

Investigating Fort Mackinac

This activity is to complement an on-site visit to Fort Mackinac. It involves an investigation and direct observation of the fort's buildings, learning first hand about what makes up the fort and how people lived in the 1880s.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Students will have a greater understanding of how people lived at Fort Mackinac in the 1880s through inquiry.

- Students will keep a list of direct observations of information they found while investigating a building.
- Students will identify and investigate the uses of the buildings in the fort and how they relate to the people who lived there.
- Students will share and compare their information with others and compare how we live today with how people lived more than 100 years ago.

DIRECTIONS

Prior Knowledge: Students should be prepared with a general knowledge of the Straits area history and Fort Mackinac. Sources of information include: The Mackinac Island Visitor's Guide and online Education Packet and Virtual Tour (www.MackinacParks.com).

Give each student one building (or more)/booklet (print pages back to back and staple in center) to investigate in the fort. Group 2-4 students together so they can help each other in finding evidence of what the building was used for. Each student will fill out a detective booklet (see instructions on back) before leaving the fort. Make the connection that studying and learning about history is like detective work; searching for clues and making educated guesses on how people used something in the past. All these little pieces of the fort then can be brought together to form a bigger picture of how the fort was used and how people lived in it in the 1880s.

TAKING IT FURTHER

- Wrap up the visit to the fort. Group together a "whole" fort with all the buildings in one group (could have 2 + fort groups) and compare and list all the evidence to form a theory on what people did in the fort and how it was used in the 1880s. The students can use the information gathered on the site visit and whatever information they read or studied before. Who were those people living at the fort (not just soldiers!)? How did people live in the 1880s? Compare this to how we live today (what they did for entertainment, where they bought things, what they did for work, what their houses looked like).
- Pretend you are a private, the commander, a kid or a mother living at the fort. Write about a day in the life of that person with what you know about the fort. Use specific buildings you (as a private, commander, etc.) would use during the day (places you studied and observed when visiting the fort). (Application – H.L. Bloom's Taxonomy)

DETECTIVE WORK

These are questions to be asked in the detective booklet. Each question should have a page, with the title page for the detective's (student's) name and the building they are investigating. This follows the scientific theory method of deduction.

1. The question: What was the building used for? My initial prediction is: I think this because:
2. "Read" the building from the outside. Is it small or large? What is it made of? Does it have a lot of windows? What is different about this building that other buildings in the fort?
3. Make an informed prediction. Now that you examined the outside, what do you think was done in this building? Does it look like something for the soldiers or for work? Does it look like a house? Does it look like something for a battle? Does it look like it fits a lot of people, or just a few?
4. Investigate: Now, go inside the building. Find objects, pictures, clues, furniture and rooms. Record all your observations.
5. Answer the question. With all your clues and information about this building, what do you think it was used for? Who used this building at the fort?

FORT MACKINAC BUILDINGS

See directions above for other places to get more information about each building.

Post Headquarters	where command was, orders sent out, paperwork done, paymaster, offices
Quartermaster's Storehouse	warehouse for all military items other than food and ordnance items, no windows
Post Bathhouse	water came for reservoir from blockhouse, bathed once a week by squad
Soldiers' Barracks	where they ate and slept, how they lived "off house", large buildings to fit men
Schoolhouse	where mostly soldiers and some children learned, library was here for soldiers
Officers' Hill Quarters	how the kids and families lived, see upstairs for kid rooms, porch and curtains
Post Hospital	what they used when sick, how they treated illness, what conditions were like
Officers' Stone Quarters	how families lived, what it was like to be a kid in the 1880s, stone for protection
Officers' Wood Quarters	how soldiers relaxed, what they played, could buy luxury items, former home
Guardhouse	what conditions were for punishment, guard duty HQ, bars on windows
Blockhouses	protected the fort, extra space for project when no war, stone for protection

Social Studies Benchmarks

These standards can be reached depending on the activities, exhibits and sites you visit at Mackinac State Historic Parks. These can be reached with the teacher's/instructor's help and guidance. Good luck in reaching your goals and objectives!

LATER ELEMENTARY (may be adapted for other grade levels)

Historical Perspective

Standard I.2 LE 2,3

Use graphic data to compare past and present, recount lives from the past

Geographic Perspective

Standard II.1 LE 1

Locate and explain the reasons for characteristics and locations

Inquiry

Standard V.1 LE 1

Locate information about communities using traditional sources/ observations

Standard V.2 LE 2,3

Gather/analyze information and construct an answer and support with evidence

This activity also uses the scientific method.

