

# LANDMARKS, “I SEE ONE!”

**Subject:** Social Studies

**Skills:** Action, Application, Citizenship, Decision Making, Description, Discussion, Drawing, Gathering, Large Group, Observation, Problem Solving, Public Speaking, Responsibility, Small Group, Technological

**Duration:** 5-8 class periods to several weeks depending on the selected project

**Setting:** Classroom and Neighborhood

**Materials:**

- an enlarged community map or blueprint to mark the location of student identified landmarks
- presentation and report materials
- computers with internet access

**Michigan Curriculum Framework Content Standards and Benchmarks:**

- **Social Studies II.1.LE 2:** Strand II. Geographic Perspective, Standard 1. People, Places, and Culture, Benchmark LE 2. Locate and describe diverse kinds of communities and explain the reasons for their characteristics and locations.
- **Social Studies IV.1.LE 3:** Strand IV. Economic Perspective, Standard 1. Individual and Household Choices, Benchmark LE 3. Use a decision making model to explain a personal choice.
- **Social Studies V.1.LE 1:** Strand V. Inquiry, Standard 1. Information Processing, Benchmark LE 1. Locate information about local, state and national communities using a variety of traditional sources, electronic technologies, and direct observations.
- **Social Studies V.1.LE.3:** Strand V. Inquiry, Standard 1. Information Processing, Benchmark LE 3. Interpret social science information about local, state, and national communities from maps, graphs, and charts.
- **Social Studies VI.3.LE 1:** Strand VI. Public Discourse and Decision Making, Standard 3. Persuasive Writing, Benchmark LE 1. Compose a short essay expressing a decision on a local, state, or national policy issue.
- **Social Studies VII.1.LE 2:** Strand VII. Citizen Involvement, Standard 1. Citizen Involvement, Benchmark LE 2. Engage in activities intended to contribute to solving a local, state or national problem they have studied.
- **Social Studies V.1.MS 2:** Inquiry, Standard 1. Acquire information from books, maps, newspapers, data sets and other sources. Benchmark MS 2. Use traditional and electronic means to organize social science information and to make maps, graphs, and tables.
- **Social Studies V.2.MS 2:** Inquiry, Standard 2. Conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources. Benchmark MS 2. Gather and analyze information using appropriate information technologies to answer the question posed.
- **Social Studies V.2.MS 3:** Inquiry, Standard 2. Conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources. Benchmark MS 3. Construct an answer to the question posed and support their answer with evidence.
- **Social Studies V.2.MS 4:** Inquiry, Standard 2. Conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources. Benchmark MS 4. Report the results of their investigation including procedures followed and possible alternative conclusions.

**Kent County Collaborative Core Curriculum (KC<sup>4</sup>):**

- **Social Studies:** 3:3, 3:5, 3:7  
4:4, 4:6, 4:9, 4:10  
5:4, 5:5, 5:7, 5:9  
6:1, 6:2, 6:3, 6:4, 6:5, 6:6, 6:7, 6:8, 6:9, 6:10  
7:1, 7:2, 7:3, 7:4, 7:5, 7:8, 7:9  
8:1, 8:2, 8:3, 8:6, 8:7, 8:9

## OVERVIEW

Students learn to identify community, state, and national landmarks. They will use a decision making model to choose one landmark to promote or preserve as a national- or state recognized landmark.

## OBJECTIVES

After participating in this activity, students will be able to:

- Use data from primary (direct observation) and secondary (computer) sources to identify, locate, and research landmarks.
- Use a decision making model to explain their personal choice of a landmark for recognition.
- Compose a short proposal expressing a position on why a local landmark should be officially recognized.
- Work together in small and large groups to complete a citizen project.
- Organize a media campaign and make presentations to community and governmental groups.
- Take responsibility to promote a community landmark or help one to become nationally or state-recognized.

## BACKGROUND

When you take apart the word “**landmark**,” you see that it is literally a “mark upon the land.” It is something that tells you where you are. It is something that makes that place different from all of the space around it. A landmark can be a home, a sign, a monument, a land form, a work of art, a building, or a gathering place.

There are certain natural landmarks that occur and may impact the layout of a city or an area. These include rivers, mountains, valleys, canyons, bodies of water, and forests. Most seem to create a boundary or edge by the nature of their large scale. There are individual landmarks in nature that have become special in their own right because of their size, beauty, age or because a historic event took place there.

For instance, have you heard of nationally famous trees? There are The Inyou National Forest Pines, which are 4,600 years old; The Patriarch, the largest known bristle cone pine; and the

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E-mail: [preservation@sos.state.mi.us](mailto:preservation@sos.state.mi.us).

Giant Sequoia Champion which is 275 feet high. There are some not-so-famous trees in your own city, town, or state, and they are important because they tell a local story, like the General Custer Elm in Council Grove, Kansas. Did you know that every state has a Treaty Oak and a Post Office Oak?

Both natural and built landmarks are recognized as important features to be preserved. Some have been given special protection by the government on state and national historic lists. For example, Heritage Hill in downtown Grand Rapids is an area of old houses protected as a National Historic District and is one of the largest urban historic districts in the country. Two thirds of these old homes were slated for demolition and conversion to parking lots before they were recognized as a national landmark.



Students can search for landmarks on different roads in their own town, county or in Michigan, etc. Allow them to print out their favorite landmark, and ask them to write on the back why it is their favorite.

4. For homework, have students complete pictures and drawings of favorite landmarks that they see between home and school. Mark these points on the blueprint map. Allow time for open discussion of their landmarks. Ask them questions such as the following:

- Why is this important or significant?
- What is the history or story behind it?
- What is the geographical

significance?

- Is it a natural or manmade landmark?
- When was it built? (if appropriate) Or, about how old is it?
- Is there cultural significance to it?
- What makes it different from all the space around it?
- Why is it worthy of state or national recognition?

5. Tell the students that they will be working to preserve or promote a local landmark of their choice, but first they must agree on one landmark. Allow the students to decide by using a decision tree or a decision making model.

6. Once the landmark has been chosen, divide the class into "expert" research committees. Depending on the landmark and project, example committees might be:

- **Landmark History and Facts** — students investigate and organize history, oral interviews, significance, and facts about the landmark.
- **Landmark Media Campaign** — students investigate how to promote their landmark, develop a plan, and then lead the class on campaign activities (posters, newspaper articles, radio spots).
- **How To Become a Registered Landmark** — students investigate the rules of landmark preservation

## PROCEDURE

1. Start by selecting your goal for the completion of this activity (or, you can let your students choose). Do you want to get a local landmark officially recognized (state and/or nationally)? Do you want to promote a local landmark already officially recognized? Do you want to create your own local landmark (plant a memorial tree)?
2. Open the lesson by asking the students what a landmark is (a mark upon the land), and then explain some of the background information given. Have them brainstorm as many landmarks as they can and write them on the board (Statue of Liberty, Mackinaw Bridge, The Grand River, etc.)
3. Have students search on the internet for locally or nationally recognized landmarks. A searchable database of more than 3,000 of Michigan's National Register, State Register and Historical Marker sites can be found at <http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/landmark.html>, which is the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office website. Or write to:

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office  
Michigan Historical Center  
Michigan Department of State, Lansing, MI 48918-1800

by contacting the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. Then they start the paperwork or seek help from other interested citizens or organizations.

Ask each committee to investigate their area of expertise and report their findings and progress back to the whole class. Ask each committee to outline their reports visually and verbally on a large piece of butcher paper for presentation in front of the class.

7. To communicate how the students feel about their landmark, have them write position papers or proposals that include all of their research, information, and expert opinions (to substantiate their positions). All of the information and concerns should then be compiled into a class position paper or proposal and sent to the preservation office, legislators and allied groups.
8. For homework and/or during class, have the members of the Media Campaign group lead student groups in preparing materials for presenting the landmark idea to officials and citizens of the community. Examples might include group speeches, essays, skits, posters, displays, letters, poems, notebooks, pamphlets, etc.
9. Allow students to present their landmark idea (either in person through presentations or remotely through letters and pictures) to the Parent Teacher Association, State Historic Preservation Office, local Historical Society, neighborhood association, school board, or government officials.
10. Be persistent by helping and encouraging the students to get involved in order to fully reach their project goal.



## ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

1. Evaluate each student's position paper for a position statement and supporting information.
2. Have students select an additional landmark that they feel is

worthy of recognition; draw it; list three reasons why the landmark is significant; and list two ways that they can be personally involved to get the landmark recognized.

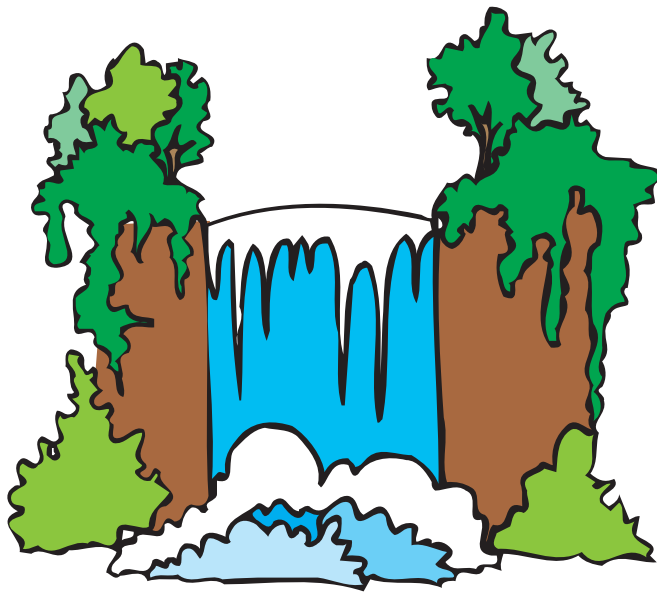
3. Have each student demonstrate how to use a decision making model by choosing another landmark to preserve.
4. Have the students write a short essay about the process they went through to decide on a landmark, what some of the steps are to promote or preserve a landmark, and how they can be involved.

### Adaptations/Extensions

1. Investigate what a monument is and compare and contrast it to a landmark. How is it different? Where is a local monument?
2. Assign each group to take turns making presentations of the landmark proposal to different groups in the community.
3. Have students list and map the state and nationally recognized landmarks in their community, city, and/or county. (Lists are located on the MI State Historic Preservation Office web site.) Require the students to list the landmarks in chronological order.
4. Assign each student to write a formal report on their favorite landmark found on the internet. Have them include a picture, descriptive information, and history.
5. Have the students make a list of famous local or regional natural landmarks (trees, rivers, waterfalls, etc.) They may be famous for their scarcity, their beauty, their size, an important event, or any other criteria.

### Computer Extensions

1. Michigan Historic Preservation Network. [Indexpage](http://www.mhpn.org/page1.htm). Mar. 2002. 18 April 2002. <<http://www.mhpn.org/page1.htm>> The mission of the Network is to create an awareness of the value of Michigan's rich cultural heritage and architectural history, to encourage the preservation and stewardship of historic resources, and to support efforts which acknowledge the contribution these resources make to the strength and vitality of Michigan's communities.
2. Michigan Historical Center. [Homepage](http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/history.html). Feb. 2002. 18 April 2002. <<http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/history.html>> Excellent Michigan resource with links to teacher and student pages.
3. The Michigan Historical Center of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries. [Michigan History for Kids](http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/mag/kids/index.html). <<http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/mag/kids/index.html>> An ambitious program to help fourth-grade educators teach our state's history. The program consists of [Michigan History for Kids](#) magazine, a 4-page reader titled [The Mitten](#) and a 32-page teacher booklet [Introducing Michigan's Past](#), all produced by Michigan History. Willie Wolverine appears throughout the magazine to help make learning history fun. Teachers also receive lesson plans developed by the education staff of the Michigan Historical Museum.
4. MI State Historic Preservation Office. [Michigan's Historic Sites Online](http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/landmark.html). 15 Jan. 2002. <<http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/landmark.html>> Offers a searchable database of more than 3,000 of Michigan's National Register, State Register and Historical Marker sites.
5. National Park Service — Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP). [Homepage](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp). 18 April 2002. <[www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp)> uses properties listed in the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places to enliven history, social studies, geography, civics, and other subjects. TwHP has created and offers a variety of products and activities that help teachers bring historic places into the classroom.



**SOURCE**

Lesson developed by Anne Williamson, curriculum consultant for *United Growth for Kent County*, a project of Michigan State University Extension. Background information from “Identifying Landmarks,” page 8 and “Conserving Natural Landmarks,” page 10 in *Walk Around the Block* by Ginny Graves HAIA, 5328 W 67th St., Prairie Village, KS 66208, Tel (913) 262-8222, Email: [ginny@cubekc.org](mailto:ginny@cubekc.org), <[www.cubekc.org](http://www.cubekc.org)>

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Contacts:

- Department of State Michigan Historical Center
- Local Historical Society
- Local Neighborhood Association
- Michigan Historical Commission
- Michigan State Historic Preservation Office

References and Teacher Resources:

- Creative Teaching With Historic Places. Cultural Resource Management, Volume 23, No. 8, in 2000. ISBN: 1068-4999. National Park Service. (This issue can be accessed electronically through the Cultural Resource Management homepage at <<http://www.cr.nps.gov/crm>>)
- Graves, Ginny. *Walk Around the Block*. Prairie Village, Kansas: Center for Understanding the Built Environment, 1997.
- Lewis, Barbara A. *Kids Guide to Service Projects*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 1995.
- Lewis, Barbara A. *Kids Guide to Social Action*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 1991.

Additional Lessons:

- Walk Around the Block, A Tree Marks the Spot, Pg. 11.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK REFERENCE**

IIID,VA1,VE1,VG,VIA1,VIC1

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*Each of us must be  
the change  
we want to see  
in the world.*

—Mahatma Gandhi

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