



2025 Model Home Building Contest for Students

3/22/25 - 1:00PM - Lincoln Hall at Hildene in Manchester

Turning the contest into a learning experience

Students are more than welcome to do the contest on their own time. However if you have the flexibility in your curriculum, there are many ways to incorporate the contest into lesson plans. The contest is a fun and unique way to reinforce art, math, social studies, and writing lessons into the classroom. The following are ways in which a teacher might incorporate this contest into their lesson plan.

Please feel free to be as creative as you would like, as the guidelines are quite simple. They do vary by age, but creativity and functionality remain key across all categories.

The Habitat for Humanity Model-Home Building Contest is open to all students in Bennington County, and will be divided into the following three categories: Kindergarten thru 4th Grade; 5th Grade thru 8th Grade; and 9th Grade thru 12th Grade.

Guidelines For All Categories

- Model homes can be made of any/all materials.
- Students can enter individually, or in groups of 2, 3 or 4. (No more than 4 students per team).
- Model homes should be no larger than 20" x 20" x 20".
- Each contestant must register online at BenningtonCountyHabitat.org/ModelHome
- Judging will be determined by a panel of local professionals and the students themselves.

K-4 Emphasis on Home

- Which rooms in a home are the most important to you?
- What is special about a home versus a school building or other structure?
- What does "home" mean to you?

5-8 - Emphasis on Functionality

- What makes for a good, functional home?
- How does the house flow? (design of both exterior, and interior layout)
- What design aspects make this house more functional than a standard home layout

9-12 - Emphasis on Sustainability

- What makes your design a sustainable home?
- How is your home efficient in terms of energy and water usage?
- What have you done to think about the future in your home's design?

Introducing the Contest to Students:

- Provide an overview of Habitat for Humanity using the overview provided at the bottom of this document. More helpful material can be found at www.BenningtonCountyHabitat.org.
- Leverage the guidelines sent with the contest enrollment package to explain the guidelines—minimal requirements and boundless creativity!
- Create a classroom timeline with key check-in points to allow students to share their ideas with each other, capture feedback and—most importantly—to ensure that the houses are completed in time for the February 28th event.

Tips for Incorporating into Math Lessons

- As a first step to the process, ask students to identify the size their house would be (in square feet) if it were full-scale. Then have them conduct the conversion from feet to inches, and determine if it will fit the specified 20" x 20" x 20" guidelines.
- Have students determine the size specifications of each piece of the house (i.e., each wall, floor, ceiling, windows, etc.) and measure the pieces in the chosen house material (showing you their work) before cutting.

Tips for Incorporating into Art Lessons

- Leverage the design of the house to reinforce color composition, balance, proportion/scale, contrast, and focal points.
- The contest does not put any strict guidelines on the definition of creativity. However, you can opt to drive the direction of their designs to tie into current lesson plan topics. For example, require that the students incorporate use of a specific material (clay, water paints, sculpture, etc.).

Tips for Incorporating into Social Studies Lessons

- Ask students to research their family ancestry or another culture, and incorporate characteristics into their design. This is particularly relevant to younger students, with the guideline of what makes a house a home.
- Have students incorporate eco-friendly aspects to reinforce environmental learning, such as green building techniques and sustainable landscape, which is especially important for high school students' guidelines.
- Tie in the connection between location and natural resources and lifestyle into the design of the home.

Tips for Incorporating into Writing and Public Speaking Lessons

- Contest participants are required to be prepared to discuss their house with the judges. Ask students to draft their descriptions as part of a writing exercise. This can be used to highlight sentence composition, controlled paragraph organization, and descriptive and persuasive writing skills.
- To help students prepare for the day of the contest, have students rehearse their presentations to the judges. You can act as the judge and ask the students to describe their dream home. Probe for the inspiration behind their theme, how long it took to build their model, or what materials they used. This can be used to practice formal speech skills such as correct pronunciation, appropriate volume, speaking with purpose, and pace of the speech.

Overview of Habitat for Humanity

What does Habitat for Humanity do?

Bennington County Habitat for Humanity helps hard-working, low to middle income individuals and families achieve homeownership. Habitat homes are not free, they are sold to partner families using an affordable 30-year mortgage. These partner families are chosen based upon their need for affordable housing, their ability to pay their monthly mortgage, and their willingness to complete 200 hours of volunteer labor, or “sweat equity” per adult. 100 of which must be at the construction site. Since 1997, Bennington County Habitat has given a hand up, not a hand out, to 36 families thanks to countless volunteer hours and the financial support of our community. For more information, visit www.BenningtonCountyHabitat.org

Why is owning a home so important?

Families that own their homes feel safe, secure, and proud. Children of homeowners are more likely to succeed in school, hobbies and sports because the worry of having a place to live has been eliminated. Owning your own home is something to be proud of. For many families, it is a dream come true. In many cases, it is a family's only shot at multigenerational wealth.

Who builds a Habitat house?

With limited staff, Habitat relies heavily on community volunteers to build homes. Last year, over 200 volunteers gave over 7,000 hours of their time to help build Habitat homes in Bennington County. Partner families who will be purchasing the home also complete their sweat equity helping to build their future Neighborhood.

What does a Habitat house look like?

Habitat homes are simple and decent. An average Habitat house for a family of four in the United States is 1,200 square feet, has three bedrooms, and two bathrooms. Habitat homes are designed to fit seamlessly into the existing neighborhood. In fact, you cannot distinguish a Habitat home from a non-Habitat home. Please contact us at the information below if you would like a Habitat representative to come to your school to speak about the contest and our work in your community.



Bennington County
Habitat
for Humanity®

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