

HGTV: Holiday Windows

About *Holiday Windows*

Holiday Windows takes students behind the scenes as the world's best department-store Christmas windows and trees are sketched, built, installed and revealed. Students will follow two designers on a yearlong journey from initial idea to magical opening night.

Curriculum Connections

This activity guide has been written for upper elementary and middle school classrooms. Activities connect to language arts, visual arts, marketing, math, science, and family and consumer studies.

Previewing Activities

Ideas to introduce the show's content, spark student interest, and prompt discussion, debate and critical thinking

1. Have students share what they know about store windows and displays at holiday time. Do they remember any specific windows or displays from stores in your town or across the country? Which national stores are known for elaborate holiday displays? Have students ever seen these store's windows at holiday time? What memories, if any, stand out?
2. Who might be part of a team tasked with creating a store window for the holidays? What skills would be required? What school subjects would be put to work?

Viewing Activities

Questions and challenges for students to track and consider as they watch the episode

1. Have students record and compare the two designers' processes, from initial idea to final product. In what ways are their processes similar? In what ways do they differ?
2. Have students track the challenges that each designer faces throughout the process and the creative ways that the challenges are overcome.
3. Have students vote on their favorite featured window.

Extended Activities

Activities to connect the show's content to different curricular areas, the home and community

- Visual Arts/Marketing/Language Arts: Have student groups imagine that they have been selected to design a holiday window for a local or national department (or other) store. (Each group could select their own store, or all groups could compete to design a window for one store). Taking into consideration the shoppers who will view the window, students must brainstorm an idea for the window; conduct research on their idea; design a sketch; and create a small model of their window on the computer, on foam core, in a shoe box or using other materials. In addition to the model, students must list materials they would use for the full-size window and include three potential problems they might face along the way. Students must present and justify their ideas to the class. Note: Students can go to <http://gonyc.about.com/cs/christmasinnyc/p/holidaywindows.htm> to see examples of holiday windows across New York City.
- Math/Marketing/Language Arts: In 1870, in the biggest department store in the world, a cultural tradition was born. In anticipation of the holiday season that year, Macy's lured in shoppers with illuminated window displays that have become a much-anticipated annual tradition. It was the same year that Macy's hired their first Santa Claus. Have students brainstorm about other strategies that stores use to attract shoppers during the holiday season (special sales or offers, free babysitting, visits with Santa, attractive signs, free parking, and complementary food and drink are a few). How do students think the Internet has impacted in-store holiday sales? Have students go to the National Retail Federation (www.nrf.com) or another retail site to learn about the current year's holiday

sales projections. Then have them track the actual national retail sales numbers each week against the projections, as well as national and international events that are impacting the trends. Finally, have students design a strategy for an online or retail store to increase sales during the holiday season.

- Science/Family and Consumer Studies: In this episode, designer Lonnie Hanzon creates a 2,000 pound, 15-foot Christmas tree made of sugar. Along the way, he experiments with temperature, colors and textures and learns the challenges of using sugar as a work of art. Have students experiment with sugar creations, using the recipe that follows. They will need a measuring cup and spoon, large heavy metal sauce pan, wooden spoon, glass jar, clean piece of cotton string, Popsicle stick or pencil, paper clip, pot holders and cooking/candy thermometer. (1) Tie one end of the string around the middle of the stick or pencil. (2) Moisten the string with a little water and roll it in sugar. Put the clip on the end of the string to help it hang down. Lay the stick over the top of the glass jar so the string hangs down inside but does not touch the bottom. (3) Put 1 cup of water into a sauce pan and heat until it boils. Add 2 cups of sugar to the boiling water while stirring. Keep stirring until the sugar dissolves or a candy thermometer registers 240-degrees Fahrenheit. (4) Remove the pan from the heat. If desired, experiment with flavoring and/or color. (5) Pour the hot mixture into the jar. (4) Let the sugar water sit for 3 to 10 days. (5) Take the string out of the jar. Have students observe (and then eat!) the results!