I was talking and doing something or seeing people doing something that they understood. At the head of the Ile de la Cité below the Pont Neuf where there was the statue of Henri Quatre, the island ended in a point like the sharp bow of a ship and there was a small park at the water's edge with fine chestnut trees, huge and spreading, and in the currents and back waters that the Seine made flowing past, there were excellent places to fish. You went down a stairway to the park and watched the fishermen there and under the great bridge....

Neighborhood Cafés

It was a lovely evening and I had worked hard all day and left the flat over the sawmill and walked out through the courtyard with the stacked lumber, closed the door, crossed the street and went into the back door of the bakery that fronted the Boulevard Montparnasse and out through the good bread smells of the ovens and the shop to the street. The lights were on in the bakery and outside it was the end of the day and I walked in the early dusk up the street and stopped outside the terrace of the Nègre de Toulouse restaurant where our red and white checkered napkins were in the wooden napkin rings in the napkin rack waiting for us to come to dinner. I read the menu mimeographed in purple ink and saw that the plat du jour was cassoulet. It made me hungry to read the name. I went on up the

street looking in the windows and happy with the spring evening and the people coming past. In the three principal cafés I saw people that I knew by sight and others that I knew to speak to. But there were always much nicer-looking people that I did not know that, in the evening with the lights just coming on, were hurrying to some place to drink together, to eat together and then to make love. The people in the principal cafés might do the same thing or they might just sit and drink and talk and love to be seen by others. The people that I liked and had not met went to the big cafés because they were lost in them and no one noticed them and they could be alone in them and be together. The big cafés were cheap then too, and all had good beer and the apéritifs cost reasonable prices that were clearly marked on the saucers that were served with them....

I passed the collection of inmates at the Rotonde and, scorning vice and the collective instinct, crossed the boulevard to the Dôme. The Dôme was crowded too, but there were people there who had worked.

There were models who had worked and there were painters who had worked until the light was gone and there were writers who had finished a day's work for better or for worse, and there were drinkers and characters, some of whom I knew and some that were only decoration.

I went over and sat down at a table with Pascin and two models who were sisters. Pascin had waved to me while I had stood on the sidewalk on the rue Delambre side wondering whether to stop and have a drink or not.

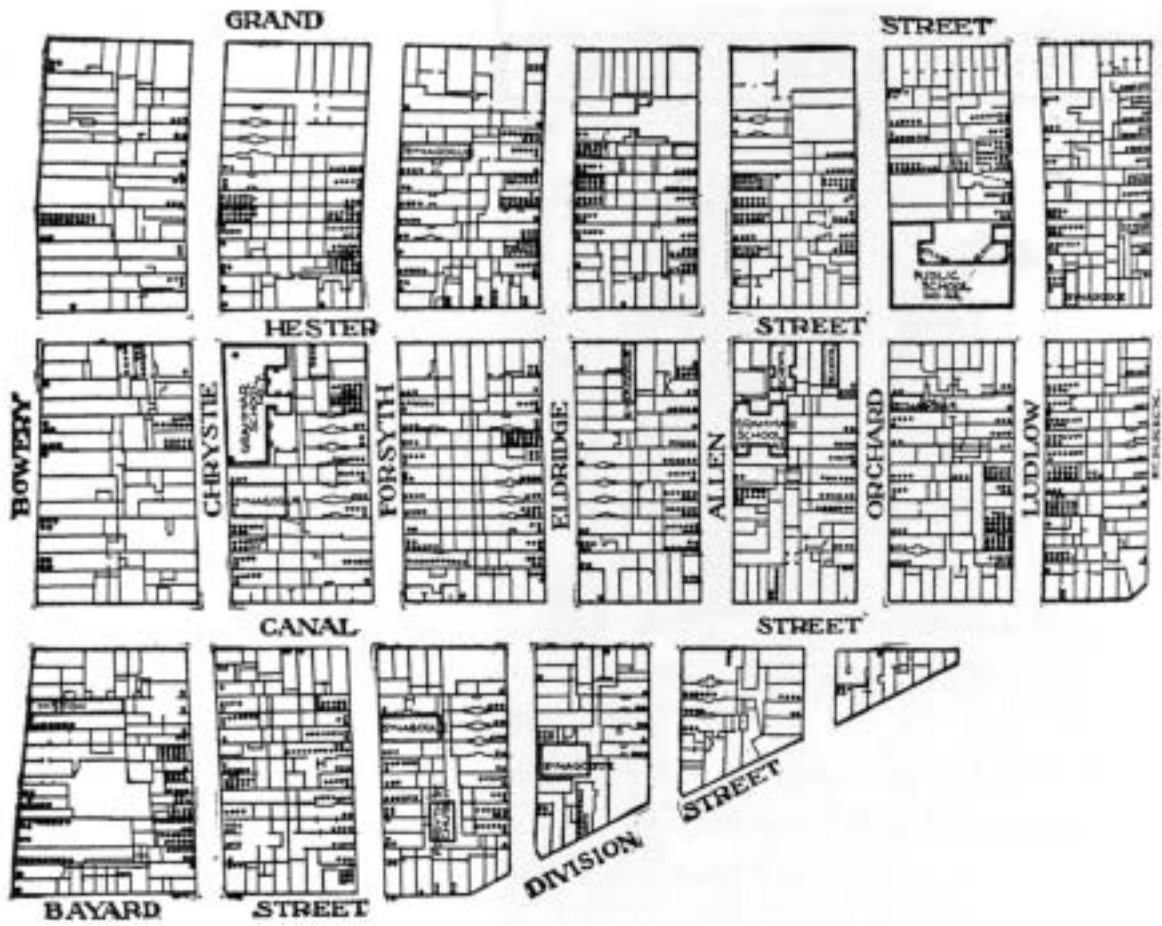


Figure 15. Lawrence Veiller, *Poverty Map* from tenement house exhibition, 1900, published in Robert W. DeForest and Lawrence Veiller, *The Tenement House Problem* (New York: Macmillan, 1903) 1:114.



Figure 16. Detroit Photographic Company, *Shoppers, New York City*, ca. 1903, photograph, The New York Public Library.



Figure 17. *Hester Street, 1896*, photograph, The New York Historical Society.



Figure 25. Lois Mailou Jones in Cabris, southern France, 1945, reproduced in *New Directions: The Howard University Magazine*, July 1977, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 10.



Figure 28. Arthur Rothstein, *Street in Boston, Massachusetts*, 1938, photograph, Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.