

Lesson Four: The 300th Anniversary Tour Contest

Overview of Lesson: Students will plan an architectural tour through St. Petersburg by being assigned in pairs to specific, significant buildings. Students will research the history and architecture of the buildings and do oral presentations to “sell” their buildings to a simulated tour committee, which needs to choose five St. Petersburg attractions for a tour group of historians and architects to visit as a part of the 300th anniversary celebrations. After the presentations, the class will act as the selection committee, choosing the top five attractions based on the presentations. Class discussion will follow concerning how the story of St. Petersburg is revealed through her architecture.

This lesson may take 2-3 class periods of 50 minutes each.

Objectives:

1. Students will take virtual tours through St. Petersburg to become familiar with its main architectural attractions.
2. Students will gain an in-depth knowledge of their assigned buildings through extensive research.
3. Students will research, organize, and prepare a “sales” presentation, which provides the “story” of their buildings and argues for its significance to the history of St. Petersburg.
4. Students will analyze, through discussion, how the architecture can tell the “story” of a city.

Focus Questions:

1. What are some significant architectural attractions of St. Petersburg?
2. Who were the main architects, dominant styles, and Tsars involved in the construction of these buildings? When and for what purposes were these buildings constructed?
3. How does the architecture of St. Petersburg tell its story?

Resources/ Materials:

- Access to University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning’s Interactive map of St. Petersburg – <http://www.umich.edu/stpetersburg/> (click on About St Petersburg, Interactive Map)
- Handout of assignment sheet
- Access to internet and/or other Russian history/architecture sources

- Optional separate grading rubric determined by teacher

Procedures/Activities:

1. Assign students in pairs to each of the main attractions listed on assignment sheet. (See attached).
2. Allow class time (preferably in computer lab) for students to explore the interactive map of St. Petersburg, find their assigned buildings, and begin research.
3. Allow time for completion of research and presentation planning. Other recommended websites (in addition to the University of Michigan's:

<http://www.saint-petersburg.com/history>

<http://www.geographia.com/russia/>

4. Before presentations, remind class of standards of evaluation. Have students take notes on all buildings, so they can make an informed vote at the end (and to have available for a possible future quiz/test on these buildings).
5. Vote, and announce winners.
6. Conduct a whole class discussion of the focus questions, or use #4 as a writing prompt for a paragraph or two as an evaluation of the learning experience.
7. Ask students if they can think of examples of other cities whose architecture reveals their history, and have them give examples of specific buildings in specific cities (e.g. – L'Arc deTriomphe in Paris, Tower of London, Empire State Building, etc.). Ask them to explain what these buildings reveal about the histories of the cities.

Evaluation/Assessment:

1. Students will receive a grade on their presentation based on content, coherence and organization, creativity, speaking skills, audience response, and length of presentation.
2. A formal or informal assessment of student understanding can be made based on student responses to discussion questions.

Extension Activities:

1. Have students write an essay/essay response to the question: If you could only visit 3-5 buildings in St. Petersburg, what would they be, and why?
2. Have students create a travel brochure/itinerary for the mythical 300th anniversary tour, including a brief description of the five attractions the class selected as “winners.”

300th Anniversary Tour Contest Assignment

As a part of the 300th birthday celebration of St. Petersburg, a delegation of historians, art historians, and architects are planning to visit St. Petersburg to attend a special tour entitled, “The History of St. Petersburg Through Architecture.” Their itinerary has to be limited (they will only be in the city for three days), so they can only visit five of St. Petersburg’s amazing architectural treasures. A tour committee will select the five attractions for the tour based on sales presentations by representatives for each site. More tourists mean more publicity and money for preservation and upkeep of the buildings, so each building representative wants his/her building to be chosen!

- You will be assigned in pairs to represent one of the architectural attractions of St. Petersburg.
- You will prepare an oral/visual presentation to “sell” your building to the tour committee, which will be represented by the whole class.
- In order to “sell” your building, you need to emphasize the historical, architectural, and “fun” aspects of your assigned building.
- The following information must be included: where the building is located in the city, when it was built, who were the architects and Tsars or Tsarinas involved, the style of architecture used, and why it was built.
- You must use some type of visual aid in your presentation (poster, tour booklet, etc), which will certainly help to sell your building.
- Remember to focus on why the unique history of your building makes it a “must see” in St. Petersburg. Your presentations should be approximately 10 minutes in length.

When the presentations are over, the class will serve as the tour committee and select the five winning attractions for the tour.

Presentations will be given a grade based on: content; coherence and organization; speaking and sales skills; creativity; audience response; and length of presentation.

