

## Lesson 20

# Walk to the Past

What clues are provided about our town's or city's history?  
Does understanding our past help us understand the present day?

**GOAL** To decipher clues provided to determine time period, event, or place.

**OBJECTIVES** Students will:  
✓ read clues and try to determine time period or place

**MATERIALS** pencils, paper

### CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

- Language Arts 1(1,11-14)
- Science 8(7,8)
- Social Studies 1(1,3,5,6), 2(1,3), 3(1-3), 4(1,5), 11(3,5)

**VOCABULARY** aqueducts, decipher, uncover, clues

### PROCEDURES

1. Begin by explaining to the students that certain clues are given to us about the past. The clues might be in the form of an abandoned bridge, a huge rock or boulder, sand pits, old mills, etc.
2. Provide students with clues that they will need to decipher the past. It could be a clue to a time period, event or place. Explain that they are historians that were given a huge task. They have to enter a time machine to go back to the past and uncover a mystery.
3. Provide the answers to the clues (they may be written on the board) and the students have to match the clues to the answers. Decide that students can guess answers, as they listen to a narration of the clues.
4. Break up students into groups and have each team listen to clues or receive clues and try to decide the answer. Clues are as follows:
  - e. We entered a time when the trees towered over the land. The clear, cool water of the river flowed rapidly and we noticed it was filled with pinkish fish. We could see the bottom of the river and rocks were scattered forming riffles in the water. We walked through the thick woods, carefully and came upon a clearing. There were houses made of bark rounded like igloos, deer pelts hanging from the entrances. Gardens had been planted and we noticed the small ears of corn, pumpkins and beans sneaking out of the stalks and vines. What time period are we in? (*Native American – 1600's*) What are the pink fish and bark houses called? (*salmon and wigwam*).
  - f. We were settlers from an area at the mouth of a river. We decided to move our

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- families to a near distant place. We needed more land to plant our farms and build fences for our pastures. We walked and rode our horses, but came upon a dangerous area. It appeared to be the only way to go. We were frightened because we heard the rage of the water falls and the only way to cross was through the huge crevice or hole in the rocks and boulders. Where are we and where are we going? (*Tariffville Gorge and going to Simsbury*) What town did they come from? (*Windsor*).
- g. We entered the town of Tunxis. The crowd was bubbling with excitement. It was opening day for a great canal that would travel from New Haven to Westfield, MA. The celebration was contagious. While we were walking towards the river, we noticed an aqueduct crossing the river. Where are we? (*Farmington*) What are we celebrating? (*opening day of the Farmington Canal*) What is the date? (*July 4, 1825*).
  - h. There was a stench in the air and we were gasping for breath. We could not believe our eyes. The river spewed colors that were unnatural to the river. We looked behind us and saw a factory's pipe pouring an unknown substance into the river. We were horrified at what we saw. Dead fish, darkened skies and no trees were sights we will never forget. Where are we? (*any area along the river that had factories – Windsor, Hartford, New Hartford, etc.*) What time period are we in? (*Industrialism – 1800's*).
5. Discuss how they were able to determine the answers. Explain that there are many items in our towns that provide clues to our past.
  6. Have students go on a real walk through the past in their town to uncover the town's history. Suggest walks by the river, bike path's, woods, etc.

## EXTENSIONS

1. Have students create drawing to correspond with historical events.
2. Have students visit an area of historical significance in the Farmington River Watershed.

## RESOURCES

Farmington River Association, *Farmington River Guide*, 2002, Farmington River Watershed Association, Inc.

## GLOSSARY

**aqueducts** - a pipe or channel designed to transport water from a remote source, usually by gravity

**clues** - things that serve to guide or direct in the solution of a problem or mystery

**decipher** - to read or interpret

**uncover** - to remove the cover from; to manifest or disclose