

Research and Public Art

The sites on the Berea Public Art Tour are windows into the history and culture of Berea. It is our hope that visiting the sites will pique your interest and the interest of your students. Encourage that interest by inviting your students to take notes at the sites they visit, make lists of questions, listen to the interview clips on the website, and do more research. You can assign them themes or specific topics or let them self-select. You can work with them or let them work with partners or groups. Find ways for them to share their discoveries, whether in written reports or oral or multimedia presentations.

Help them transfer their curiosity to their own communities or neighborhoods and engage them in researching the stories behind their own public art. Ask them to consider the different methods of research that contributed to the Berea Public Art Tour. Be sure they identify:

- On-site visits
- Library research
- Internet research
- Review of primary documents
- Review of historic photographs
- Oral histories



When they have completed their research, guide them in using the information to create a community heritage book, a walking tour, a brochure, or some other way of representing and sharing what they have discovered about their own community or neighborhood.

Another approach to consider is to look at what aspect of your community or neighborhood should be represented by public art but is not. Is there a historic person, group, or event that should be memorialized? Is there something about your history or heritage that should be represented by a mural? What is it? How could it be represented? Perhaps your class or group could undertake creating a piece of public art. Several youth groups and school classes across Kentucky have painted murals on their walls, created quilt blocks to display on their school buildings, or contributed to programs like painting fire hydrants. You might take

on such a project on your own or recruit the help of your local arts council, tourism commission, or an artist-in-residence through the Kentucky Arts Council.