

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: CHANGING LANDSCAPES

ESSENTIAL CONCEPT	Our environment reveals the social forces that have shaped our progress. Photographs from the past and present can reveal much about our future.
GRADES	4–8
TIME	One to two class periods
ART CONCEPTS	Composition, design, shapes, geometry, line
MATERIALS	Landscape photographs
TALKING ABOUT ART	<p>Although the camera had recorded natural landscapes in the past, in the early 1900's, photographers now captured the transition from farmlands to urbanization. Renger-Patzsch's <i>Allotment Garden Landscape</i> can be seen as a survey of his country's land being encroached upon by modern industrialization.</p> <p>View and discuss Albert Renger-Patzsch's photograph, <i>Allotment Garden Landscape</i>, 1929. What words would you use to describe the landscape in this photograph?</p> <p>What shapes or lines can you point out in the photograph? Are they organic, man-made or both?</p> <p>Would you describe this landscape as residential, agrarian (farmland) or industrial? What visual clues tell you this? Why did the artist choose this vantage point for his photograph? Is he nostalgic or is he stepping forward into modernity by embracing urban development?</p>
MAKING ART	<p>We can link Patzsch's photograph of a German landscape to our society's urbanization from the 18th through 21st centuries. For example, in 1776, Mission San Juan Capistrano was a European settlement located 55 miles south of Los Angeles. Later, in an attempt to promote immigration and residential communities in the area, it was named Orange County—after the citrus fruit. Orange County was promoted as a semi-tropical paradise where various crops could grow. Then, in the mid-20th century, the railroad line and Interstate-5 Highway were developed, connecting Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego. Residential developments grew and attractions like Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm (previously renowned for its boysenberries) attracted tourists. Today, Orange County is the second most densely populated county in California, second to San Francisco County. Over the years, urban development has yielded high revenues, but Orange County is no longer the tropical paradise that initially drew people to the area.</p> <p>Examine your own surroundings. As you travel to and from school, observe the urban and/or natural landscape around you. With a camera or cell phone, take three to five photographs of what speaks to you—natural landscape, residential, commercial spaces, etc.</p>

Choose your favorite photograph, print it and reflect on it as it relates to the natural/urban environment. Write a title on your photograph and bring it to class to be displayed.

REFLECTION

Present your artwork, addressing the following:

Why did you feel it was important to document that particular site?

How does the site impact the community?

How did you frame the site in your photograph and why?

How do you think the site might change in the future?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.6–8

4–8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners.

6–8.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

6–8.4 Present claims and findings, using pertinent descriptions and details.

CCSS.HISTORY SOCIAL SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS.4

4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.

6–8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary source; provide an accurate summary. 6.6 Identify aspects of a text (artwork) that reveal an author's point of view or purpose.