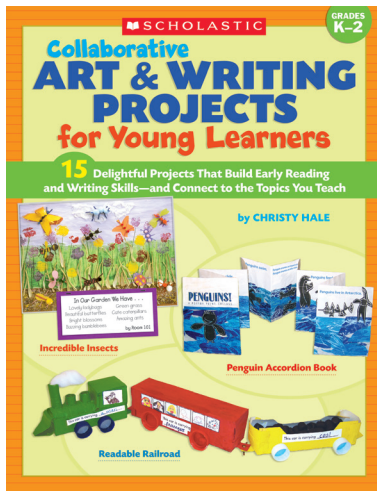




© Christy Hale

## Neighborhood Walk

Build a neighborhood in your classroom with this collaborative panel collage. The diverse buildings, people, and activities portrayed will inspire young writers to rich explorations of point of view.



lesson excerpt from *Collaborative Art & Writing Projects for Young Learners: 15 Delightful Projects That Build Early Reading and Writing Skills-and Connect to the Topics You Teach* by Christy Hale (Scholastic Teaching Resources, 2006)

## Getting Started

1. Launch a study of the neighborhood by giving children clipboards, paper, and pencils and taking your class on a neighborhood walk. Encourage children to draw sketches and take notes about the kinds of buildings they see.
2. Back in the classroom, ask children to name some of the places they saw—for example, a grocery store, post office, bank, and library. Encourage them to share their sketches and describe how the places are different from one another and ways they might be alike. To help children learn more about ways people use the different buildings they observed, share some of the resources suggested in Book Links, right.
3. If possible, share Romare Bearden's work *The Block*, a tribute to his old neighborhood, Harlem. Invite children to describe the details they see in his artwork. How did the artist create this work? Discuss his collage technique and the materials he might have used. Then tell children that they are going to create a collage of a block in their neighborhood.

## Materials

- tagboard (cut into pieces 9, 15, and 18 inches high by 12 inches wide)
- ruler
- construction paper, corrugated bordette, foil, and other decorative papers
- cardboard scraps
- fabric trim (rickrack, lace, braid, yarn)
- craft sticks
- craft foam
- cellophane (assorted colors)
- magazines, catalogs, and newspapers (with pictures of people, trees, buildings, transportation vehicles, signs, textures, and more)
- scissors
- tempera paints
- paint containers (paper plates, bowls, or styrofoam trays)
- paintbrushes
- markers
- pencils
- glue

## Book Links

*The Block* by Langston Hughes (Viking/Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995) Poems by Langston Hughes are paired with Romare Bearden's impressive collage tribute to Harlem.

*Cassi's Word Quilt* by Faith Ringgold (Knopf, 2002) A young African-American girl takes early readers on a tour of her 1930s Harlem home, school, and neighborhood.

*One Afternoon* by Yumi Heo (Orchard Books, 1994) Minho, a Korean-American boy, joins his mother on her daily errands. Together, they encounter the many sights and sounds of life in New York City.

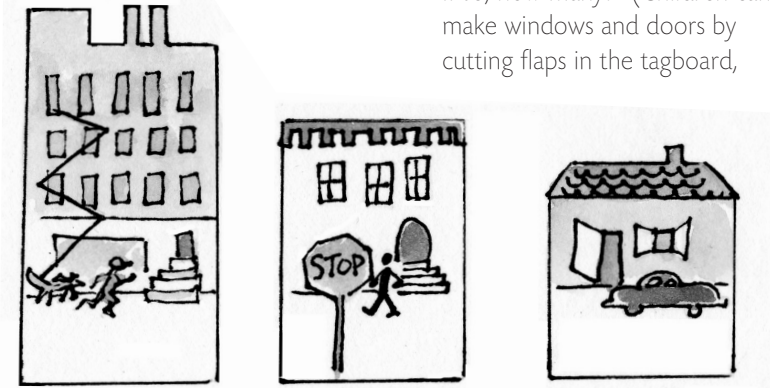
*On the Town: A Community Adventure* by Judith Caseley (Greenwillow, 2002) As Charlie and his mother explore their community, Charlie's lively notebook entries "illustrate" their adventure.

*A Street Called Home* by Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson (Harcourt, 1997) Children will want to stretch out this accordion-fold book and immerse themselves in the stunning streetscape, where they'll meet the sock man, the medicine man, the chickenfoot woman, and other people in this busy 1940s community.

*Uptown* by Bryan Collier (Henry Holt, 2000) A young boy takes readers on a tour that celebrates his vibrant Harlem community. Richly illustrated in watercolor and collage.

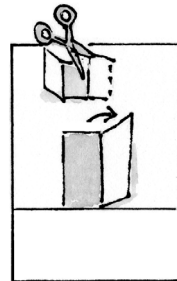
## Building Panels

1. Precut tagboard panels in three different heights (to create an interesting roofline) but in a uniform width (to allow accordion assembling).



2. Rule off four inches along the bottom of each panel. This portion will be reserved for children's writings about their buildings, and will also function as the street.
3. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with assorted papers, cardboard scraps, fabric trim, craft sticks, craft foam, colored cellophane, magazines, catalogs, and newspapers, scissors, tempera paints in containers, paintbrushes, markers, pencils, and glue. Also give each child a tagboard panel.
4. Ask each child to choose a building in the neighborhood to create. Children can then work on a single panel—drawing, painting, and combining collage elements and magazine and newspaper pictures to portray their building. Encourage children to think about what makes their building unique by asking questions:

- "What size is your building? Is it tall? Short?"
- "What shape roof does it have?"
- "Does it have windows and doors? If so, how many?" (Children can make windows and doors by cutting flaps in the tagboard,



folding them back, and then gluing photos or drawings of interior scenes to the back of the panel. The doors and windows can then be closed and opened to reveal what's going on inside.)

- "Does your building have a sign? If so, what does the sign say?"
5. Invite children to add transportation vehicles, trees, traffic signals, people, and other details on the street below their building.

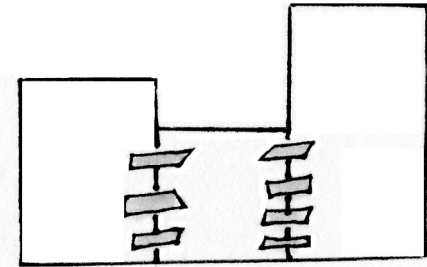
## Writing Connection: Exploring Point of View

Ask each child to describe his or her building and the reasons people go to each place. Tell children to use the first-person ("I") voice and write a brief story from the point of view of their building or a character in their panel. Have them work on separate paper, and then copy and glue a finished, revised story to the bottom section of the panel.

I am the school building.  
My halls are crazy crowded  
one minute. When everyone  
goes in a different door,  
my halls are silent. I have  
friends during the day, but  
I am lonely at night.

## To Assemble

1. Assemble the neighborhood by turning the building panels facedown, aligning them side by side, and then hinging them together with tape. Instant neighborhood!



2. Display your neighborhood collage on a bulletin board or tabletop and let children lead tours, introducing the many voices of the neighborhood.

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