



## Learning Activity: Creating a Safe Space (Grades 9-12)

### Part 1:

**SWBATD** synthesis of their understanding of the original purpose of the torreon in Lincoln by designing a map of his/her own home and determining the best safe place for themselves and their family.

### Materials Needed:

- butcher paper (1 piece per student)
- black markers (1 per student)

### Anticipatory Set:

- “Guess what? Local authorities have reported chatter that your neighborhoods may be targeted for attack. Today, we’re going to figure out your safe place.”

### Activity – Making a Map.

Before students begin their mapping activity, they should be reminded to reflect upon the “Lockdown in Lincoln” presentation and to imagine themselves living in a modern-day situation similar to what the early settlers of La Placita experienced. What would it be like to live with the constant worry of invasion from people outside the community?

1. Demonstrate how to draw a simple aerial map of a home. (Remind students to begin with pencil rather than marker because they will likely be making corrections.)
2. Instruct students to include all doors and windows that would be necessary for seeing outside or escaping from the invaders.
3. Instruct students to try to represent the rooms of the house proportionally by size, for example the living room should be significantly larger than the bathroom.
4. Instruct the students to label each room in the house.
5. Once students have designed a map of their house, ask them to decide which room might be the best safe place for their family and pets in the event of an invasion outside the house.
6. Direct students to mark an “X” on **one room** in the house where the family would go for safety.

## Part II:

### Writing Assignment:

Reflect back on what was learned about the defensive advantages of the torreon as a safe place for the settlers of La Placita. With these thoughts in mind, write a 5 paragraph essay explaining the map that you drew of your home.

- Paragraph 1 – Introduce your essay by explaining that your neighborhood has been invaded. Describe the composition of your family (including pets) and any others who might rely on your house as a safe space.
- Paragraph 2-4 - Explain your rationale for selecting the room in your home where your family would be most safe from invasion. Expand upon the following considerations:
  - Which room has enough room to accommodate the entire family and pets?
  - How many points of entry and exit (windows, doors, skylights, dormer windows, chimneys) does the room have?
  - What life necessities (food, water, bathroom) are present in that room and which are not?
  - What is present in the room that could be used for self-defense on short notice?
- Paragraph 5 – After writing about the above considerations, conclude your essay by explaining whether or not you believe you initially chose the best room for your family’s safe space, or if pondering the above considerations caused you to change your mind.

### Closure:

Ask the students to imagine that all of the residents of their street had designated a communal gathering place in case of an emergency (similar to the way that the residents of La Placita would all gather at the torreon).

Then ask, “What would be the one item that you would take with you if you had to run quickly to the community safe place and you didn’t know how long you would be there?”