



What Was Happening in the Rest of the World?

[See Student Worksheet C](#)

The purpose of this activity is to embellish students' temporal literacy and to create an interest in people and places outside their communities. It requires students to take a look at one particular period in time and research what was going on in the world at that chosen time. The period during which the Empire State Building was being constructed is the time period selected for this activity. The activity requires students to use geography and history to look at events from a global perspective.

Activity

Begin by having students create, as a class, a list of **everything** that was happening in the United States in the year 1929. Make sure they include things in the areas of art, music, politics, technology, military issues, society, the built environment, etc.

Create another list with your students this time have them give their thoughts about what was going on in the rest of the world in 1929 in the areas of art, music, politics, technology, military issues, society, the built environment, etc.

Both of these lists should be created on the spot, without the benefit of research. **You are interested in your students' perceptions.**

Divide the class into groups and have each group research **one** of the following locations using our graphic organizer Student Worksheet: *What Was Happening Around the World in 1929?* as a guide.

- New York City, New York
- France
- England
- Russia
- Japan
- Germany
- San Francisco, California
- Their Own Community

After students have completed their research, have each group report their findings to the class.

Encourage students to augment their presentation with primary sources such as music, art images, personal letters, journal entries, newspaper articles, maps, etc.

Students might also like to interview community residents who were living in 1929.

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Record what your students have discovered on a master graphic organizer. And help them connect and compare what was happening around the world in 1929.

Materials Needed

Student Worksheet: *What Was Happening Around the World in 1929?*

Art created in 1929

Music popular in 1929

Objects of daily use in 1929

A master graphic organizer of some sort for everyone to see

Good Websites About the Year 1929

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1929_in_film --- This is a Wikipedia site so please use it cautiously. It presents lots of information about the year 1929 and events occurring around the world at that time.
2. <http://www.answers.com/topic/1929> --- There is a lot of interesting information here, including the year itself based on different calendars used around the world.
3. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/crash/filmmore/pt.html> --- This is the transcript of a PBS presentation on the Stock Market Crash of 1929.
4. <http://www.infoplease.com/year/1929.html> --- This site provides links to other sites with information about the events of 1929.
5. <http://www.keyboardmuseum.org/pre60/older.html> --- This site lists electronic musical instruments and when they were created. Once you've selected an instrument, you can click through for more information.
6. <http://www.archives.gov/nae/education/lesson-plans.html> --- This is a good site for documents about the Great Depression.
7. <http://www.ellisland.org/> --- This is the website of the Ellis Island Foundation. It has a wonderful archive of personal stories of immigrants that have entered the United States via Ellis Island since the last half of the 19th Century.



Things As You See Them

These activities start simple but then become much more complicated. They require students to use their skills of visual literacy and visual perception to evaluate the built environment. They focus on seeing beyond the immediate; on seeing a wider scope of things. They involve applying these skills to the way a community is arranged and how this affects the people who live there.

These activities also use optical illusions and perceptual twisting of visual items **and** of the printed word. They focus on what might be, or what might not be, depending on how you look at it!

Activity 1

Have students think about and visualize, **in their heads**, their school community. Then have them draw the **pattern** this community makes. Here are some questions to focus on:

- Is it mainly a rectangle or a circle?
- Maybe it's a square?
- Does your community form stars?
- Does it look like a snake? If so, where?
- Could it be a combination of two or more of these?

Have different students check their perceptions by pointing out these designs on a map of their school, their neighborhood or their community. Discuss why the different patterns might appear where they do. Is there a geographical reason for the patterns? Is there an economic reason for the patterns? Etc.

Present a map of New York City and study the shape of the city's design. Have students compare the design of New York City to the design of their school or neighborhood. Students will, no doubt, see all sorts of designs in these two cities. Have them point out any similarities they see.

Discuss the advantages of different types of community design. Ask students to decide if they were designing a community, what design they might choose and why.

Present images of built environments around the world, especially where it's possible to see buildings of different shapes or cities that have an obvious overall total design.

Invite a local urban planner into the classroom to discuss the pros and cons of different city design patterns.



Have students photograph/create a film of buildings in their community that are or have parts that are:
rectangles
circles or half circles
squares
combinations of the above

Activity 2

This activity takes visual *shapes* and word *shapes* and changes the viewer's or the reader's perception of them.

Present your students with several examples of perceptual illusions. (See suggested websites below for these images). Help students try to decide what creates each illusion.

Present the work of M.C.Escher. Discuss his work and help students decide what creates the illusion in Mr.Escher's work.

Have your students choose an object in their everyday environment that they especially like and then create a work of art by repeating it over and over again, similar to a **tessellation**.

Have students research and find examples of the following:

- Necker cube
- Penrose triangle
- Tessellations/tiling
- Polyhedra
- Mobius strip
- Fractals
- Impossible figures

When students have completed their research, have them select one of the above and create their own example of it.

Have your students find examples of mathematical art work created by the following:

- Hollister David
- Robert Fathauer
- Brent Collins
- Istvan Orosz
- Kerry Mitchell

Have your students create Hinky Pinkies.

Have your students write limericks.

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Have your students create puns using the following words:

*Eye,
Watch,
Book,
Bear,
Knot.*

Their puns can be either visual or using words.

Materials Needed

Map of your school community
Zoning districts in your local community
Map of New York City
Images of built environments around the world so that shapes are observable
Access to local city planning experts

Good Websites About Urban Planning

1. <http://www.carsonessays.org/> --- This website is a good source of information about the profession of urban planning and for issues that must be addressed when thinking through urban development. The author, Rich Carson, was an urban planner in the Pacific Northwest.
2. <http://www.cyburbia.org/> --- This is another website that presents issues in urban planning. It changes on a daily basis with planners submitting questions and citing work around the world.
3. <http://www.planning.org/> --- This is a very comprehensive website all about the planning. It's the official website of the Professional Institute of American Planners. It's a good place to get information about community planning issues around the world.
4. <http://www.cnu.org/> --- This is the website for the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU). It's an organization that promotes "walkable, neighborhood-based development as an alternative to sprawl. CNU takes a proactive, multi-disciplinary approach to restoring our communities." It presents some definitions and perspectives on community that are a bit different for many Americans.
5. <http://www.cnt.org/> --- This site is all about sustainable communities. You can also find links here to green building information.
6. <http://www.ti.org/> --- This is the website of the Thoreau Society. It focuses on the field of urban planning and the problems surrounding it. The society takes a different stance looking for ways to protect the environment without regulation, bureaucracy, or central control.

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7. http://www.scenic.org/learn_more/what_is --- This is the official site for Scenic Conversation. It's an organization devoted to preserving the visual beauty of the American Landscape.
8. <http://www2.lib.udel.edu/subj/census/internet/> -- This is the official website of the US Census Bureau.
9. http://www.lowermanhattan.info/about/history/history_timeline/ --- This site is specific to New York City. It provides a wonderful timeline of the city's history.

Good Websites About Visual Perceptions

1. <http://www.scientificpsychic.com/graphics/> --- This site has a wonderful selection of optical illusion!
2. <http://dragon.uml.edu/psych/illusion.html> --- This is another good site for optical illusions.
3. <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/hiro.html> --- Lots of brain hieroglyphics at this site.
4. <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/writing.html> --- You can find a lot of creative activities using interesting word perceptions here.
5. <http://web.mit.edu/persci/> --- This is a website at MIT that focuses on how different people perceive things.
6. <http://www.mcescher.com/> --- This is the official M.C. Escher website. It provides a look at some of his most wonderful work.
7. <http://members.cox.net/tessellations/index.html> --- This is a commercial website that sells tessellations. It also has some interesting lesson plans.
8. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml/panhome.html> --- This site relates to another kind of perception in map-making, panoramic maps.



Shapes and Patterns Are Everywhere But Did You See Them?

The activities in this section focus on attending to the shapes and patterns in the built environment. They require students to go beyond observing simple geometric shapes. They require students to observe the shapes and patterns that different parts of the environment make when considered as part of a larger whole. Students are called on to observe the built environment and focus on how it can be arranged to influence human feelings and human behaviors.

Activity 1

To refresh your student's concept of **shapes** found in the built environment give them a *Pop Quiz*. Here's our version of a *Pop Quiz* for your use:

Ask students to --- **quickly** --- look around the room and call out all the geometric shapes they see --- circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, parallagrams etc. List their responses on the board so everyone can see them.

Ask students to look again, take their time and look more closely. Ask them to call out what they see with this added attention. Add their new response to those already recorded on the board.

Then ask your students to look around the room for geometric shapes that are created by grouping other geometric shapes together. They must look at a bigger whole to do this. For example, they might notice:

- the rectangular windows lined up in row to form a bigger rectangle
- the shape the desks make when looked at altogether
- the shape of the space between the teacher's desk and the two closest corners of the room
- a circle made by a few desks that are grouped together
- the rectangle made by a stack of rectangular books

Repeat the same activity, this time searching for geometric shapes over the entire school campus. First ask your students to search for simple geometric shapes then have them search for larger shapes made by grouping several shapes together.

Students might want to sketch or photograph the shapes they discover.

When students return to the classroom, have them compare and discuss their discoveries.



Create a collection of photographs or drawings of the shapes your students found in their school.

Activity 2

This activity calls for students to pay attention to the **patterns** around them in the built environment and analyze the moods or feelings they create.

Divide your students into teams. Each team should choose five (5) of the feeling/emotion words from the list below. Each team must then visit a complement of sites in their community and evaluate each site based on the five (5) feeling/emotion words they selected.

Feeling/Emotion Words

Calm
Energized
Harried
Sad
Happy
Cold
Warm
Confused
Unsure
Angry
Contented
Worried

(Modify or add to this list to suite your particular students)

Here are some questions to be addressed at each site visited:

1. Does this site evoke an emotion from you?
2. If so, which one or which ones?
3. Do the colors used here affect you?
4. Does the way the furniture is arranged affect you? If so, how?
5. Do the sounds or lack of sounds here affect you? If so how?
6. Does the general shape of the room affect you? If so, how?
12. How about the general amount of space here? How does it affect you?
13. Does the temperature here affect you? If so how?
14. How about the parts of the room/building like the windows and the stairs, etc? How does their design or placement affect you?
15. Do the other people here affect you in any way? What is it about these people that you noticed first?

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16. Are there smells here that are good or bad? Do they affect you?
17. Does the arrangement or kind of the objects in the room affect you? Why or why not?
18. Use something in this room and decide how easy it is to use.
19. How do you think this site intends for you to feel?
20. How could you change this site to evoke an opposite emotion from the one it does?
21. Do you like this site? Why or why not?
22. Do you see shapes made from other shapes here?

Community Sites to Be Visited

- A grocery store
- A library
- A restaurant
- A professional office
- A government office
- A movie theatre
- A phone store
- A park

When the student teams have completed their research, have them discuss their findings with the total class.

Activity 3

To further your students' study of shapes in the environment and how they make us feel, have them research the Golden Mean/ the Golden Section/the Golden Ratio. Have them begin with a look at Euclid's book *The Elements* (300BC).

If a line is divided at the Golden Ratio, the smaller part is to the larger as the larger is to the whole.

Present your students with works of art created by artists such as Jan Vermeer and Piet Mondrian and discuss them in terms of the Golden Mean.

Look for graphics all around you that are pleasing to the eye.

Lead your students on a search around your school for things that are balanced. Help them decide *if balanced always means symmetrical?*



Materials Needed

Map of your community/town/city

Means for listing team discoveries so the entire class can see them

Samples of works of art created by artists such as Jan Vermeer and Piet Mondrian

Good Websites About Patterns/Designs in the Built Environment

1. <http://trob.home.pipeline.com/artdeco1.htm> --- This website is all about Art Deco buildings in New York City. It has some good links to other sites about Art Deco. It has some news articles referring to earlier interviews with some of the city's Art Deco architects.
2. <http://www.artdeco.org/> --- This is the official website for the Art Deco Society of New York City. It has minimal information but it does present information about their activities.
3. <http://www.architypes.net/patterns.php> --- This is a very informative site about the built environment and why it makes us feel the way it does.

Good Websites About the Golden Section/Golden Mean/Golden Ratio

1. <http://www.mcs.surrey.ac.uk/Personal/R.Knott/Fibonacci/phi.html> --- This site has lots of information about the Golden Section including history, explanation, examples and activities for understanding.
2. <http://jwilson.coe.uga.edu/EMT668/EMAT6680.2000/Obara/Emat6690/Golden%20Ratio/golden.html> --- This is a paper written about the Golden Ratio in Art and Architecture by a professor in the Mathematics Department at the University of Georgia. It has a good explanation of the concept.
3. <http://www.friesian.com/golden.htm> --- This site presents another paper on the Golden Ratio.
4. http://www.vermeersiddlerevealed.com/grail_geometry.shtml -- This site presents several geometric techniques that prevail in Jan Vermeer's paintings and even presents one opinion that debunks the notion that Mr. Vermeer understood and used the concept of the Golden Section.



Draw These Buildings

The purpose of this activity is to help students improve their visual literacy and attention to details and to help them turn words into visions. The activity also provides students with some information about New York City's early architecture.

Activity

Here is the basic construction description for three buildings your students will see when they visit New York City. Present the description and request that students draw each of the buildings you are describing:

Building #1

The base of the building rises five floors above the street.

The entrance is four floors high.

The lobby is three floors high.

From the 60 foot setback on the fifth floor, the building soars without a break to the 86th floor.

Building #2

The 77 story edifice, distinguished by its abundant automotive imagery (for example, silver hood ornaments embellish the setbacks and stylized racing cars appear at the thirty-first floor) and its striking crown --- The black Belgian granite entrance arches lead into a spectacular interior.

Building #3

This triangular steel skyscraper was designed on what was,, at the turn of the century, among the most prominent sites in New York City ---

The slender 22-story building is clad in traditional Italian Renaissance ornament, most of it white terra cotta --- The small metal and glass extension (known as the cowcatcher) at the apex of the building was designed by the Burnham firm in 1902.

(This activity could be completed in teams)

After completing their drawings have students (or student teams) show their renderings. There will more than likely be a number of different visual versions of these written descriptions. Here are some items you might discuss with students:

Which words guided your drawings and why?

What were the most important words used in the description?

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What were the least important words used in the description?
Which description did you enjoy drawing the most? Why?

Have students bring their drawings with them when they visit New York City.

Materials Needed

Drawing supplies

Written or audio versions of the building descriptions

Good Websites About New York Buildings

1. <http://www.nycskyscrapers.com/> -- This site is all about what's located inside New York City Buildings. It's a good source of photographs of buildings. It is not clear whose site this is.
2. <http://www.shaye.com/> --- This site is devoted to photographs of New York City. It shows quite a bit of the city.
3. http://www.skyscraper.org/home_flash.htm --- This is the official website of the Skyscraper Museum. It has a lot of good information about New York's built environment.
4. <http://www.greatbuildings.com/gbc.html> --- On this site you can find photographs of buildings from around the world. They even have 3D models for downloading.
5. <http://www.skyscraperpicture.com/index.htm> --- This is a good place to find photographs of many different skyscrapers.
6. <https://www.nyhistory.org/web/> --- This is the official site for the New-York Historical Society. It's a wonderful place to find all kinds of information about New York City.
7. <http://www.mcny.org/> --- This is the official site of the Museum of the City of New York. The museum has a nice collection of photographs of the city.
8. <http://histmaps.research.cuny.edu/pub/maps/home.aspx> --- This site is a good source of information about New York City maps.
9. <http://www.artnet.com/artist/8884/yvonne-jacquette.html> --- This site has some of the wonderful paintings of New York City by Yvonne Jacquette.
10. <http://unseen-cinema.com/disc5.html> --- This site offers a DVD for purchase. The DVD is a collection of very early short films made of New York City. Two of these early shots were created by Rudy Burckhardt. (We have not personally previewed this DVD.)
11. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/zone/zonehis.shtml> --- This website presents zoning issues that affected the design of the built environment in New York City.

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Marvel Comics Walking Tour of New York City

This activity takes students on a tour of New York City to many of the sites featured in the Marvel Comic's Super Heroes series. Through this tour students get an idea of how stories are developed and how familiar people, places and things become part of even the most over-the-top fanciful stories. In addition students will be called on to use map reading, visual organization and planning skills to develop the route for their walk.

Activity

Present your students with maps of New York City and have them locate selected Marvel Comic sites from the list below that they would like to explore. The sites they select will become a tour of the City.

New York City Sites That Appear in Marvel Comics

The Bowery
City Hall
The East Village
Bleeker Street
187 Chrystie Street
666 Fifth Avenue
East Thirty-ninth Street and Second Avenue
Empire State University --- New York University
Yancy Street --- Delancey Street
Baxter Building/Four Freedoms Plaza (42nd Street and Madison Avenue)
Chrysler Building (405 Lexington Avenue and East Forty-second Street)
Empire State Building (350 Fifth Avenue between 33rd and 34th Streets)
United Nations Building (760 United Nations Plaza)
The Gem Theatre (42nd Street between Broad way and Eighth Avenue)
Hell's Kitchen
Madison Square Garden
Rockefeller Center
New York Public Library (5th Avenue and 42nd Street)
Times Square
Central Park
The Frick Collection
The Solomon Guggenheim Museum
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
American Museum of Natural History
Columbia University
Brooklyn Bridge
Statue of Liberty

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After the sites are selected, have students use street maps of New York City to plan the precise route of their tour. Don't forget to consider how you will get to each site --- via foot power, subway or bus.

Assign different students or student teams the responsibility of describing what happened in the different comics at each of these locations. When you arrive at each of the selected locations have the assigned students/student teams tell the story (stories) that took place at this location.

At each site have students decide if they think the location is a good one for the story that took place here and why they feel as they do.

Have students compare the actual site to the depiction of it in the Super Heroes comic and describe the differences.

Have your students decide if they agree or disagree with the following statement:

Super Heroes represent the potential within every individual to become extraordinary.

Peter Sanders, author of *The Marvel Comics Guide to New York City*.

Back In the Classroom

When you return to your classroom have students complete an outline or a storyboard for a Super Hero comic using sites and characters from their own lives

Materials Needed

Marvel Comics for your ride to New York Here is a site for the Marvel Comics catalogue

<http://www.marvel.com/catalog/>

Maps of New York City

Cameras