

Neighbourhood Photowalk

Studio from Home series

Lesson plan prepared by Adam Graham for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Primary – Grade 12. The ease of use for smartphone cameras makes this accessible to all grade levels. Complexity of the chosen theme can be modified depending on age.

Subject Areas

- Visual Arts
- Photography
- Architecture

Introduction

A photowalk is a great way to get outside and make some art with your kids! Kids get to work on their photography skills and practice seeing their community in a different way. The examples in this activity come from a photowalk I took in Yarmouth with my two sons who are in grade 4 and grade 7.

Our walking route was designed so that we would finish outside of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Western Branch. This piece of architecture was designed by Kenneth G. Rea of Montreal and was built in 1912-1913 as a branch of the Royal Bank of Canada. Built in a Victorian style, the exterior of the building has remained largely unchanged, with many of the original decorative elements intact. It provides an excellent connection to the built history of our community.

Set Up

- Charge smartphone or camera batteries
- Check to make sure you have space to record photos to device storage or memory card

Materials

- Camera or smartphone
- Smartphone or desktop photo editing application

Process

Before you go:

Before you head out on your photowalk be sure to choose a theme together. Having a theme turns your photowalk into a fun scavenger hunt and encourages kids to think about the result before taking a photo. When choosing a theme you can be as abstract or concrete as you prefer, depending on the age of your kids. The theme we chose was 'Above your head or below your feet!' in order to introduce a different perspective to the photos. Some other theme ideas are:

- Colour
- Lines
- Light
- Pick a specific shape to find
- Signs of the season
- A dog's eye view

On your Photowalk:

During your photowalk be sure to stay together. Even with older kids who are able to go further afield it is more fun to see what they decide to photograph in the moment. Establish a rule that anyone is allowed to stop the whole family to take a photo, even if the others aren't taking a picture.

Keep in mind that the adult needs to be extra vigilant for hazards! Any of us get distracted when we have something else to focus on.

After your photowalk:

After your photowalk make sure you show your photos to each other! It can be amazing to see the differences between the photos even though you were walking together.

There are a lot of free photo editing apps for phone or computer that let you experiment with making adjustments to your photos. Playing with adjustments can be a great way to learn about colour and exposure in photography. Or your photograph can become the start of a piece of digital art! Layer photographs together or add text! The possibilities are endless!

Another great thing to do is to turn your photos into a physical memento. You can easily order all kinds of products with your photos; prints, calendars, small albums, etc.. At our house, in the dining room we have small photos from our family outings printed on plain cardstock and stuck all over one wall. As time goes by we just keep adding to it!

Resources

Lisette Gaudet and Yarmouth County Museum and Archives , “Royal Bank of Canada Building, Yarmouth,” *Historic Nova Scotia*, accessed April 7, 2020, <https://historicnovascotia.ca/items/show/179>.

Here are some free photo editors to try that should work on any device:

Photoshop Express - <https://www.adobe.com/ca/products/photoshop-express.html>

Fotor - <https://www.fotor.com/>

Google Photos - <https://photos.google.com/>

If you're interested in taking your learning further, here are a couple links to some information about the elements and principles of photography. You could easily pick one element to use as a theme for a photowalk!

<http://www.stmphotography.ca/elements--principles-of-design1.html>

<https://expertphotography.com/principles-of-design-photography/>