



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1993 Volume I: The Symbolic Language of Architecture and Public Monuments

---

## Play on Architecture

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.01.03  
by Bill Derry

Architecture is rarely taught in the traditional school curricula. This unit has been designed to accomplish two tasks: 1.) describe my journey into the world of architecture, and 2.) provide a blueprint for myself and other teachers who wish to take themselves and their students on a similar journey. The unit provides an experiential introduction to the world of architecture using fifteen buildings or locations in New Haven.

Students who are exposed to this unit will: 1.) better understand the concept of architecture, 2.) be more observing and critical of architecture in their environment, 3.) have a vocabulary to better communicate ideas concerning architecture, and 4.) have a “personal” connection to architecture in New Haven providing an identity with a larger portion of New Haven than their own neighborhood(s). Five specific and measurable objectives are provided to ensure that the students’ progress can be evaluated. Although this unit was written for use in a fifth grade at Wexler school, I believe it could be adapted for students in grades 5-10. It could fit into a Social Studies, Art, or History curriculum.

During the ten-week study of local architecture, students translate their feelings about particular pieces of architecture into short dramatic scenes and/or dances. The culminating event, “Play On Architecture”, is a production which pieces together all of the improvised scenes. The unit comes with thirty-five slides which are used to introduce the unit and to project during the student performance. Through this culminating event students will have the opportunity to teach others what they have learned about architecture.

(Recommended for Social Studies, Art, and History, Grades 5-10)

### **Key Words**

*Architecture New Haven Connecticut*

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>