

Exploration 7

Level I: Acquisition of Information

One of the basic skills of an architect is understanding the existing conditions. Observation and documentation are the first steps in any design project.

These questions encourage us to think like an architect and allow us to obtain information by using perceptual skills—looking, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting. They also allow us to record the information in words, drawings, photographs, tape recording, video, etc. As the teacher, you should encourage your students to become inquisitive and facilitate or augment, not replace perceptual experiences, to help them become independent thinkers. Start with using cueing and probing questions. They are a good way to get beyond the obvious.

Materials:

- Images of Ft. Necessity
- Something to write and draw on
- Something to write or draw with

Objective:

After/before a visit to Fort Necessity, students will use visual and spatial analyses of the site/representations of the site and its artifacts to answer questions concerning its history, function, materials, and design.

Standards:

- Arts: NA-VA 1, 2, 3, 4
- English: NL-ENG 5, 7, 8
- Mathematics: NM-MEA 1, 2; NM-DATA 1,4; NM-PROB 1-4; NM-PROB.REA 1-4; NM-PROB.REP 1, 2, 3
- Science: NS 5, 6
- Social Studies: NSS-USH 3; NSS-G 1, 5, 6

Procedures:

- Use the following questions and instructions to analyze Ft. Necessity. These could be used as a pre- or post-visit activity.

1. Context

- a. What surrounds Ft. Necessity—natural and constructed?
- b. What's adjacent to it?

- c. What transportation systems serve it—sidewalks, roads, railroad, river, etc.?
- d. Draw a map locating Ft. Necessity, any adjacent significant features, and transportation systems. Use a legend and a scale. Architects call this a site plan.

2. Materials

- a. List the materials of Ft. Necessity
- b. Make a list of 5 adjectives for each material.
- c. Make a rubbing of each material or take a photo to document it or sketch it and label it.

3. Structure

- a. Can you see why Ft. Necessity is able to stand up?
- b. Can you see its skeleton? How would you describe it? What are the parts? How are the pieces connected?
- c. How does Ft. Necessity meet the land—excavated, even with the ground, on a hill, isolated, in the trees, etc.? Is there a foundation to it? Can you see a material? Does it have a basement?
- d. Build a basic model of Ft. Necessity showing how it structurally stands up.

4. Circulation

- a. How do you enter Ft. Necessity?
- b. How do you leave Ft. Necessity?
- c. On a separate piece of paper, draw the basic outline (footprint) of Ft. Necessity. Include its exterior walls and any openings in them. Diagram how you entered and left Ft. Necessity. Add little footprints and arrows to document your path and direction.

5. Function

- a. What is the program (use) of Ft. Necessity?
- b. What changes, if any, have been made to accommodate the building's new use?
- c. What's been added to the site to accommodate the building's new use? Using color, indicate that on your map in your legend.

6. Appearance

- a. Examine the exterior of the building. Does the building give you any clues to as what is happening on the inside? Document those clues, if any.
- b. What visual elements—line, shape, color, texture, etc.—are emphasized in Ft. Necessity? Document those elements in the most appropriate way.

- c. Is there a repetition or rhythm of any patterns of materials? Of windows? Of Openings? Of structural elements?
- d. Stand facing how you entered Ft. Necessity. Stand far enough away to get an overall view of one side of the structure and draw what you see (the elevation).

The information and images below are courtesy of the National Park Services' Fort Necessity website. For additional photos and more information, please refer to <http://www.nps.gov/fone/>

Fort Necessity

The confrontation at Fort Necessity in the summer of 1754 was the opening battle of the war fought by England and France for control of the North American continent. It was also the opening episode of a worldwide struggle



known in North America as the French and Indian War and elsewhere as the Seven Years' War. It ended in 1763 with the expulsion of the French from North America and India. The action at Fort Necessity was also the first major event in the military career of George Washington, and it marked the only time he ever surrendered to an enemy.

