

## *An Amish Barn Raising*

**Subject:** Social Studies: Agriculture

**Grade Level:** 5-8

**McRel Standards: US History** Era 6: The development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

**Benchmark:** Understands how the rise of corporations, heavy industry, and mechanized farming transformed American society.

**Iowa Model Core Literacy: Writing:** Uses writing as a tool for learning  
**Curriculum:** Uses an effective writing process  
Uses knowledge of purpose, audience format, and medium in developing written communication.

**Listening:** Listens for information and understanding  
Analyzes visual media for effect and information

**Anticipatory Set:** Using a KWL , the students will fill in the column to share what information they already know about a barn raising. Then students will share ideas in class and the teacher will chart the information on the board using the KWL chart that has been replicated on the board

**Objective:** Through the use of the video [An Amish Barn Raising #2](#) the student will be able to describe the documented footage and share through writing the importance of the event for the community. They will develop an understanding of terminology used in timber framing. They will use descriptive writing to describe the sights and sounds of the barn raising.

**Purpose:** The students will be able to compare and contrast the archival footage and the 2001 footage to note similarities and differences in the barn raisings. Students will also learn how to fill out a listening guide for a multi media presentation. Students will also learn about the Amish culture.

### **Teaching to the objective:**

1. Students will use a KWL chart sheet while watching the video, [An Amish Barn Raising 2](#). Prior to watching the video, the students should fill out the first square with information that they think they might know about a barn raising. Students will be able to share their thoughts prior to watching the video and the teacher will make notes on the graphic organizer that has been reproduced on the board.
2. Students will use a listening guide to take notes while watching

the DVD. After completion of the listening guide, then students will complete the KWL chart.

3. Students will then compare and contrast the information they saw from the first video and this DVD.
4. Students will read the book “Amish Horses” Richard Ammon and share information they find out about the Amish culture.
5. Students can also research Amish culture and then report back why a barn raising event is so important in the life of the Amish community.

**Amish:**

The Amish or the Old Order Amish originated in Switzerland about 1525. They were a division of the Mennonites or Anabaptists. The Amish began a small faith group and separated from the Swiss Mennonites during the 17<sup>th</sup> century with their founder, Jacob Amman. They were against the union of church and state and infant baptism. They baptized their members when they were about 18 years of age. Adult baptism was a crime in Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and anyone found practicing adult baptism were put into sacks and thrown into European rivers.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, William Penn granted a haven from religious persecution in America. During the 1720’s many Amish settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Others settled in New York, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri and Ohio.

**Amish Beliefs:**

The Amish believe in remaining separate from the rest of the world. They will not be involved in the military or warfare. There is no centralized Amish organization. The Amish avoid seeking people to convert. The *Ordnung* is an oral tradition of rules that regulates the Amish way of life. The *Ordnung* rules differ among the various church districts.

**Practices:**

1. The members of the Amish speak a German dialect, called Pennsylvania Dutch (Deutsch).
2. Amish have one-room schools that are run by the Amish. Children are taught up to grade 8, further education is discouraged. The Amish train their youth on how to be homemakers, farmers, carpenters and tradesmen from an early age.
3. Amish do not use or own automobiles.
4. They do not have electricity, radios, TV sets or telephones.
5. Marriages outside the faith are not allowed.

6. Men usually dress in plain, dark colored suits with hook and eyes, not buttons, and broad-brimmed black hats. The men follow the Hebrew Scriptures with the regards to beards.
7. The women wear plain colored dresses with long sleeves, bonnet and apron. The women wear a white prayer covering if married; black if a death and the women are usually buried in their bridal dress, which is often blue or purple.
8. Religious services are held biweekly on Sundays in the homes of members, not in a church.
9. Funerals are conducted in the home without a eulogy and flowers. The casket is plain, without adornment.
10. The Amish do not collect Social Security/Canada Pension Plan Benefits, unemployment insurance or welfare. They maintain mutual funds for members who need help with medical costs or bills.
11. They do not take photographs or allow themselves to be photographed.
12. They practice a tradition called *rumspringa* (*running around*). The Amish teens aged 16 and older are allowed some freedom in behavior. They live at home, but they date, go out with friends, visit the outside world, go to parties, drink, and wear jeans. The idea of this tradition is to allow the youth to make certain they want to commit to the community and be baptized in the Amish faith.
13. The Amish practice “shunning” where they shun any members who break their rules.

The Amish are close-knit communities. Family values are important to them. They prepare for the world to come rather than trying to become rich or famous. They practice the old ways with a slow pace simplicity. They have found a way to survive in our high-pressure technology world by practicing the simple way of farming and using their traditional craftsmanship.

**Resources:**

**Web sites:**

1. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/amish.htm>  
The web site gives a great summary of the Amish history and culture.
2. <http://www.holycrosslivonia.org/amish/origin.htm>  
The web site also gives a great summary on the Amish history and culture.
3. <http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/aged.html>

**Books:**

1. “20 Most Asked Questions About the Amish and Mennonites”, Merle Good, Phyllis Good, Good Books, Oct 1995, ISBN 1561481858
2. “America’s Amish Country”, Doyle Yoder, Leslie A. Kelly, America’s Amish Country Publications, May 2000, ISBN 1930646003
3. “Amish Ways”, Ruth Hoover Seitz, Blair Seitz, RB Books, May 1991, ISBN 1879441772

4. “Amish Horses”, Richard Ammon, Atheneum, April 2001, ISBN 0689826230, ages 4-8
5. “An Amish Year”, Richard Ammon, Atheneum, Feb 2000, ASIN 0689826222, ages 4-8
6. “Raising Yoder’s Barn”, Jane Yolen, Little Brown, Sept 2002, ISBN 0316075930, ages 4-8
7. “Amish Home” Raymond Bial, Houghton Mifflin Company, March 1995, ISBN 0395720214
8. “Amish Children”, Phyllis Pellman Good, Good Books, Oct 2002, ISBN 156148380x, ages 4-8

**Assessment:** Students will write a journal entry about the barn raising that they viewed. They can describe the event from the perspective of the chief carpenter—Josie Miller, a member of the barn raising crew, the Amish farmer who had been preparing for the event, or one of the young Amish children who helped prepare the food for the event. Students can also write about what it would be like for an Amish young person to visit a “English” barn raising. What might they see that is the same and what might they see that is different?

## *An Amish Barn Raising*

### Listening Guide

1. What determined the needs of the barn?
2. What did the journeymen do prior to the barn raising?
3. How many tenon and mortise joints were in the barn construction?
4. What are bents?
5. How many men did it take to hoist the first bent?
6. What would be the two needs for anew barn?
7. In 1900 half of America’s population lived on farms. How many live on farms today?
8. What is the purpose of the steel pry bars when the tenon and mortise joint is put together?
9. Why is the barn always larger than the family home?
10. Why are the barn raisings held on Saturdays? Why is this called a frolic?
11. How many men did it take to put up the center-bearing wall?

12. Why did the narrator use the terms synergy and cooperation when he described the men working together to raise a bent?
13. In the Amish community what is the difference between a built barn and a burned barn?
14. Why are oak pegs used to join the joints rather than nails?
15. What two ancient cultures used mortise and tenon joints?
16. Why is the floor of the barn made out of thicker wood?
17. Why would weather determine building materials?
18. Why is wood used for a barn?
19. How many total men worked on the barn?
20. Why is it easier to build long rather than wide?
21. Why did some come to work on the barn even if they didn't know the barn owner?

### ***An Amish Barn Raising Math***

1. What is the area of the barn that they raised if it measures 130 feet long by 82 feet wide?

2. What would the cost of the skeletal frame of the barn be?

2500 board feet of lumber was used for the skeleton @ \$3.25 per board foot = \_\_\_\_\_

150 pounds of spike nails @ \$1.25 per pound = \_\_\_\_\_

100 pounds of siding nails @ 1.10 per pound = \_\_\_\_\_

3. There were 200 men that helped at the barn raising. Carpenters make about \$20.00 per hour of work. If the men each worked 8 hours the day of the barn raising and the farmer had to pay them, what would the cost of the labor be?

4. Do you think the farmer could afford to pay all of the workers?

5. What did the DVD narrator say about the Amish people and their willingness to help others within their community?