



Design Your Community Hub

 Social Studies •  30 min •  Ages 12-15 • Grade 8

This lesson challenges learners to think like community leaders, designing a shared space that serves diverse needs. They'll explore what makes a community thrive and use everyday materials to bring their vision to life.

Our goal is for your child to analyze diverse community needs for a shared public space, develop a physical design for a community space using limited resources, and explain how design choices balance conflicting needs and promote community well-being.

What You Need

Paper • Scissors • Glue/Tape • Small Blocks/Caps



Scan To Tailor

Every child learns differently, and this is just the baseline.

Scan to jump into the app and easily tailor this lesson to match your child's exact learning level and see how Mai will guide this lesson.



Ready for more adventures? Explore our **Sparks Hub** in the app

Lesson Blueprint

A simple, hands-on lesson that guides your child through curiosity, exploration, and reflection.



Mai's Tips

1. **Encourage the learner to think about specific people they know in the community** (e.g., 'What would your friend who loves art enjoy here?', 'How about your grandparents?'). This personalizes the needs.
 2. **During the building phase, focus on process over perfection:** The goal is to articulate ideas through a physical model, not to create a polished masterpiece. Celebrate creative problem-solving.
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Prep Before Session

1. Gather the materials and choose a safe, comfortable place for the activity.
2. Read through the lesson once so you know where the child will make predictions, test ideas, and reflect.



1 Introduction 5 Min

1. Begin by inviting your learner to imagine a new gathering place in your neighborhood, a 'Community Hub.' This is a central place where diverse people gather, learn, relax, and connect; it's important because it fosters connection and well-being. Ask them to reflect on existing public spaces they enjoy. Use these guiding questions: 'What are some of your favorite public places in our neighborhood or town?' 'What makes those places special for you?' 'How do you think those places work well for different kinds of people?' Encourage them to articulate how these spaces serve various community members. Once they've shared initial thoughts on public spaces and what makes them special, you're ready to move on.

 **Done when:** Student shares initial thoughts on public spaces and what makes them special.



2 Explore & Plan 8 Min

1. Shift focus to becoming 'community needs experts.' A 'Preliminary Layout' is a rough, initial sketch showing the basic arrangement of different areas or features. Guide your learner in brainstorming the 'Diverse Needs' of different community members – the varied requirements and preferences of people, from kids to elders, important so everyone feels welcome. Ask: 'What different kinds of people live in our community?' 'What might each of these groups need or want in a shared space?' Once a list of needs is generated, help them start sketching a preliminary layout of their community hub on paper. You are done when they have a list of identified community needs and a preliminary sketch or plan.

 **Done when:** Student has a list of identified community needs and a preliminary sketch or plan for their hub.



3 Discussion 6 Min

1. Acknowledge the fantastic ideas brainstormed. Now, guide a discussion around potential 'Conflicting Needs' – when desires like quiet versus loud clash, which is important to address for creative solutions. Also, focus on 'Inclusivity' – the practice of ensuring all feel welcome and have equal access, crucial for a thriving hub. Ask: 'Did you notice any needs or features that might be tricky to fit into one space?' 'How could a quiet reading area exist peacefully next to a bustling playground?' 'Who might feel left out if we only included features for one group?' The goal is for your learner to articulate potential design challenges and discuss creative ways to address them for inclusivity.

 **Done when:** Student articulates potential design challenges and discusses ways to address them for inclusivity.



4 **Activity** 9 Min

1. It's time to build! Your learner will create a 'Physical Model' – a smaller, three-dimensional representation of their design, which helps visualize ideas. Gather the materials: Paper, Scissors, Glue/Tape, and Small Blocks/Caps (substitutes include bottle caps, Legos, building bricks, or buttons). Ensure the learner leads the design and construction. They can cut shapes from paper for buildings, green areas, and pathways. Use small objects to represent specific features. Offer support, helping with cutting or holding pieces, but all creative decisions should be theirs. The stage is complete when your learner has finished a physical model or layout of their community space.

 **Done when:** Student has completed a physical model or layout of their community space.



5 Summary 2 Min

1. Celebrate your learner's incredible community hub design! Now, reflect on the process. A 'Thriving Community' is one that is successful, growing, and connected, the ultimate goal of good planning. Ask them to reflect with these questions: 'What was the most challenging part of designing a space for so many different people?' 'What surprised you during this design process?' 'If you could share one big lesson from this challenge, what would it be about building a thriving community?' Your learner has completed this stage when they share one key takeaway from the design process and their reflection.

 **Done when:** Student shares one key takeaway from the design process and reflection.

Beyond The Lesson

Fuel their curiosity beyond the lesson with bonus sparks.

Table Talk



Community planners and urban designers use similar processes to create public spaces that serve millions of people.

Did You Know?



Everyday objects can reveal surprising science when we slow down and observe them.

Challenge



Now, imagine you only have half the space you designed, but still need to include all the essential elements. How would you redesign it? Or, design a small budget proposal for one key feature, explaining its cost and benefit.

★ Quick Recap Quiz 4 Min

Check what your young scientist remembers. Each question includes a Parent Tip to help them find the answer without giving it away.

1. What Is The Primary Goal When Designing A Community Space?

- ☐ Make it as profitable as possible.
- ☒ **Meet the diverse needs of many people.**

 Remind them about considering 'everyone' and 'different needs' during the planning.

2. Why Is It Important To Consider Different Age Groups When Planning A Community Hub?

- ☐ It makes the design more complicated.
- ☒ **Different age groups have different needs and interests.**

 Ask: 'Would a toddler and a teenager want the same things in a park?'

3. If A Community Space Has Both A Quiet Library Area And A Noisy Playground, What's A Good Design Strategy?

-  Put them right next to each other to save space.
-  **Separate them with a buffer zone like a garden or path.**



Think about how physical barriers or distance can help different activities coexist.

4. What's A Key Benefit Of Having Community Members Participate In Designing Public Spaces?

-  It slows down the building process.
-  **It helps ensure the space is truly useful and welcoming for them.**



Connect back to the 'why' of their design challenge – making it work for real people.