

From the preceding exercise, we can clearly see that object lessons can be interdisciplinary. We used rubber bands to look at history, physics, archeology, music, economics, measuring systems, games, ecology, fashion, sociology, travel, technology, and aesthetics. In the same way, we can look at architecture and the built environment from a variety of perspectives. Buildings could be looked at in terms of style, construction, technology, religious or social significance, mathematical proportion and geometry, geology, physics, history, climate, context (physical or social), chemistry (material analysis), ecology (materials and fuels used), or social structure of the culture (who made constructed the building, and by whom and how was it used.) Each of these, and many more, can be pursued further, but architecture can provide an interesting springboard.

Objects, including buildings, can be studied and enjoyed by a wide range of people and can address a wide array of learning styles. One does not need to be able to read to learn from them. Think about how variations of the rubber band exercise could be done with different age groups.

Object-based learning can lead to the development of verbal skills, visual thinking, higher order thought processes, creativity, and problem solving. Perceptual skills are used to make careful observations, which can then be used for a basis of description, comparison and contrast, analysis, generalization, inference, hypothesis formation, argument development, and transformational skills. As one participates in these exercises, one can gain experience and confidence expressing oneself verbally and in writing, as well as in other creative modes.

The following exercises are designed to get everyone comfortable talking about and thinking about the architecture they inhabit everyday.