

Share: Storytellers in the Streets of Old Grand Rapids (Grades 4-8)

Program Description:

GRPM's *Streets of Old Grand Rapids* exhibit is set up as a scale model of Victorian Era Grand Rapids. Through a series of perspective-taking exercises and visits with exhibit interpreters, students will be encouraged to answer the question of what it was like to live in Grand Rapids in 1890. The program will culminate with a creative-writing piece, written in first person, where students will demonstrate their take-home understandings and put themselves in the shoes of a child living in the city more than 120 years ago!

What content standards align with this program?

ELA Common Core Standards by Domain: Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, Range of Writing.

Michigan K-12 Social Studies Standards: H1 The World in Temporal Terms: Historical Habits of Mind, H2 Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago, H3 The History of Michigan and the Great Lakes Region, U6 The Development of an Industrial, Urban, and Global United States, G2 Places and Regions, E1 The Market Economy, P1 Reading and Communication, P2 Inquiry Research and Analysis

Museum Program Strand:

1. *Cultivate a community of empathetic contributors who value diversity.*
2. *Help learners tell, interpret, create, and share compelling stories so no history is ignored or untold.*

This program is aligned with the following Museum Learner Outcomes:

Holders of Foundational Knowledge	Masters of Fundamental Literacies	Creative Thinkers and Doers	Generous Collaborators for Tough Problems	Learners For Life	
X	X	X		X	

What will students know and be able to do after completing this program?

- Students will be able to empathize with diverse viewpoints.
- Students will be able to describe what life would have been like for children who lived in Grand Rapids during the Victorian Era.
- Students will create a short creative piece in written or pictorial form.

What questions will students answer?

- What does it mean to practice empathy?
- What do you learn when you put yourself inside the shoes of another person?
- What was life like for children who lived in Grand Rapids more than 120 years ago?
- What did people do for fun in the past?
- How did families function in the past?
- What are some examples of goods and services available in Grand Rapids in the past?
- How do you create a creative work of fiction?

Key vocabulary

Empathy
Perspective-taking

Artifact
Character
Fiction

Materials List and Setup:

Lined Paper and pencils
Student worksheet
Whiteboard and expo markers
Laminated pictures for perspective-taking activity
“Peter’s Journal” short story
Self-reflection half sheet (exit slip)

Program Activities: 90 minutes

1. Introduction and expectations
 - a. Mini Perspective-taking activity
 - i. This pre-writing activity encourages students to consider another individual’s thoughts and emotions. Stepping outside of themselves and considering the perspectives of another is an important precursor that they will need to achieve this program’s objective. The lightheartedness of this prompt is an approachable way to start to practice empathy.
 - b. Have a discussion to draw out student prior conceptions of important terms: empathy, perspective-taking.
 - c. Introduce focus of the program: to work through a series of activities to practice perspective-taking and empathy with the characters in this exhibit in order to learn about what life was like for somebody who lived in Grand Rapids during the late Victorian Era of 1869-1901. Program content and activities will lead up to final creative writing piece at the end.
2. Instructor gives important context and information about the content/themes of the exhibit.
3. Reflection on primary source:
 - a. “Peter’s Diary” story about child laborer in 1880 as a way to start putting ourselves into the perspective of a child in history.
4. Journey through the exhibit. We are keeping our brains in this time period. And now we are going to step inside the exhibits and transport ourselves into Grand Rapids in 1890.
 - a. Barrel Factory: Raised by the rules activity to learn rules of behavior expected in Victorian families.
 - b. Voigt Herpolsheimer: Gifts of Long Ago Activity to learn about what recreation looked like for children in Victorian times.
 - c. Rudell Drug Store/Pharmacy
 - d. Kaminski’s Grocery Store.
 - e. Print shop. Think/pair/share discussion about communication and how it’s changed through time
5. Instructor introduces creative writing prompt. The prompt will ask students to perspective-take in an even deeper way by creating a creative piece of writing with information they learned about the time period during the program.
 - a. Students spend time writing/sketching their story from that perspective.
6. Wrap-up discussion and dismissal
 - a. What strategies did you use to put yourself in the shoes of these various characters
 - b. Why do you think it’s important to practice empathy and perspective-taking?