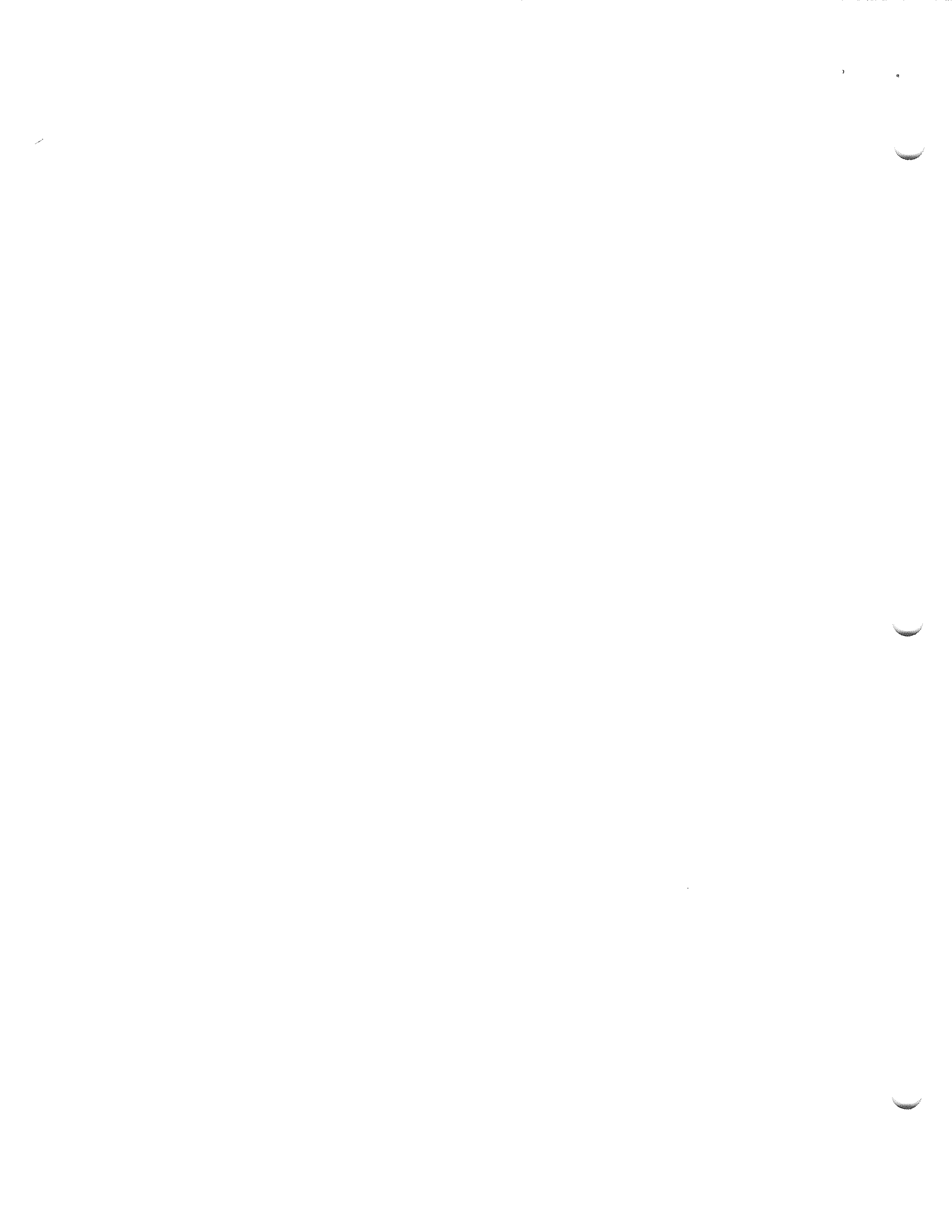


INTRODUCTION

Included in this booklet are three sample lesson plans designed for students in the intermediate grades. All three lesson plans address primary and basic skills that are needed for conducting any folklife project, no matter the content. These skills are listening, formulating and asking questions, and observing, which are the primary tools of a folklorist. Being able to do them well helps to insure the success of a folklife project.

Along with the lesson plans and accompanying worksheets are two outlines of what integrated curricula units in folklife might look like. They are intended to spark the imagination by providing ideas as to how folklife can be utilized to study any subject area.



LESSON 1: Listening Skills

Primary Objective

To practice and improve listening skills

Secondary Objectives

To learn more about the other members of the class.

To practice extemporaneous speaking

Preparation

Several days before conducting this lesson, assign to the students the task of bringing a favorite object from home. This should be an object that is important to them, either because of the memories it evokes or because of what it represents for the child or his family. Caution the students not to bring objects that can be easily damaged.

Materials

Personal items students have brought from home.

Process

Pair students. Each will take the role of speaker and listener for the first three minute exchange, and then they will switch roles.

With the teacher acting as timekeeper, give the speakers three minutes in which to tell their partner about their treasure. Each speaker must speak for the full three minutes. If they say all they can about their treasure before the time is up, they must continue to talk anyway, speaking instead about a related topic. No speaker is allowed to stop talking until the teacher signals the end of the three minutes.

The listener's job is to remember as much as possible about what the speaker has told them. They are not to interrupt or begin to converse with the speaker.

After the first exchange, the students exchange roles. The new speakers and listeners do the same as above.

At the end of the second exchange, gather the students into a circle in the classroom. Have each student in turn briefly tell the rest of the class the following:

1. WHO they listened to.
2. WHAT their partner's object is.
3. WHY their partner chose that object.

After the listener relates what she heard to the class, give the speaker the opportunity to respond by correcting any misinformation and by adding any other information that he considers essential.

Evaluation

Have the students fill out the evaluation sheet, "What Did I Hear?".

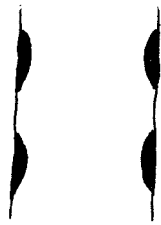
Follow-up

Discuss with the students the difference between MAIN IDEAS and SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

Explain that when they reported to the class, focusing on the answers to Who?, What? and Why?, they were relating the Main Idea.

If there was an example during the reporting to the class when Supplementary Information really was necessary to give the listeners crucial contextual information then discuss that with the students.

Use the following drawing to illustrate the point of how crucial supplementary information can be to understanding.



What is it? a bear climbing a tree

Why is that hard to know? because the view is too close.

because we don't have the full picture.

What Did I Hear?

Name _____

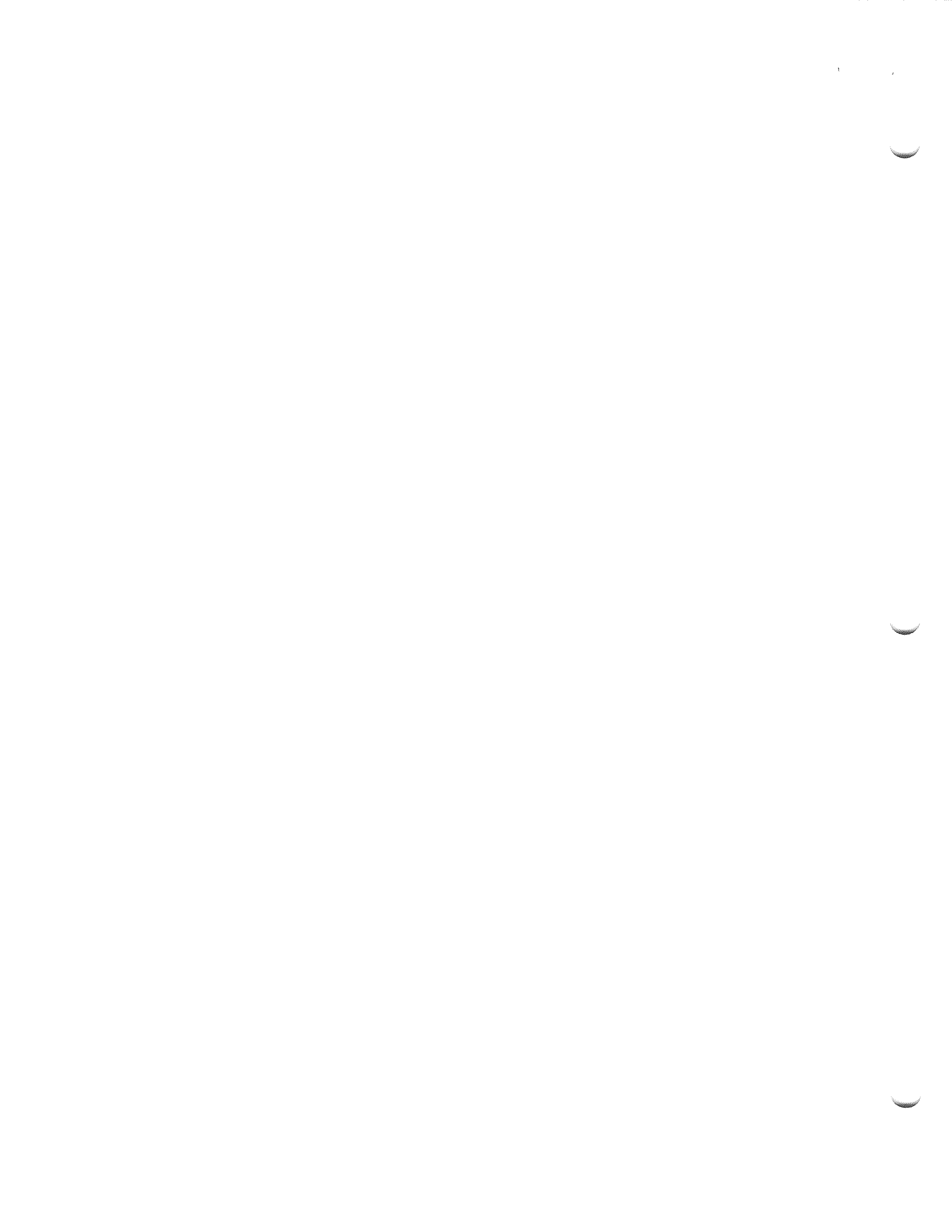
Date _____

1. The main idea I learned from my partner was _____

2. Something else that I learned from my partner that I thought was interesting was _____

3. I thought it was hard to listen to my partner because _____

4. Something I did to help me listen well was _____



LESSON 2: Interviewing

Primary Objective

To learn how to ask questions that will elicit narrative responses.

Secondary Objectives

To learn more about the class teacher as a person.

To practice asking questions.

To practice listening.

Preparation

The teacher should bring in a favorite object from home that is not self-explanatory at first glance. As with the students' objects, this should be an object that is important to you, either because of the memories it evokes or because of what it represents to you or your family. Bring something that you will be comfortable talking about to the students.

Materials

Worksheet: "What I Want to Know Is..."

The teacher's treasured object.

Procedure

Display your treasured object so that all the students can see it. Have them each write five questions they want to ask you about the item on the sheet "What I Want to Know Is...". Advise them that you will not offer any information that they do not ask for and so their questions should be worded to elicit the information they want to obtain. Their task is to find out both Main Ideas and Supplementary Information about your object.

After the students have written their questions, have them take turns asking single questions of you. You should respond only to what they have asked and not offer additional information they have not requested.

Continue around the room until every child has asked at least one question. Ask the students if there are any other questions they haven't yet asked.

Discussion

Ask the students to tell you what the Main Ideas were about your object: WHAT the object is and WHY it is important to you.

Ask the students to tell you what Supplementary Information they thought was important.

Verbally evaluate the questioning experience by discussing these points with the students:

1. Did their questions elicit all the important information about your treasured object and its meaning to you?
2. Were there other questions they should have also asked in order to learn what was important?

Ask the students to evaluate the questions that they asked:

1. Which were the questions that worked well? Why?
2. Which were the questions that didn't work well? Why?

Evaluation

Based on the discussion, have the students reread their questions they wrote and choose one to revise, re-wording it to make it a better interview question.

What I Want to Know Is...

Name _____

Date _____

Five questions I want to ask my teacher about her treasured object:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

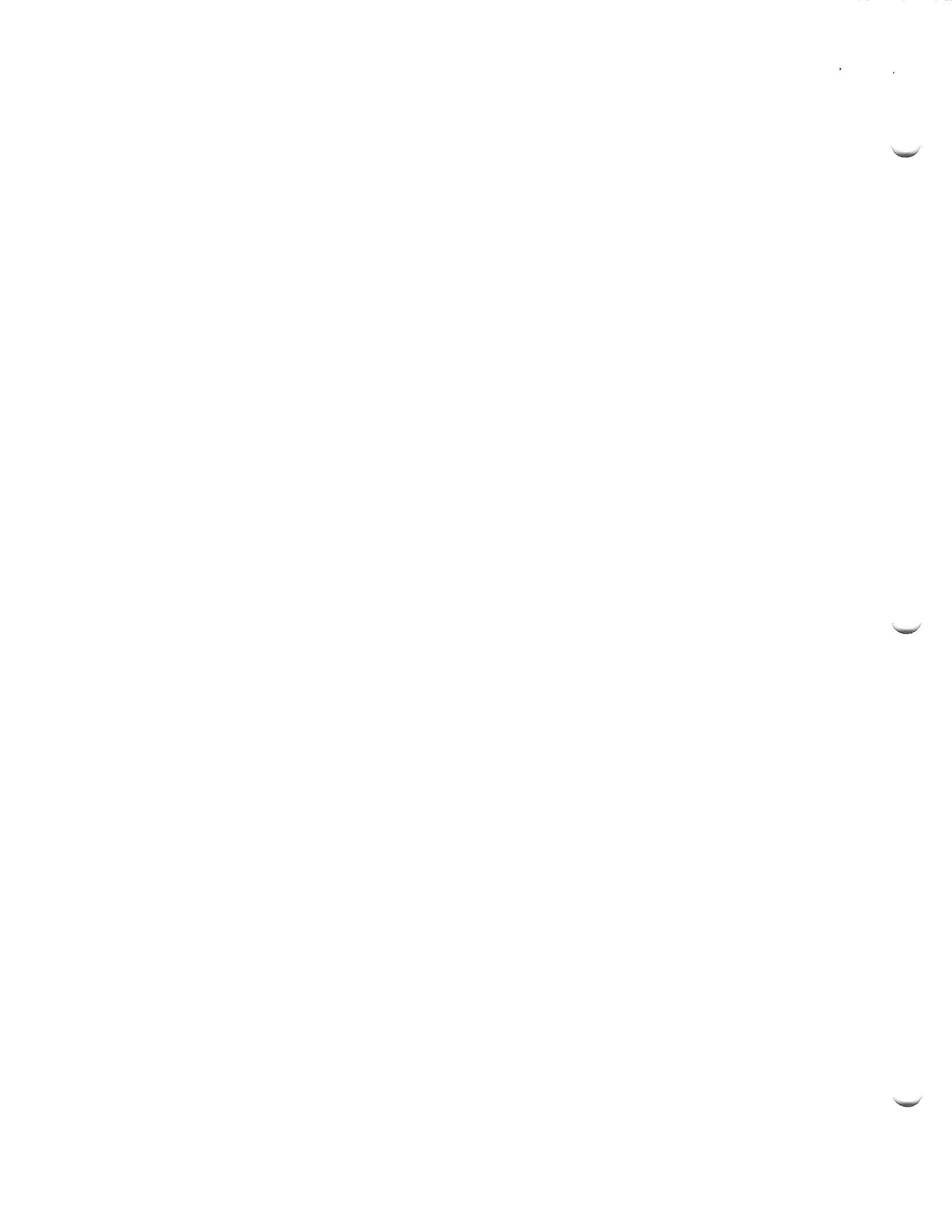
5. _____

* * * * *

AFTER I interviewed my teacher, I found out that a question I wrote would be better if it was reworded.

The question I want to rewrite is Number ____.

This is the rewritten, improved question:



LESSON 3: Observing

Primary Objective

To develop the skill of observation.

Secondary Objectives

To understand that something very familiar can often be complex.

To gain an appreciation for the detail needed to describe a process in full.

To learn of the different meal customs practiced by classmates' families.

To understand that families follow meal-time traditions, even when they're not aware of it.

Preparation

The day before, assign as homework that the students observe the process of dinner in their home that night. Do not explain what they should be looking for; simply ask them to watch as though they had never seen the process before and as though they were learning about it for the first time.

Materials

Worksheet: "Dinner at My House"

Procedure

Day 1

Based on their observations from the night before, have the children brainstorm the different parts of the dinner process. Be prepared for reports of eating out as well as cooking at home, of families eating together or individual members eating separately.

No matter the structure of the meal, elicit the components that make up the process. They will include: preparing the meal, serving the meal, eating the meal, cleaning up after the meal.

Have a student volunteer choose one part of the meal process, for example, the preparation. Ask that student the basic questions of Who, What, Where, When and How. For example,

Who prepared the meal?

What did that person prepare?

Where did they prepare it?

When did they prepare it?

How did they prepare it, meaning what tools did they use and what did they do to the food to get it ready to eat?

*Why did they prepare it?

Divide the class into three groups. Assign the first third with the task of thinking about what they observed *before* the meal; the second third with what they observed *during* the meal, and the last third with what they observed *after* the meal. Give them a few minutes to think about it,

*The question of Why is not one that can be answered merely through observation. The observer can make guesses as to why someone is doing something, but to really find out, the observer must become an interviewer and ask the person. Explain this to the students through a discussion.

and then begin a discussion regarding each part. Solicit from the students examples of what they observed. Watch for patterns in their answers: are they concentrating primarily on eating the meal rather than also the preparations and clean-up, or are they observing the Who and What and not the How or When? Point any such patterns out to the students and advise them to expand their observations accordingly.

Instruct the students that they should observe their family's dinner again tonight, this time paying attention to all parts of the dinner process and paying attention to the basic questions of Who, What, Where, When and How.

Day 2

Give the students the worksheet "Dinner at My House" and tell them to fill in as many of the squares as possible in five minutes.

After the students have filled out the chart, ask for their evaluation of the observation process:

1. Was their observing different the second night from the first night? Why or why not?

2. Did they observe something about the dinner process that they had never noticed before? If so, what was it?

Ask a student volunteer to tell the class what he observed during the middle part of the dinner process, the "eating" part. After the student shares the basic information of Who, What, Where, When, How, ask if this meal was a typical one for her family. If yes, then say, "So what you just described is your family's dinner-time traditions." If the answer was no, then ask the student to explain how last night's meal differs from a typical one. Conclude with, "So your family has certain dinner-time traditions, but sometimes you take a break from them."

Ask a few more students to do similar reporting. Make the same points of noting that the family has particular patterns that could be called their dinner-time traditions.

Explain to the class that one observation period can't tell the observer if what they're seeing is the traditional pattern or if it is a break from the pattern. That is why observing something more than once is important when studying traditions.

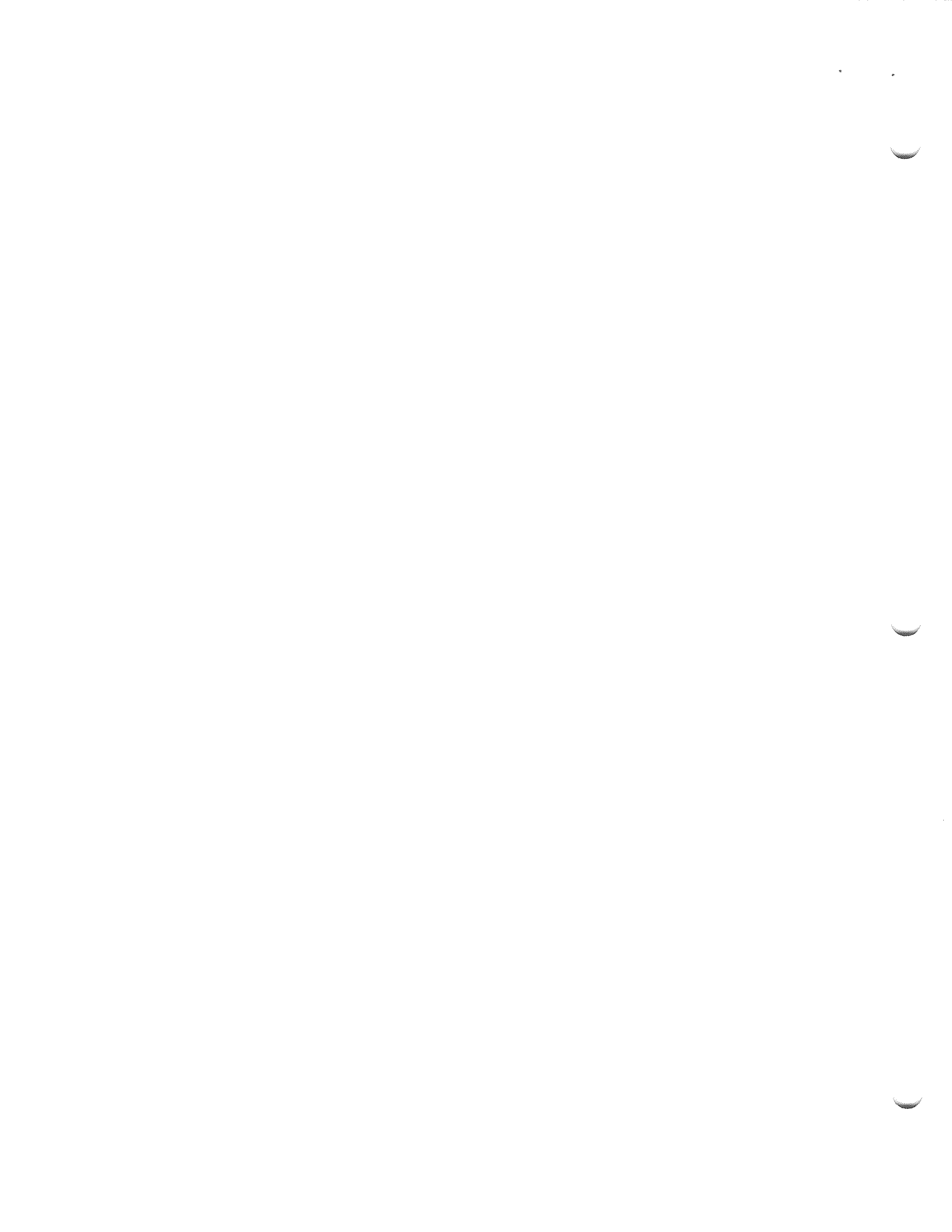
Ask the students if any of them have dinner-time rules in their family, such as washing hands before sitting at the table, blessing the food before eating, or asking to be excused before leaving the table. These rules will be interesting to the students, so solicit as many as possible. Ask if they could tell that a behavior is an enforced tradition (a rule) just by one observation period. The answer is no, but there are clues that can suggest to the first-time observer that a behavior is a pattern. Try to solicit these ideas from the students:

- If all the people who are eating do the same thing,
- If someone is reprimanded for not doing something,
- If people are reminded in advance to do something.

Mention again to the class that not everything about dinner-time traditions can be learned merely through observation. WHY the family follows the traditions it does is something that is important to understanding dinner-time traditions but that can't be found out through observations.

Follow-up activity:

Have the students interview one of their parents to find out why they follow the dinner-time traditions that they do. Instruct the children to ask the parents about how the dinner process they experienced when they were young.

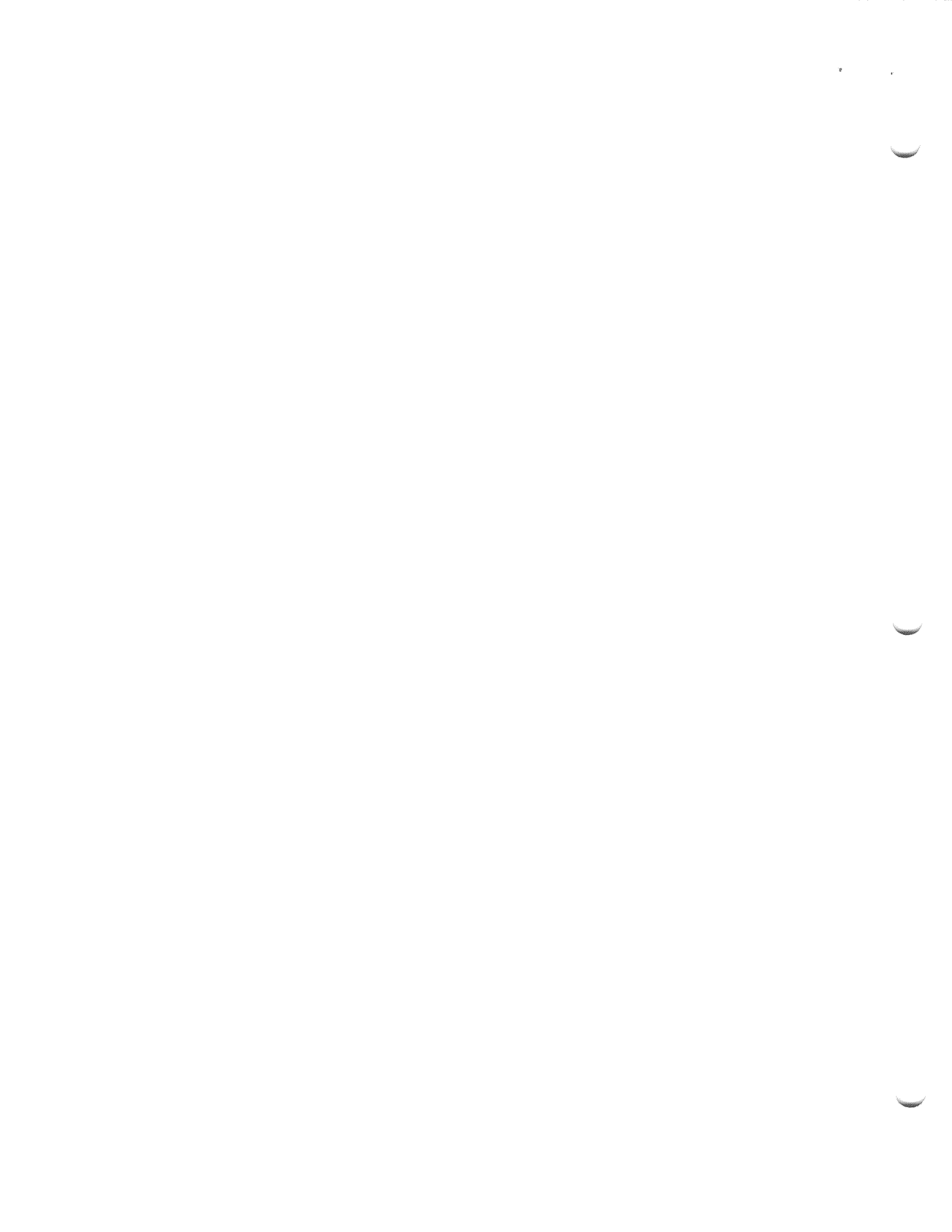


Dinner at My House

Name _____

Date _____

	BEFORE DINNER	DURING DINNER	AFTER DINNER
WHO			
WHAT			
WHERE			
WHEN			
HOW			



Neighborhood Traditions

UNIT GOALS:

- To identify local aesthetic values.
- To develop an appreciation for local aesthetic values.
- To understand how landscape traditions influence contemporary landscapes.
- To understand how different historical forces influence local landscapes.
- To understand how different physical environments influence local landscapes.
- To practice interviewing skills.

Art: Take the students on a walk through the school's neighborhood to study its aesthetic components. Have the students concentrate on the "yard art": garden design, statuary, fences and gates, edging, animal houses, graffiti, murals, signage, mailboxes. Discuss the aesthetic qualities of the content and arrangement. Using both visual observations and information gathered from interviews (see below), find the patterns followed by the neighborhood residents. Then have the students decorate a part of the school yard in a way that continues the patterns found in the neighborhood.

Language Arts: Have the students write letters to neighborhood residents explaining the neighborhood study in which they are engaged, and asking if they could interview them about the art in their yards. Practice listening and questioning skills, and have the students construct a list of questions they want to ask. Have them conduct the interviews in pairs. If the interviewee agrees, have the students take photos of the person and their yard art. Record the information from the interview on a reference sheet.

History: Take the students on a walk in order to map the neighborhood. Each student will be responsible for a small section (a single house or a section of a block), and a complete map will be reconstructed from the pieces back at school. Then, using the local historical society and library as resources, have the students find photos that show the neighborhood at different times in the past. Let them contrast the contents of the photos with their own map of the neighborhood. Have them create a time line that shows when significant changes took place.

Next, have them compare the neighborhood changes with events that were taking place nationwide at that time. Explore with them how the local changes fit in with national trends. Have them determine what historical events

were the catalysts of those trends. Have the students create a parallel time line that illustrates the national events of significance to the neighborhood.

Science: Take the students on a walk through the school's neighborhood. On this walk, have them focus on the buildings themselves, the design and construction of the houses, stores, or barns. What do the designs of the buildings indicate about the climate? How do the building materials reflect the local physical environment? Have the students create a physical map that shows the location of the primary natural resources used for construction in the neighborhood.

Contrasting the local environment with other environments across the United States, have the students predict what materials and designs would be found in another part of the country. Via the Internet, connect with another class in a state that has a different type of climate. Have the students in the two locations compare information about the local environments and human habitats.

Technical Arts: Have the students design and construct models of shelters appropriate for different parts of the United States using only materials available in that locality.

Migration in Our Nation

UNIT GOALS:

- To understand the migration history of the local area.
- To learn how local migration stories fit with historical patterns of migration in the United States.
- To gain an appreciation for the connections between family stories and the history of the nation.
- To practice map skills.
- To practice listening and questioning skills.
- To engage in creative writing.
- To develop an aesthetic appreciation for the art of quilting.

Social Studies: Using the activity sheet, have students find out the details about their families' migration to the local area. Encourage the students to trace their family's journey in the United States through as many generations as possible. Have the students map their family's moves on a continental map. On a bulletin board, have each student draw the path their family took to get to their present locality.

Language Arts: Prepare students by training them in questioning and listening skills. Then have students interview family elders to collect from them stories related to the family's migrations. Here, the emphasis is less on the details than on accompanying narratives, the entertaining anecdotes that recount specific events or emotions of the moves. Have the students write one of the stories they were told.

History: Examine the family stories and the migration maps and compare these with migration history within the United States. How do the family histories illustrate national history?

Art: Working from the students' research, have each students create a symbol that represents their family's migration to the area. Each symbol will then become a square in a quilt.

Working with an area specialist in the folk arts, identify a master traditional quilter and involve that individual in the project. Invite her to school to discuss quilting and the narrative nature of quilting. Have the students apply the principles learned from the visiting artist to the quilt that they make.

Math: Have the students do all the calculations for creating the quilt: the amount of different types of materials needed, the measurement of each square and border, etc.

Language Arts: Create a "verbal quilt" out of the family stories. Prepare the students by training them in story telling techniques. With the quilt as a physical backdrop, have each student retell one of their family stories. Or, rather than tell the full stories, have the class create a poem from phrases that illustrate key elements in each family's story.