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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2014 Volume IV: Eloquence

Auditorium Building, Chicago: "The Temple of Peace."

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.04.11, published September 2014

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The narrative curriculum unit I've written this year is titled *Auditorium Building, Chicago: The Temple of Peace*. It is a look into a social and cultural space that is an important part of Chicago's voice. The content is organized into four categories: history, politics, design, and rhetoric. The unit aims to connect the concepts and history of "Eloquence" with architectural design. I would argue that the Auditorium Building embodies rhetoric for equal opportunity, for all people, for community, for labors of love, for monumental permanence, for acceptance of diversity, and for change which is ever-flowing and constant. Students are asked to consider how a building might speak and also listen. Their studies will reveal a conceptual connection between rhetorical tropes and schemes/figures of speech and architectural expressiveness. The heart of the architectural design of this building lies in its purpose—a common ground for social and cultural dialogue. They will work to learn speech invention, arrangement, recitation and memorization skills. They will also rewrite famous speeches using contemporary language. They'll rewrite a pageant that was performed during the Colombian Exposition as readers theater. As the culminating event of the unit our class will access the space several times in order to be able to act as docents and give tours while reciting speeches they have written to persuade the community that buildings can embody rhetoric.

(Developed for Social Studies, Writing, and Reading, grade 7; recommended for Social Studies, Writing, Reading, and Drama, grades 6-9)

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