

Dyckman Farmhouse Pre Visit Activities

Grades 3-6

Reading the Room

As the students visit the farmhouse they will be asked to use clues in the rooms (furniture type and placement, decorations and objects, etc.) to draw conclusions about how the room was used, who would have used it and how the activities in the room would have changed throughout the seasons of the year.

To prepare your students for this exercise have them “read” their classroom. Architectural features of your classroom, the furniture and objects in the room and how these objects are arranged in the room provide clues about how this room is used. Use the following questions to get you started!

What do you notice most about this room? (possible responses– the size of the room, the chalkboard, desks and chairs, wall decorations)

How does the arrangement of the furniture and other objects in the room reflect the use of the room and who might use it? (Important aspects– the desks are facing the chalkboard, the size of the furniture, etc.)

Are there any aspects of the room or its contents that might be confusing when trying to figure how this room is

Rural vs. Urban

Discuss the meanings of the words **rural** and **urban**; use a dictionary if necessary. Discuss the characteristics of each type of landscape. Perhaps set up a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences between rural and urban landscapes.

What types of buildings would you find in these landscapes?

How is the land used in each landscape?

How many people live in each landscape?

What types of jobs or activities would people perform in these landscapes?

What types of plants and animals live in each landscape?

Farming in Manhattan?

Many people who visit the farmhouse are astonished to find out that this area of Manhattan was covered by farmland until the early 1900’s. In fact, there was still a small farm in Inwood until the 1930’s! In order to get your students into the “farming” mindset discuss what they know about a farm or farming activities.

What types of things do farmers do?

What types of buildings, animals, and plants are typically found on a farm?

What are the seasons that we experience in New York?

How would these seasons affect the farming lifestyle of a New York farmer?

Then have the kids imagine a farm in the early 1800’s, when farmers did not have access to machines and electricity, and they lived quite a distance from their neighbors and even further from the city.

How would this change the type of work farming men, women and children performed?

What kind of transportation would a farm family have used to travel around their land or to the city?

How well would they have known their neighbors?

How would a farm family have obtained the supplies they needed for their home and farm throughout the year?

