

Why Don't We Talk To Our Neighbors?

Full Name: _____

Class: _____



Is living on the same street enough to know one another?

1. Think about these two questions as you watch the video.

In Appleyard and Lintell's study, how do relationships with neighbors differ between streets with different levels of traffic?

According to Jan Gehl, why is counting the people who pass through a street not enough to understand how lively it is?

How A Connection Begins

2. Work backward from this last step in getting to know someone. In each box, write the step that came just before it in the video.

“You notice you haven’t seen them in a while.”



Before That



Before That



Before That

a. How does passing through the same place again and again help these steps happen?

b. “Someone whose name you don’t even know has become part of your daily life.” What does the word “even” emphasize?

One More Research Question

Appleyard and Lintell interview 12 people on each of three similar streets with different levels of traffic. Those on the street with light traffic report about three times as many friends on their own street as those on the street with heavy traffic.

However, the proportion of families with children and how long people have lived there also differ.

3. Imagine you are continuing the study. Write two questions you would ask the people interviewed to learn about factors other than traffic. Explain what each question would help you understand.

1. My Question

What I Want To Learn

2. My Question

What I Want To Learn

a. Write one sentence using “however” to connect the study’s finding with what it cannot tell us for certain.

The Windows

Charles Baudelaire • Les Fenêtres • 1869 edition

Someone looking in from outside through an open window never sees as much as someone looking at a closed one. Nothing is deeper, more mysterious, more fertile for the imagination, darker or more dazzling than a window lit by a candle. What we can see in sunlight is always less interesting than what happens behind a pane of glass. Within that dark or glowing opening, life goes on, life dreams, life suffers.

Beyond the waves of rooftops, I catch sight of a middle-aged woman, already wrinkled, poor, always bent over something, who never goes out. From her face, her clothing, her movements, from almost nothing, I have pieced together this woman's story, or rather her legend; sometimes I tell it to myself and weep.

If it had been a poor old man, I could have pieced together his story just as easily.

Then I go to bed, proud to have lived and suffered in lives other than my own.

Perhaps you will say, "Are you sure this legend is true?" What does it matter what reality lies outside me, if it has helped me to live, to feel that I exist and what I am?

Translated from the French original for this booklet.

4. How can someone looking at a closed window see "more"? Explain what "seeing" means in this text.

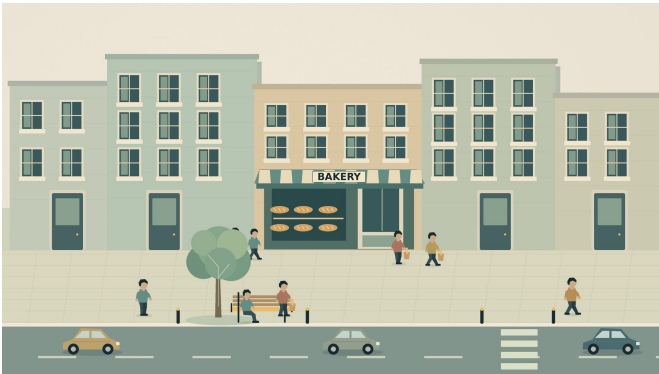
Seeing And Knowing

5. Baudelaire’s narrator watches the woman from a distance. In the video, we gradually begin to greet and talk to someone. How does getting to know a person differ in these two situations? Use one detail from the text and one from the video.

a. Is the narrator trying to prove that the story about the woman’s life is true? Support your answer with a phrase from the final paragraph.



Before



After The Changes

6. Choose one detail that changes between the two frames. Who might this change help, and what could it make easier for them?

A Street In The Rain

Gustave Caillebotte • Paris Street; Rainy Day (1877)



Oil on canvas • Art Institute of Chicago
Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection, 1964.336

7. Two people looking at this painting make the comments below. Under each comment, write one detail that could support it.

“This painting makes me think of loneliness.”

“This painting makes me think of togetherness.”

a. What might we miss if we describe the painting through just one interpretation?

One Place, Two Needs

An Imagined Street

A bench is placed in the shade of a tree on a street. People who need a rest can stop there. But when people gather in front of the bench to chat, they block the sidewalk. A person using a cane has to step into the road to get around the group.

8. Suggest a change that would make it easier both to rest and to walk past, without removing the bench. Explain how your idea meets both needs.

9. Write a three-sentence note to put beside the bench. Use the first sentence to invite people to sit. In the other two, explain what people should do to keep the path clear and why.

What Follows A Hello

10. Write 6-8 sentences to connect this beginning and ending. Use a detail of the street to make it easier for the people to stop and talk. Show what happens to get their conversation started.

Beginning

Every time I left the bakery, I would see the same person. That morning, for the first time, I wasn't in a hurry.

My Title: _____

Ending

We still didn't know each other's names, but we were no longer strangers.

Sources

Video

Why Don't We Talk To Our Neighbors?

Text

Charles Baudelaire

Les Fenêtres / The Windows
Petits Poèmes en prose
Michel Lévy Frères • 1869
Vol. IV • pp. 109-110

A new English translation for this booklet from the public-domain French original.

Original Text And Edition ↗
French National Library Record ↗

Painting

Gustave Caillebotte

Paris Street; Rainy Day
1877 • Oil on canvas
Art Institute of Chicago

Charles H. and Mary F. S.
Worcester Collection • 1964.336
Public-domain artwork and image.
Image: Google Art Project /
Wikimedia Commons.

Museum Collection ↗
Image And Rights Record ↗

Sources Used In The Video

Donald Appleyard and Mark Lintell • 1971

The Environmental Quality of City Streets: The Residents' Viewpoint.
Highway Research Record, 356, 69-84. ↗

Jan Gehl • 2011 edition

Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space. Translated by Jo Koch.
Island Press, pp. 9-15. ↗

Images

The street frames come from original animations created for this episode.

Activity Design Reference

IES / What Works Clearinghouse • Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively (2016; revised 2019), Recommendation 2. ↗