

TEACHER GUIDE

CROSSROADS: CHANGE IN RURAL AMERICA K-12 Classroom Connections: A Teacher Discussion Guide

Teachers! This guide is meant to support classroom connections between the exhibition, *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, and the *Crossroads Activity Guide*. You do not need to facilitate every discussion prompt, but rather pick and choose questions that are of interest to you and your students. While many of the ideas below can be modified for a variety of ages, some may be more grade / age appropriate than others. The activity, *Before and After*, at the end of this guide can be easily modified depending on time, student's age, and classroom interest.

DISCUSSION AGREEMENTS

Create a sense of safety in the classroom for all students by setting some rules and agreements for discussion as a class:

1. Encourage and require respectful conversation. Define what respect and disrespect looks, feels, and sounds like.
2. It is ok to have different opinions - listen to and consider the ideas of others.
3. Hate is not welcome but a brave and loving space is.
4. Empower students that their voices matter.
5. Promote participation without singling or calling students out.
6. Be inclusive of all students.
7. Difficult conversations can bring up emotional and sensitive topics for students - talk to students ahead of time, offer alternate activities, stop any lesson that is upsetting.

Discuss and define the following concepts:

- Rural: A place with fewer people than land.
- Suburban: A place with more houses that are close together than business buildings.
- Urban: A place with many people, houses, and buildings.
- Community: A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
- Change: The act of making or becoming different.



Changing Utah, photo by Trevor Christensen.

**Do you live in a rural, suburban, or urban place?
What communities do you belong to?**

Discuss the following statement:

Crossroads: "Where people meet, ideas intersect, and change is constant".

- *Does this describe where you live or your community? How?*
- *Why might change be constant? In your mind, is change a good or bad thing?*

#UtahRuralCrossroads | www.utahhumanities.org



Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution, Utah Humanities, and local partners statewide.



This educational guide is a creation of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, a professional partner for the Utah tour of *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, a Museum on Main Street exhibition brought to you by the Smithsonian Institution and Utah Humanities.



SECTION 1 | WELCOME TO CROSSROADS: CHANGE IN RURAL AMERICA

A rural crossroads, FreeImages.com/Bettina Schwehn.



Closed stores in Eureka, Utah, 2017, Heidi Besen/Shutterstock.

Look at the flipper questions and answers in this section. Find the photo of the closed businesses in Eureka, Utah.

- What businesses do you think people need / want in their town? Why do you think these businesses closed?
- What could the people of Eureka do in these spaces today to promote change in their town?



SECTION 2 | IDENTITY

Sugar beet field workers in Colorado, 1972, courtesy National Archives.



Moroni and Amy Timbimbo, Washakie, Utah, 1939. Utah Historical Society.

Watch the video "What Does Rural Mean to Me?"

- How do the people interviewed define "rural"? Do they all have the same answers?
- What three words would you use to describe what "rural" means to you? Now, pick three images or artworks that connect to those words. **Discuss as a group your findings.**
- Do you think all these depictions of rural life are realistic and true? Why or why not?



SECTION 3 | LAND

Miller's Swimming Hole, Missouri, 1902, Wisconsin Historical Society.



Temples of the Rio Virgin, Southern Utah, Alfred Lambourne, 1876, courtesy Springville Museum of Art.

Explore this section of the exhibition to learn about the important role that land, and access to it, has played in the development of rural America.

Consider different viewpoints of land ownership among different cultures, past and present, and how some people have access to land and others do not.

- Why do you think the topic of land creates so many strong feelings and opinions in people? What does that tell us about our connections to the land?

Discuss in groups:

- Define work and labor. How have these terms' meaning changed over the past one-hundred years?
- How do people in your area make a living? Do they work on the land or do something else?

SECTION 4 | COMMUNITY

Downtown Montpelier, Vermont, by Doug Kerr.



Main Street revitalization, Brigham City, Utah, 2021. Image courtesy Brigham City Corporation.

What do people like to do in your town? How and where do you celebrate things that are important to the community?

In many communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, rural people created bustling streetscapes lined with commercial buildings. “Main Street” became a symbol of small-town life and community. Look at the images of the main streets in this section.

- *What do you notice about these images? What similarities and differences do you see?*
- *Does your town have a main street? How has your main street changed over the years? What is something that you wish your town has, but doesn't?*
- *Why do you think people might leave where they live and move somewhere else? Why do people stay?*



SECTION 5 | PERSISTENCE

Businesses and festivals attract visitors to Telluride, Colorado.



Chinese parade, Utah, c1880, courtesy Utah Historical Society.

Why is this section of the exhibition titled “persistence”?

Find three examples of persistence that has supported rural communities in unexpected ways.

- *What traditions in your area make it unique? What would you call a festival that celebrated these traditions?*



SECTION 6 | MANAGING CHANGE

Find and discuss the image of the “Wealth” art installation and read the quote by Garth Brooks: “You aren’t wealthy until you have something money can’t buy.”

- *Why do you think the artist used crops to spell out the word “wealth”?*
- *What things measure a community’s wealth?*
- *What are things “money can’t buy” that are most important to help your community thrive?*



Art installation near Reedsburg, Wisconsin, courtesy Wormfarm Institute.

LOOKING AHEAD



Windmills old and new, Milford, Utah, photo David Crane.

Now that you have spent time thinking about community, change and rural places throughout this exhibition, what are rural America's best assets? What are the most critical issues rural communities face?

- What do you believe is the future of rural America?
- Why is it important for rural people to engage in conversation about the future of their communities?
- What do you think is the most important issue facing your community that people need to discuss?

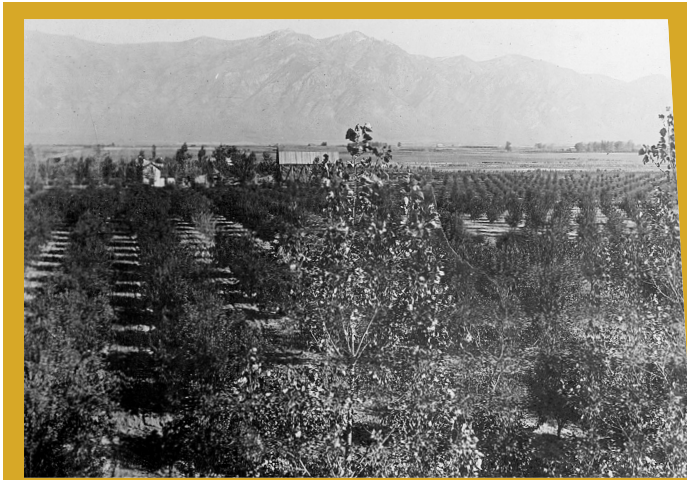
Identity, Persistence, Community, Diversity and Change:

- Which of these words best describes your community?
- Do any of these words highlight an issue that your community may be struggling with?

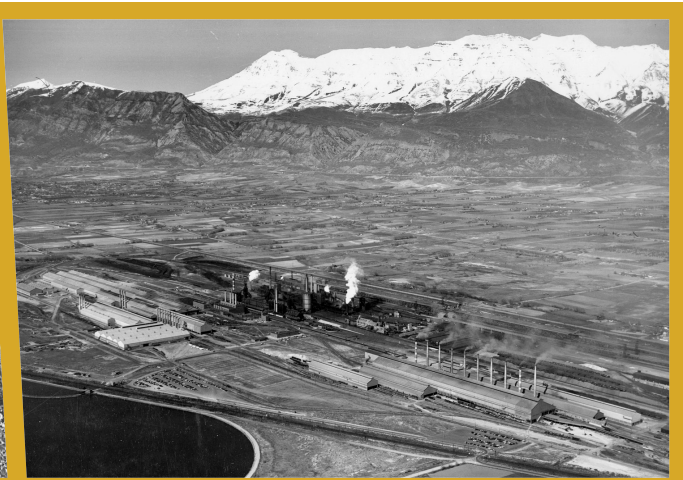
ACTIVITY

BEFORE AND AFTER

Learn about the past and present of your town and imagine possibilities for the future!



Provo Peach Orchard, c 1905, courtesy Utah Historical Society.



Geneva Steel Plant on shore of Utah Lake, c 1945, courtesy Utah Historical Society.

- How much time has passed between these "before" and "after" photographs?
- Can you find three things that are in the first image but not the second?
- Notice the perspective of these photographs. Where was the photographer when they took each photograph? Why do you think they chose the perspective they did?

RESEARCH!

In groups, research and answer the following questions:

- Who are the original human inhabitants of your town? Why did they originally choose to live here?
- What geographical features make your location unique from the surrounding areas?
- Why did your family or ancestors choose to live here?

DISCUSS!

As a class, answer the following questions:

- Which industries or resources do you think are the most important features of your town?
- Is your town famous for any communities, industries, or historical events?

CREATE!

Create a drawing of something that makes your town unique (This can be a company logo, a building, a geographic feature, or another symbol of your choosing).

EXPLORE!

Print out historical images of your town (you can find images of most towns in Utah by visiting: <https://history.utah.gov/library-collections/digital-collections/>).

Using historical images as a reference, each student will create a drawing or take a photograph of that same location as it appears today. Teachers can provide a photo taken in the same spot for the students to draw from, or the class can visit the site and draw or photograph together, if resources and time allow.

DISCUSS!

In small groups or as a class, discuss each student's artwork by answering the following questions:

- How much time has passed between the "before" and "after" photographs?
- Can you find three things that were in the first image but are no longer around today?
- Have they been replaced by something else?
- Can you find three things that have been added to the landscape since the first photo was taken?

CONNECT AND CREATE!

Create a collage of your town combining the drawing of what makes your town unique, historical photograph, and added elements of what it looks like today.

SHARE!

- What do these artworks say about your community?
- Is your town growing, booming, or declining?
- How has your town changed to support or reflect today's industries or economy?
- What is something you hope to see in your town in the future: 5, 10, 50, or 100 years from now.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!

Now add a drawing, photograph, or detail to your collage that highlights your vision of your town in the future. Write a short statement about the past, present, and future of where you live. What can you do to help your town and its residents thrive in the future? **SHARE!**

Utah sugar beets, courtesy Utah Historical Society.





Squirt Store, Spring City, 2019, painting by Randall Lake.

METHODS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Did students participate in the discussions related to *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* and explore aspects of rural America?
- Did the students complete a collage that combined the past, present, and future and discuss why change is essential? Did they consider how the past and present will shape the future?
- Did students consider their own role in their town and their vision of the future?

Utah State Education Core Standards Links (www.uen.org/core):

- **Kindergarten:** Social Studies Standard 2 - Students will recognize their roles and responsibilities of being a good citizen. Standard 4 - Students can explain how humans meet their needs in many ways.
- **First grade:** Social Studies Standard 1: Objective 3 - Name school, neighborhood, Utah state, and national symbols, landmarks, and documents. Standard 4: Objective 2 - Recognize that people need to make choices to meet their needs.
- **Second grade:** Standard 1: Students will recognize and describe how people within their community, state, and nation are both similar and different. Objective 2: Recognize and describe the contributions of different cultural groups in Utah and the nation.
- **Third grade:** Standard 2: Objective 1- Evaluate key factors that determine how a community develops.
- **Fourth Grade:** Social Studies Standard 2: Students will understand how Utah's history has been shaped by many diverse people, events, and ideas.
- **Fifth Grade:** Social Studies Standard 4: Objective 1 - Investigate the significant events during America's expansion and the roles people played. Standard 5: Objective 2 - assess the impact of social and political movements in recent United States history.
- **Sixth Grade:** Social Studies Standard 4: Objective 2 - Explore current global issues facing the modern world and identify potential solutions.
- **Seventh Grade:** Social Studies - Utah Studies: UT Standard 2.6: Students will explain how agriculture, railroads, mining, and industrialization created new communities and new economies throughout the state. (economics, geography)
- **Eighth Grade:** Social Studies: U.S.I Strand 6: Expansion U.S. I Standard 6.3: Students will identify the economic and geographic impact of the early Industrial Revolution.
- **Secondary social studies (9-12th grade) - Utah Studies UT Strand 2:** UT Standard 2.3 - Students will use geographic inquiry to explain patterns in the settlement of Utah and the subsequent trends in urbanization, referring to a range of communities as case studies (geography). United States History U.S. I Standard 1.4: Students will identify how the period of exploration has affected the current human geography of the Americas, and in particular the role their own cultural background has played.

Resources and Links:

- Learn more about the Indigenous lands you call home: <https://native-land.ca>
- Crossroads Young Adult and Children's Reading List: https://museumonmainstreet.org/sites/default/files/crossroads_youngadult_and_childrens_reading_list.pdf
- Utah Historical Society Educational Resources for K-12 Teachers and Students: <https://history.utah.gov/inquire-2/k-12-resources/>
- Utah Historical Society Digital Collections: <https://history.utah.gov/library-collections/digital-collections/>

The activity, *Before and After*, is a modified excerpt from a larger curriculum, *Mining the West: Before and After*, by Kate Sherrill written for the digital exhibition, *Mining the West: Primary Elements*, a collaboration between J. Willard Marriott Library Special Collections and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts.

