

These educational organizations offer resources to help students in rural areas and small towns. Consider exploring options they may offer for partnerships in your area.

4-H: An informal educational program delivered to rural and urban youth through a partnership that involves volunteers at the local level and employees of the county-level Cooperative Extension Service (administered through each state's land-grant university). 4-H participants learn about subjects ranging from health and nutrition to civic responsibility. For information on the 4-H National Headquarters, visit: <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/4-h-national-headquarters>

National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE): Organized in 1948 as the National Vocational Agricultural Teachers' Association and renamed in 1997. The NAAE serves the interests of the fifty state-level agricultural educator associations. Its mission is to "advance agricultural education and promote the professional interests and growth of agriculture teachers as well as recruit and prepare students who have a desire to teach agriculture. The organization is dedicated to developing professional pride and competency, to nourishing a spirit of unity among classroom teachers, and to recognizing members for conducting outstanding programs. It monitors governmental affairs affecting agricultural education and assists in the development of priorities and strategies to affect federal legislation and appropriations. <http://www.naae.org>

National Agriculture in the Classroom, launched in 1981 through a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and state departments of agriculture and state Farm Bureau offices, exists to increase agricultural literacy. It initially targeted elementary age students, but now serves K-12 students.

The National Council for Agricultural Education (The Council): The Council began in 1983 to facilitate communication between leaders of the eleven national organizations that advocate for agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resource systems education in schools. It serves as the "umbrella organization for the agricultural education community." <https://www.ffa.org/thecouncil/>. The Council describes agricultural education as "a systematic program of instruction available to students desiring to learn about the science, business, and technology of plant and animal production and/or about the environmental and natural resources systems."

In 1988, the **National Research Council (NRC)** defined an agriculturally literate person as a person who "understand[s] the food and fiber system and this would include its history and its current economic, social and environmental significance to all Americans." The 1988 NRC report called for the expansion of the Agriculture in the Classroom program.

In 2013, the **National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes** identified five themes central to the national curriculum: 1) Agriculture and the Environment; 2) Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber, and Energy; 3) Food, Health, and Lifestyle; 4) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math; and 5) Culture, Society, Economy, and Geography. [D. M. Spielmaker, *National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes: Benchmarks Related to Agricultural Literacy and Academic Achievement*

(Logan, Utah: Utah State University, 2013), 2, available at <http://www.agclassroom.org/get/doc/NALObooklet.pdf>].

National Agriculture in the Classroom collaborates with **Farm Bureau** offices at the state and county level to implement the National Agriculture in the Classroom curriculum. Historical content does not often factor into systematic agricultural instruction, but “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” provides opportunities to provide historical content related to local production of food, fuel, and fiber.

National FFA Organization: Future Farmers of America (FFA) began in 1928 to prepare young people for supporting American agriculture. Its focus is on middle and high school classes that promote and support agricultural education it has since expanded its mission that the organization is for those with diverse interests in the food, fiber and natural resource industries, encompassing science, business and technology in addition to production agriculture. <https://www.ffa.org>

National Young Farmer Educational Association (NYFEA) has the goal of being America’s association for Education Agricultural Leaders. Recognized by the United States Department of Education the vocational student organization for those adults enrolled in agriculture classes, usually through the local vocational agriculture/agricultural education program. Founded in 1983, its mission is to promote the personal and professional growth of all people involved in agriculture with a focus on the education of young farmers and youth interested in agribusiness. The NYFEA is THE site for young farmers and Ag leaders seeking to promote their personal and professional development through leadership training and community service initiatives. <http://www.nyfea.org/home.html>

National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization (PAS) is an organization associated with agriculture/agribusiness and natural resources offerings in approved postsecondary institutions offering baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. With a mission to to provide individual growth, leadership and career preparation opportunities for professional agriculture students, PAS has been developing two and four-year college-level professional agriculture students for the workplace through participation in employment experience programs, skill-set development, network opportunities, and organizational activities. PAS is one of the 11 career and technical student organizations that has been approved by the U. S. Department of Education as an integral part of career and technical education. Students compete at the local, state, and national levels and are guided by faculty advisors to develop the technical, professional and soft skills required for career success within the agriculture industry. <http://www.nationalpas.org/>

National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP): founded in 1949, the NTHP supports preservation of historic structures and raises awareness about endangered structures and places, including buildings in rural communities and barns on farms across the nation. It provides information on laws, policies, and programs useful to support rural preservation and adaptive reuse. <https://savingplaces.org/>

Rural Schools Partnership / Rural School and Community Trust / Rural Schools Collaborative (RSC): formed in 2014, believes that “a sustainable American future depends on thriving rural regions.” The RSC supports a rural renewal that 1) strengthens rural education; 2) rekindles the agrarian spirit; 3) constructs thoughtful approaches to community development; 4) builds public and charitable capital; and 5) nurtures local cultural heritage. It supports place-based education and manages “Grants in Place,” a small-grants program that funds

interdisciplinary projects addressing community issues, involving community members, and engaging students with a community's history, environment, economy, or culture. It also has launched the Rural Teachers Corps Project to address recruitment and retention of rural teachers. <http://ruralschoolscollaborative.org/>; <http://www.ruralschoolscollaborative.org/rural-schools-partnership-news/>

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE): began in 1988 when the U.S. Congress passed the Agricultural Productivity Act but issued no appropriation to conduct the work. SARE has identified “3 Pillars of Sustainability”: 1) Profit over the long term; 2) Stewardship of our nation's land, air and water; 3) Quality of life for farmers, ranchers and their communities. See SARE's booklet, *What is Sustainable Agriculture?* (2010) and *The New American Farmer*, 2nd edition (2005). SARE's mission is “to advance—to the whole of American agriculture— innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.” Between 2000 and 2004, SARE partnered with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History to create a traveling exhibition, “Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image.” <http://www.sare.org/>

Lesson Plans

Teachers voluntarily submit lesson plans to the National Agriculture in the Classroom curriculum website, available at the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix. You can access resources at: <https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/>

Additional plans can be found at the following links:

Conservation Education, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. National Curriculum on U.S. forest management:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/conservationeducation/materials/national-curriculum>

Manzanar Educator Resource Box for teaching about Japanese American Internment, with lesson plans available at: <https://www.nps.gov/manz/learn/education/educator-resources-box.htm>

Educational materials for “Listening to the Prairie: Farming in Nature's Image” are available through the Smithsonian Institution (http://forces.si.edu/main/pdf/2-5_Intro.pdf). Lesson Plans for PreK-12, 155 pages of resources, are available through the National Agriculture in the Classroom website (<http://agclassroom.org/ny/resources/pdf/activities/prairie.pdf>).

Teaching with Historic Places, U.S. National Park Service (NPS). Lesson plans focus on NPS sites. Several relate to “Crossroads: Change in Rural America.” <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/teachingwithhistoricplaces/index.htm>

The topics relevant to “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” include agriculture, American Indian history, community planning and development, conservation, and recreation and leisure.

Teachers on the Public Land, curriculum materials prepared by teachers to teach about U.S. public land, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, <https://www.blm.gov/learn/teachers/teachers-on-public-lands>

This site also includes the BLM's Educational Activities Database:
<https://www.blm.gov/teachers/>

Crossroads Collections on Smithsonian Learning Lab

Learning Lab (<https://learninglab.si.edu>) is a website where students and teachers can explore Smithsonian collections on their favorite topics. They can also create their own collections of items that they discover.

A set of Smithsonian Learning Lab collections related to rural America can be used in conjunction with *Crossroads*. Consider your state and local contexts how you might tailor these resources to your needs and histories. Besides this document, we have also included a list of other educational resources to consult.

Title: Changes in American Agriculture

Age Level: Middle School (12 to 15 years old)

Summary:

This collection includes a mix of articles, student handouts, historical artifacts and artwork to provide an in-depth look at this complex topic. Each slide has information and/or quizzes attached for testing student comprehension. Open-ended questions are provided to stimulate further thought on the topic.

Title: Main Street USA: Concept & Community

Age Level: Middle School (12 to 15 years old)

Summary:

"In the United States, Main Street has always been two things—a place and an idea. As both, Main Street has embodied the contradictions of the country itself." - Miles Orvell

Conjuring images of simplicity, community, and harmony with the natural world, "Main Street" is a concept that continuously sparks the American imagination. Synonymous with small town America, popular depictions of Main Streets range from Disneyland's *Main Street USA*, *It's A Wonderful Life's* Bedford Falls, to Norman Rockwell's paintings. But is there a difference between the popularized concept of Main Street and the reality of today's small town communities? How do people today experience their Main Streets, and do their experiences differ from each other?

This collection explores two main topics: Main Street as an IDEA, and Main Street as a PLACE. Students are asked to analyze depictions of Main Street from art, literature, and historical documentation.

Title: Crossroads – Rural and Urban Communities

Age Level: Primary (5 to 8 years old), Intermediate (9 to 12 years old)

Summary:

In this collection, students will:

- Differentiate between the characteristics of rural settings and urban settings in artwork.
- Discuss how a rural community's needs and values differ from an urban community's needs and values and how this can be observed in art.
- Identify examples of urban communities and rural communities by recognizing visual clues in various artworks.

- Compare and contrast how their community is similar to and different from other communities.
- Describe the characteristics of each type of community.

Students successfully complete this Learning Lab by:

- Choosing 4 pieces of artwork and answering the companion questions. All questions are open-ended and are intended to stimulate subjective analysis, conversation, and/or critical-problem solving. The main purpose of these questions is to allow students to analyze their own community.
- Once students have finished answering questions, it would be best for an educator to start a conversation about what they have learned, using the guidelines included below.
- Several worksheets are included at the end of this collection. Educators may decide which worksheets are the best fit for their class and use as many or as few as they need. These worksheets should be adapted to highlight or promote the features of the local community. Having a list of upcoming events, community organizations or charities, and/or community landmarks is advised.

Title: Crossroads - The Past, Present, and Future of Agriculture in America

Age Level: Middle School (12 to 15 years old)

Summary:

“The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.”

— Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*

In this lesson, students will:

- Read about our nation’s historic connection to agriculture from early colonization to present day
- Analyze the evolution of agricultural practices in America over time
- Understand how our present understanding of agriculture is a product of our time, and it will continue to evolve

A multimedia mix of videos, student handouts, interactive websites, historical artifacts and artwork provide an in-depth look at this complex topic. Each slide has information and/or quizzes attached for testing student comprehension. Open-ended questions are provided to stimulate further thought on the topic.

Title: Faces of American Agricultural Innovation

Age Level: Middle School (12 to 15 years old), High School (16 to 18 years old)

Summary:

In this lesson, students will learn about the lives and innovations of the following people:

- Dolores Huerta
- Cyrus Hall McCormick
- George Washington Carver
- Rachel Louise Carson
- Robert Fraley
- Eli Whitney
- Norman Borlaug

This resource provides informative text on each slide, as well as videos and articles from outside educational resources. This resource is created for students to navigate independently and includes an optional biography worksheet activity.

Title: Alphabet Soup: Rural America and the New Deal

Age Level: Intermediate (9 to 12 years old), Middle School (12 to 15 years old)

Summary:

This lesson explores three different New Deal programs for their impact on rural America. It also focuses on student engagement with a variety of types of primary sources. This is a self-contained lesson ready for use in a classroom or activity-based educational setting and may be supplemented with other content to expand its reach. It is designed for the following age levels: Intermediate (9 to 12 years old), and Middle School (12 to 15 years old), but may be adapted to suit other students. The lesson aims to introduce students to New Deal programs that affected rural life, encourage discussion of the experience of those programs in the context of the Museum on Main Street (MoMS) exhibition *Crossroads*, and help students practice using different types of sources as research material. Students will be asked to identify different types of sources as primary sources, as well as differentiate between objective and subjective sources; interrogate textual, video, and visual sources to develop a conclusion; and be able to translate their research into a presentation to teach to other students. This lesson focuses on themes of daily life, technological change and continuity, and common or shared experiences.