



Lesson 1: What is a house?

This lesson examines why we need houses and focuses on the facilities and features considered important in a well-designed house.

Support material: Worksheet A1, Information Sheet 1 “Scrapbook Instructions”.



Spotlight

Shelters and their uses



Key Concepts

Protection. Shelter. Facilities for rearing families and storing food.

Brainstorming

Any or all of the following topics may be explored with the students, who should rely on their own vocabulary and experience (where they live, observation, books, knowledge of the natural world, travel). A student/group who finds any point of particular interest may be encouraged to probe further.

● What is a house?

“House” is a word which means different things to different people in different parts of the world. Ask students to think of as many different house types as they can. List them on the board under headings such as the following. Students may suggest others.

Ireland — List/discuss houses and house types (including flats and apartments) in urban, suburban and rural settings.

Europe and the EU — Name the countries in Europe/the EU. Describe the types of houses which might be common in each but which are different from Ireland.

World-wide — Think of native populations, different cultures, rich and poor.

Natural world — Birds, insects, mammals, reptiles, amphibians — whether native, European or world-wide. Discuss why and how each creature uses/needs its “house”. Elicit as many different words as possible for these “homes”.

● Why do we have houses?

List as many **reasons** as possible for living in a house. Why do we need protection and shelter? From what are we being protected and sheltered? What facilities are needed in a house? These include places in which people can relax, eat, work, sleep, store food and belongings, be with their family and friends.

● What characteristics are important in any house?

Discuss space, warmth, light, good construction, privacy, security etc. List them on the board as the discussion develops.



Activity — Design a shelter for a family.



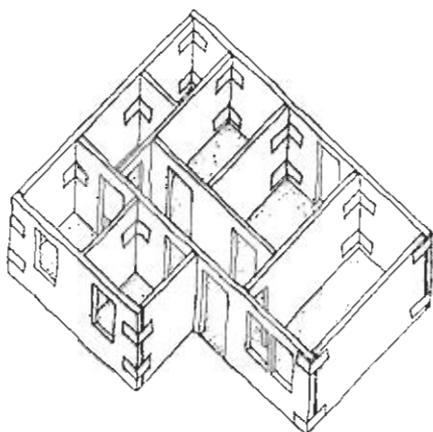
Key Concepts

Space. Natural light.

Working in pairs, the students design and construct a shelter for a family group of 4-6 people. They should consider: the spaces and facilities needed for the family; the positions of and reasons for windows and doors; the introduction/use of natural light. This is simply an exercise in determining internal space. There is no need to get too elaborate — positioning radiators, fireplaces etc. — unless the students negotiate a reason for doing so.

Materials: card, blade, scissors, glue, masking tape, Pritt Stick, pencil, ruler

Advance preparation: Cut plenty of card, using sheets of thin card or mounting board. Cardboard boxes which have been taken apart may also be used.



Teacher demonstration: Use a large piece of card to represent the floor. With a pencil and ruler, mark in the exterior walls and subdivide the space to represent the rooms. Mark the positions of doors and windows. Using additional pieces of card for the walls, mark door and window positions to correspond with the floor plan. Outline doors and windows. Cut them out, then assemble the walls on the base. Fix them provisionally with masking tape until satisfied that everything fits together.

The students now work in pairs to discuss and implement the design brief.

Review of work

Students look at their classmates' efforts and consider the effectiveness of each shelter. Remind them of Key Concepts — space and natural light.

- Which shelter best accommodates the needs of the family, making good use of space? How does it do this?
- Which shelter makes the best use of natural light? How does it achieve this?

Homework

1. Distribute copies of Worksheet A1 and discuss its requirements.
2. To complement the work they are doing, ask students to start collecting material for a **Scrapbook**. Distribute and discuss Information Sheet 1 "Scrapbook Instructions".
3. Students also start their own **Vocabulary Files** which should be updated with each lesson.



Cross-Curricular Connections

1. Biology/Environmental Studies — Find out more about animal homes and habitats. Students use what they have learned about the need for shelters and apply this to the natural world through investigating the home/shelter requirements of animals in general or of a particular group of animals (eg birds) or of animals in a specific habitat (eg rainforest, local woodland, park).
2. History/Geography — Study the evolution of human shelter. Choose a particular climate, culture or society and investigate the ways in which dwellings have changed as a result of technological advances.
3. Geography/Sociology/Construction Studies — Nomadic people and settled people need different kinds of dwellings. Investigate the requirements of a dwelling for people who have to move location two or three times a year. Think about climate, materials and the speed of settling in/moving on.
4. Languages/Gaeilge — The words which people use to talk about a house, home land, town or village can tell a lot about the way they think/feel about these things. Are there any words or sayings in the Irish language which suggest that Irish people have different attitudes about these things than English or American people do?
5. Design/English — Eileen Gray was born in Wexford in 1878. Today, furniture made to her designs can be bought in the best furniture shops throughout the world. Write an illustrated story of her life and work.