



What's in a Name? See Student Worksheet B

Sometimes it's possible to get clues about the history of a city simply by looking at the names of things within that city. The activities in this section will help students focus on the importance of paying attention to what's around them (visually, auditorily and in print). They provide an introduction to the importance of preserving that which is *old and historic*. They focus on the importance of words and the way we use them. They also sample the origins of some of the words commonly used in the United States today. Place names found in New York City and in your students' home community serve as tools for this activity.

Activity 1

Below is a list of New York names for your students to explore. Their task is to find out *when and why* these names/words first appeared in New York City. We're betting they are surprised at what they discover.

Begin by studying a New York City map for the names to be researched.

Here are the names/words to be researched:

Amsterdam
York
Greenwich Village
Wall Street
Broadway
Herald Square
Woolworth Building
The Bowery
Whitehall

Have students discuss their findings as a group and decide what these names tell about New York City.

For a fun way to take another look at the origins of New York City names have your students complete the Student Worksheet: *New York City Names Crossword Puzzle*.

Challenge students to locate the sites, etc found on their Student Worksheet: *New York City Names Crossword Puzzle* on a current day New York City map.

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The crossword puzzle uses mainly names that relate to the early development of New York City. There have been many additional names created in the city's more recent history. After students complete the Student Worksheet: *New York City Names Crossword Puzzle*, have them create their own crossword puzzle using more recent New York City names. Have students challenge one another with their newly created puzzles.

Activity 2

Have students make a list of the most interesting names of the streets, neighborhoods, schools, public buildings, etc in their own community. They should be encouraged to find out how these entities were named, who named them and if there is a pattern to their naming --- ie. *Before 1990 every street was given a flower name --- or --- Everything built by a certain builder was named after his family.*

Have students locate the named sites and buildings on a local map and note any patterns that exist.

Have your students create a crossword puzzle using the names of streets and/or sites found in their own community.

Have your students select the most interesting street, site, building, etc that they discover through their research. Have them contact the officials attached to this site, etc. and ask permission to create and conduct a walking tour of this site. After obtaining permission, have your students create a walking tour of the site and make plans to provide this tour on a regular basis to residents in their community.

Activity 3

Invite a professional in the field of historic preservation into your classroom to discuss the care of the historic sites and buildings in your community.

Have students discuss what buildings/sites found in their world today should be preserved for future generations and why.

Have students decide what messages/stories about their community they would like to preserve for future generations. Have your students write a description of their school as it exists today for students of the future.

Have your students research the names and write a brief summary of as many plays as they can find that were written specifically about places.



Materials Needed

Student Worksheet: *New York City Names' Crossword Puzzle*
Map of New York City
Map of your community
Access to the local Historic Preservation Society
Access to the internet or other research tools

Good Websites About New York City Names

1. <http://www.forgotten-ny.com/> -- This website is devoted to rediscovering the parts of New York City that are historic but now forgotten. It has lots of information though you sometimes have to dig for it.
2. <http://www.wcs.org/mannahatta> --- This is the site for the Manhattan Project sponsored by the Wildlife Conservation Society. The project focuses on gathering information about the ecology of Manhattan when Henry Hudson first sailed by in 1609 and comparing it to what is known about the island today.
3. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/home/home.shtml> --- This is the official website of the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission. The Commission is responsible for identifying and designating the City's landmarks and the buildings in the City's historic districts. It also regulates changes to designated building
4. http://www.lowermanhattan.info/about/history/history_timeline/ --- This site provides a very good timeline of New York City history.



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.



You Are The Architect

This activity asks students to use their visual literacy skills to focus on the different architectural styles found in our built environment. Students are asked to focus on one certain style of architecture but at the same time become aware of the characteristics of other styles. The vehicle for this is a game between the students as architects and a professional builder.

Activity

This activity is a game for your students to play. Here's how the game works:

The Object of the Game --- The object of the game is to be the best communicator about a particular building style. Each of three (3) teams of architects (your students) must describe the building style they have been assigned (by you) to a professional builder who has been invited into your classroom to judge the competition. The Architectural Team that does the best job of communicating its assigned style to the professional builder is the winner. If the builder guesses a style, the Architectural Team that presented that style automatically wins. If the professional builder is unable to guess any of the styles, the professional builder then decides the winner from among the presenting teams based on the descriptions they presented.

The Architects --- Your students will act as architects during the game. They will be divided into three (3) teams. Each team of architects will be assigned a different architectural style with its own set of characteristic. It is each team's responsibility to first thoroughly research their assigned style learning all its characteristic, functions, history, etc. Then they must communicate to a professional builder the style they have researched.

However, the Architect Teams **may not use** pictures/drawings/ photographs, etc in their presentation. You must provide them with everyday, common objects that they may use in their description. In addition, they may also use their own bodies. To make their task even more difficult, the teams can only use five (5) words to describe their style. They must be creative in using the materials you provide and careful with the words they select. Architect Teams may answer *Yes or No* questions presented by the judge.

The Builder --- Invite a professional builder into the classroom to be the judge for this game. The Builder will not know in advance what architectural styles you have assigned to the Architect Teams. The responsibility of the Builder, the judge, is to try to guess the architectural detail presented by a team in each round and then, based on these described characteristics, to guess the style.

Playing the Game --- Each of three (3) Architect Teams (students) will be assigned an architectural style (by you) and will have five (5) rounds in which to communicate aspects of this style to the Builder (a professional builder who has been invited into the classroom to be the judge for the game).

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In each of the five (5) rounds each of the Architect Teams will describe **one aspect** or **one characteristic** of the architectural style they have researched using only the supplies you have provided for them and giving only one (1) word that they think describes that characteristic.

For example --- the style is *Greek* and the characteristic for the round is a *column*. To describe this the students might line up next to each other to form the outside of a square. Their one word for the round might be *supports*.

The Builder who is the judge may ask one (1) *Yes or No* question of a team **during each round**. Then the Builder tries to guess what the characteristic is. At any time the Builder may offer a guess as to what the style is. If he/she is correct, the game is over. If he/she is incorrect, the game continues. At the end of the five (5) rounds, if the Builder is not able to correctly identify any of the three (3) architectural styles being described, he/she selects the winning team based on the quality of the descriptions that each team presented.

How To Win the Game --- To win the game an Architect Team must be the first to successfully communicate its researched style to the judge. If no team succeeds in communicating its style to the judge, a team may be deemed the winner based on the judges subjective opinion of their descriptions.

Role of the Teacher ---As the teacher you are free to choose and assign any building styles you think are appropriate. It is suggested that at least one team have a style that is predominate in your students' local community. You are expected to guide and assist your students as they research their assigned style. You might also help them prepare how to present the five (5) characteristics of their architectural style.

Additional Roles

Journalists --- You might want to choose some students in your class to act as journalists and photographers assigned to cover the Game.

Prop Masters --- You could assign the task of gathering the props for the Architect Teams to a few students.

Judge Escort --- The builder you invite to be the judge will certainly need some assistance while in the process on judging the Game. You could assign a student to act as the escort for the judge.

Ater the game is over, take your students on a field trip to look for architectural styles in their community.



Materials Needed

Access to the internet or other research tools

Everyday objects to use to describe the different architectural styles

A camera for photographing your students playing the game!

Good Websites About Architecture and Building Design

1. http://www.behr.com/behrx/inspiration/historical_4.jsp -- This is the Behr Paint Company's website. It has some good information about materials and colors and trims that were part of the Art Deco design style.
2. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/furn/hd_furn.htm --- This is the Metropolitan Museum of Art's site about Colonial Dutch architecture and cultural items.
3. <http://architecture.about.com/od/housestyles/tp/housestylesindex.htm> --- This site has a listing and description of many American architectural house styles.
4. <http://www.realtor.org/rmomag.nsf/pages/arch8> --- This site has a drawing of an early Dutch Colonial home.
5. <http://www.artdecohomes.com/> --- This website shows one architect's Art Deco designs. Some are way-out but all are interesting!
6. <http://artstyleonline.com/design/life-in-art-deco-style/> --- There is not much information here but there are some clear examples of Art Deco buildings, furniture and art objects.
7. http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/230545/a_brief_history_of_architectural_styles.html?cat=2 --- This site has information about the history of architecture including some of its most significant movements and styles.
8. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ranchhouse/visit.html> --- This is a PBS site that's all about the Texas Ranch House. It's a very informative site not only about the architecture but also about the accompanying lifestyle.
9. <http://artstyleonline.com/design/life-in-art-deco-style/> --- This page is devoted to the ziggurat.



Studying the Fortune Cookie

The activities presented here are intended to serve several purposes. First students will be asked to take a look at the Chinese immigrants that arrived in New York City in the mid-1800's and focus on the production of the fortune cookie as one of the ways they adapted to economic life in the United States. By tracing the production of the fortune cookie students get a look at the migration of the Chinese immigrants through the city to the suburbs. This migration was mirrored by other groups as well, as they became more prosperous. Students will explore how the design of a city influences the way its residents use it and how the way residents use their city influences how a city will be designed.

And finally students will use the fortune cookie itself to help see things from another's perspective. We often take for granted that everyone sees and interprets things the same way we do. But this is not true. There can be as many different views as there are people presenting their views. A city has lots of people. Understanding how others might view things is crucial for the success of a city.

Activity 1

Have your students research the Chinese fortune cookie addressing the following questions:

1. Where are fortune cookies made and by whom?
2. What goes into writing a fortune for the cookie?
3. What does Ben Franklin have to do with the fortune cookie?
4. How did the fortune cookie become an American favorite?
5. What does the fortune cookie tell you about the American Chinese in New York City?
6. What is the original link between the Chinese and something like the fortune cookie?
7. What else comes to mind when you think about the early Chinese immigrants in New York City?
8. Do you have a stereotype of the early Chinese in America?

After conducting their research, have students discuss their findings together as a class.

Ask your students to describe stereotypes they think others might have about them.

Activity 2

Have your students take a look at the movement of Chinese immigrants in New York City. This is to be accomplished by having them research and collect original sources that, when pieced together, tell a story about Chinese immigrants and their movement through the City.

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This is beyond a timeline and much more demanding. Here are some suggested original documents your students might collect:

- Personal journal entries
- Family recipes
- A Chinese newspaper
- Records/photographs from Ellis Island
- Licenses or permits to operate businesses
- Personal stories or interviews

Help your students fit all of the pieces they discover into a somewhat cohesive whole. Discuss any information that is missing and how they might get this information.

Activity 3

This activity requires students to take a close look at the art of creating the fortune cookie. It is a much more complicated task than they probably think.

Bring fortune cookies to classroom and read the fortunes contained inside. Find out how many of the fortunes are **positive**, how many are **negative** and how many are **neutral**.

Divide the class into three groups --- **positive – negative – neutral**. Then present these common fortunes found in Chinese fortune cookies:

You will soon inherit a large sum of money.

A tall dark stranger will soon come into your life.

The winds of change are blowing in your direction.

Give all three of these fortunes to the each group. Have each group interpret the fortune from their perspective --- positive, negative or neutral. Have groups report their interpretations to the entire class. If the obvious differences are not seen right away, you might ask students to view the fortunes from the viewpoint of

- Someone with a beloved relative who is very sick
- A small child
- Someone who is afraid of loosing his/her job
- A lonely man or woman
- Someone who has fallen in love and not sure he/she is loved in return
- Etc.



Ask your students to relate these different perspectives (positive, negative, neutral) to making decisions about such things as:

Placement of subway stops in a neighborhood.
Whether to restrict the placement of shops in residential neighborhoods.
Whether to allow students to walk to and from school.
Etc

Ask your students to take a position about each of these, either positive, negative or neutral. Discuss who and why someone might take each of these positions.

Activity 4

Have your students research how fortunes were historically told in:

China
Japan
Greece
Eastern Europe

Materials Needed

Lots of fortune cookies
Access to the internet or other research tools

Good Websites About Immigrants into New York City

1. <http://www.mocanyc.org/> --- This is the official website of the Museum of the Chinese in America.
2. <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/11/14/immigration-in-new-york-city-taking-the-long-view/> --- This is a link to a November, 2007 New York Times article about the immigrant history in the city.
3. <http://www.ellisland.org/> --- This is a link to the website of the Ellis Island Foundation. It houses a wonderful archive of personal stories from immigrants that have arrived through Ellis Island since the last half of the 19th Century.
4. <http://thehistorybox.com/> --- This site contains information about many immigrant populations if New York City.
5. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/> --- If you want some help deciding how to use all of the historical information that's available on line, this is a good site to visit.
6. <http://www.fortunecookiemessage.com/index.php> --- This site has examples of fortunes found in fortune cookies.
7. <http://www.hanascape.com/aboutus/fortunecookie/index.html> --- This is a good site for a brief history of the fortune cookie.

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8. http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/06/06/050606ta_talk_olshan --- This is the link to the New Yorker Magazine and an article they printed (June 2005) about creating fortune cookies.
9. <http://www.wontonfood.com/> --- This is the official site of Wonton Foods. It has information about many of their products.
10. <http://www.tenement.org/index.htm> --- This is the official site for the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. They offer wonderful information and programs!
11. <http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Other.Repositories.html> --- This is a great site for locating original documents of all kinds.



A Look at Change

The activities in this section focus on the process of change. The vehicle selected for discussing change is a look at New York City as skyscrapers were appearing in the city. Through a look at changes occurring at this point in time students also get a closer look at the history of New York City with a glimpse at immigration into the city and at the conditions of the Great Depression.

Activity 1

Begin by having your students take a look at **why things change**. Here are some suggested reasons for change. Have students discuss each reason. Encourage students to add their own thoughts to the list:

The old becomes worn out --- not working any more and needs replacing

The old is used up.

The old gets boring --- psychologically it's time for a change. Fashion trends respond to this.

New people bring new ideas that seem exciting --- someone else has it.

Something else, something better becomes available --- technology changes things

Catastrophes happen.

Comfort wins out ---a change in the way of life demands it; things aren't as comfortable without it.

Record your students' responses so everyone can see them.

Ask students to give two kinds of examples of each reason they generated. First ask them to give examples about anything, i.e.

I bought a new sweater because my old one is torn and tattered.

Then ask them to give an example that specifically relate to issues within a city, i.e.

The city renovated my high school because they wanted to give us a new, cleaner, more efficient kind of heating system.

Activity 2

Now have your students take a look at things that have changed. Have your students research the following events in New York City's history. Then have them discuss the reasons for each and the changes each brought. Ask them to use the reasons for change that they generated earlier (see above) and discuss how each affected the city.

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Zoning laws were developed in 1916.
A grid plan for streets in Manhattan north of Greenwich Village was created.
People moved northward from lower Manhattan.
Big businesses located their headquarters in lower Manhattan.
The subway arrived.
People moved to the outer boroughs.
Immigrants flooded into the city in the last half of the 19th century and first part of the 20th century.

Now discuss how each of these affected the building of skyscrapers (especially the Empire State Building) in New York City.

Discuss how changing needs bring still more needs and new issues.

Activity 3

This activity focuses on personal change. For one month have students keep a running, daily log of changes in their lives. They might record such changes as:

- a new song they hear
- a new person they meet
- flowers that die in their garden
- new paint in their school
- plans for a trip with their family to an unfamiliar place

At the end of a month have students discuss the changes in their lives. Ask them to relate these changes to one or more of the reasons for change that they generated and discussed earlier.

For one month have your students read the *New York Times* to find out changes occurring in New York City. During this month, once a week choose one student to lead the class in a discussion about an article from the paper that reports a change that affects him/her or that affects the entire class.

Materials Needed

Maps of New York City --- the more the merrier!
Access to the internet or to a research facility

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Good Websites About Skyscrapers

1. <http://www.petergof.com/nyc/skyscrapers.htm> --- This site has photographs for many of New York City's modern buildings that allow the viewer to easily see the effects of zoning regulations.
2. <http://www.greatgridlock.net/> --- You have to drill down a bit but if you persist you're rewarded with some nice photographs of New York skyscrapers as well as some information about each.
3. <http://www.wirednewyork.com/skyscrapers/> --- This site has photographs of New York buildings as well as information about the architects who designed them.
4. <http://www.mcny.org/> --- This is the official site of the Museum of the City of New York.
5. http://www.skyscraper.org/home_flash.htm --- This is the official site of the Skyscraper Museum in New York City. It has lots and lots of good information about skyscrapers.



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.



New York City Biographies

The New York City of today is the work of many people. Here are just a few of these people for your students to meet. Some of the contributions these people made were controversial so this should be an interesting project. The activity is intended to help students focus on history in a temporal format and to consider how the thinking at one point in time affects what happens in another. Students will also be asked to think about how our culture pays tribute or honors the contributions of our forefathers and mothers.

Activity 1

Assign each of your students **two (2)** of the men listed below to research. They should research the contributions each of these men made to the creation of New York City as it exists today:

Alexander Hamilton
Dewitt Clinton
Gustav Lindenthal
Alexander Stewart
JP Morgan
Robert Moses
John Stevens
William Cullen Bryant
Fredrick Law Olmsted
Calvert Vaux
Robert Fulton
Fiorello La Guardia
Jeanneret
John Roebling

After researching the assigned men, have your students do **one of two things**:

1. Explore and be prepared to discuss how his/her assigned men worked together or what they **thought** of each other's work, if they were contemporaries or ---
2. Explore and discuss what his/her two assigned men **might have thought** about the work of the other, if they were contemporaries and had not known of the other's work or were not contemporaries.

Group your students according to the men assigned to them. Each group should discuss its men and explore what one would have thought of or did think of the work of each of the others. Have each

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group report their research and speculations about cooperation and view point to the class. Lead your students in a discussion of their findings. There is a good chance that some of the groups will disagree with one another.

Have your students discuss why there are no women among the list of important people who influenced the history of New York City.

Activity 2

Select **10 important historic and contemporary people** who have contributed to your students' home community and repeat the activity above.

Activity 3

Take a field trip to visit the outdoor sculpture and official memorials in your students' community that have been placed there to honor someone who contributed to the community. Don't forget to include memorials like schools and other buildings that were named after important community leaders.

Have students photograph or sketch each of the memorials.

When you return to the classroom discuss each memorial visited. Here are some variables for discussion:

- What is a memorial
- Is this memorial pleasing?
- How or what do you think the memorial is intended to make you feel/think?
- Does the memorial fit into the surrounding area?
- Does the memorial honor someone you think should be honored?
- What would you change about the memorial?
- If you were asked to create a memorial to this person, describe the memorial you would create.
- What do you think the criteria should be for creating a memorial or publicly honoring someone?

Have your students research the person for whom each sculpture/memorial was created and determine why he/she was honored.



Materials Needed

Historic photographs of New York City
Photographs of the men to be researched
Historic photographs of students' home community
Access to the Internet or other research tools.
Cameras
Sketching materials

Good Websites for Information About Historic New York City

1. <http://nycsnapshot.blogspot.com/> --- This website has lots of really good historic photographs of New York City.
2. <http://www.archives.gov/nae/education/lesson-plans.html> --- This is part of the site for the National Archives. It's a good place to get printable original documents of all sorts.
3. http://www.lowermanhattan.info/about/history/history_timeline/ --- This site provides a very good timeline of New York City history.
4. <http://pbskids.org/bigapplehistory/index-flash.html> --- This is a PBS site for children that presents a simple, easy to understand history of the city. If you drill down you can find some personal stories from immigrants.
5. <http://www.gothamcenter.com/> --- This website is part of the City University of New York. It has links to lots of other very good sources of information about the history of New York City.
6. <http://www.mcny.org/exhibitions/> --- This is the official website for the Museum of the City of New York.
7. <http://nyctimeline.com/> --- This site has an interesting timeline of the history of New York City.
8. http://www.thehistorybox.com/ny_city/gallery_nyc3.htm --- This site has drawings of historic New York City.

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Empire State Building Biographies

See Student Worksheets D & E

The building of the Empire State Building was an incredible feat! To this very day it stands as one of the best built buildings ever. It was constructed ahead of time and under budget. The activities in this section call for students to *meet* some of the people who were involved in its creation. Each contributed an incredible amount of skill, knowledge and hard work. Through researching these influential people students learn about the history of New York City as well as about the lives of people living in the era of the great skyscrapers.

Activity 1

Have each of your students research one of these men and **present a speech** to the class about some aspect of the Empire State Building **from this person's perspective**:

- Al Smith --- Official Boss
- John Jacob Raskob --- Raised the money
- William Lamb --- Designing Architect
- Rambush Studios --- Responsible for the interior design
- Bassett Jones --- Mechanical Engineer
- Starrett Brothers & Eken --- Headed construction
- John Bowser --- Job Superintendent
- Elisha Otis --- Invented the elevator
- Henry Bessimer --- First created steel
- Nick Acson --- Marble cutter
- H.G. Balcom & Associates --- Structural Engineers

For each speech, assign a few students to take on the role of journalists. These journalists must interview the students making the presentation, then create a brief **Op Ed** piece about the presenter (in character, of course).

For each speech, assign a few students to take on the role of photographers. These students must photograph the students making the presentation then describe what inspired this photograph. --- what image of the presenter (in character, of course) were they intending to capture.

Materials Needed

- Cameras for the student photographers
- Paper and pencils for the student journalists
- Access to the internet or other research tools

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Good Websites About the Empire State Building

2. 1. <http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/glk?http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/photo/hinex/empire/empire.html> --- This link takes you to the New York Public Library website. They have some incredible photos of the construction of the Empire State Building! They also have information and photographs of Lewis Hine, the photographer who took many of these incredible photographs documenting the building's construction.
3. <http://www.skyscraper.org/home.htm> --- This is the website for the Sky scraper Museum. They have wonderful information about the construction of the Empire State Building and the thinking of the time.
4. http://www.encyclomedia.com/empire_state_building.html --- This site has a really good audio and video presentation about the construction of the Empire State Building as well as printed copy.
5. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/zone/zonehis.shtml> --- This site gives some history about the zoning issues that led to the design of the Empire State Building.

Books for More Information About the Construction of the Empire State Building

1. Burns, Ric and Sander, James with Ades, Lisa. **New York An Illustrated History.** Alfred Knopf: New York, 1999
2. Craats, Rennay. **Structures, Style and Building.** Raintree: Chicago, 2004
3. Goodman, Susan and Doolittle, Michael J. (photographs). **Skyscraper.** Alfred Knopf: New York, 2004
4. Holland, Gini. **Great Buildings: The Empire State Building How It Was Built and How It Is Used.** Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers: Austin, TX, 1998
5. Homberger, Eric. **New York City --- A Cultural and Literacy Companion.** Interlink Books: New York, 2003
6. Macaulay, David. **Unbuilding.** Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1980
7. Mann, Elizabeth and Witschonke, Alan, Illustrations. **Empire State Building.** Mikaya Press: New York, 2003
8. Marshall, Bruce. **BUILDING NEW YORK The Rise of the Greatest City on Earth**
9. Milo, Francesco and Cecchi, Lorenzo, Illustrator. **Master of Art The Story of Architecture.** Studio Galante, Andrea Ricciardi Peter Bedrick Books: New York; printed in Italy, 1999
10. Schoener, Allon. **New York An Illustrated History of the People.** WW Norton & Company: New York, 1998
11. Sullivan, George. **Built To Last Building America's Amazing Bridges, Dams, Tunnels and Skyscrapers.** Scholastic Nonfiction: New York, 2005

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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.nyckyscrapers.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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The Empire State Building - Anagrams and Other Words About It

[See Student Worksheets D & E](#)

The focus of the activities in this section is the construction of the Empire State Building and the effect it had on the economy of the 1930's. The activity uses anagrams to set the stage for exploring this connection. Students are asked to solve the anagrams then to analyze the information revealed via the anagrams and explore it's relevance to the Great Depression. They get a glimpse into the social conditions and the causes of the Great Depression.

Activity 1

Anagram --- a word made by rearranging the letters in another word.

Before presenting your students with anagrams about the construction of the Empire State Building, present some background information about the wonders of the building's construction. Here is some suggested, very basic, background information:

In 1929 Smith and Raskob began construction on the Empire State Building in New York City. A skyscraper is a building that must be over 20 stories tall. It must be taller than it is wide (the measurement of the building's height is greater than the measurement of its base). It also must have usable floors where people work, live and/or recreate. A skyscraper can be home to offices, hotels, apartments, shops, restaurants, theaters, etc. In 1929 the building of the Empire State building put many New Yorkers to work. This was a very good thing since the Depression had wiped out many, many jobs in the area and many people were hungry and having difficulty making ends meet. It helped the economy of other areas in the United State and around the world because it used building materials from all over the world.

The Empire State Building took one year and 45 days to build and was built under budget. It stands 86 floors high with a tower on top that brings the total height to 102 floors --- 1,250 feet. It took 7 million man hours to build. It was a building feat that has not been matched to date. The design is Art Deco. Perhaps the most amazing feat was the incredible teamwork, planning and coordination that went into the construction efforts. Without this teamwork the Empire State Building could not have been built.

There were three physical factors that made the Empire State Building possible --
- the discovery of steel (it could support much more weight than any of the other building materials), the concept of using this steel to create an interior structure

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that would supports the weight of a building (this would allow for a multi-story building that could rise hundreds of feet in the air) and the invention of the elevator --- one that wouldn't fall (This would make it possible and safe for people to live and work in a tall building)!

Have your students solve the anagrams about the Empire State Building provided in Student Worksheet: *Empire State Building Anagrams*. Each of the anagrams presented on the student worksheet describes an important aspect of the Empire State Building or of its creation.

After solving the anagrams, have your students debate whether they think the building of the Empire State Building in 1929 was a good thing or a bad thing. 1929.

Activity 2

Have your students discuss the causes of the Great Depression using the explanations/ theories presented by the following economists:

Jean-Baptiste Say
John Maynard Keynes
Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz
Peter Temin, Ben Bernanke, Barry Eichengreen
Harold Cole and Lee Ohanian
Waddill Catchings and William Trufant Foster

Have students decide which theory, if any, seems the most plausible to them and why.

Based on your students' chosen theory of the causes of the Great Depression, have them again visit the issue of whether the building of the Empire State Building in 1929 was a good thing or a bad thing.

Activity 3

To help students focus a bit more on the domino effect of commerce, have them explore the origins of the materials used to construct the Empire State Building. Here are the materials to be considered for your students' research:

Granite
Limestone
Tiles
Glass

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Paint
Brick
Marble
Wood
Steel
Aluminum

Assign a building material to each student and have him/her find out from where it was purchased for the construction of the Empire State Building. How much of it was used in the building of the Empire State Building and how it was transported to the Empire State Building's construction site.

Have yet another discussion with the entire class about what the construction of the Empire State Building contributed to the economy of the Great Depression.

Activity 4

After solving the anagrams presented in the Student Worksheet: *Empire State Building Anagrams*, have students create their own anagrams related to

The Empire State Building
New York City
The Great Depression

Materials Needed for All Activities

Student Worksheet: *Empire State Building Anagrams*
Photographs of the construction of the Empire State Building
Access to the Internet or other research tools

Good Websites for Photographs of and Information About the Construction of the Empire State Building

1. <http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/qlk?http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/photo/hinex/empire/empire.htm>
--- This link takes you to the New York Public Library website. They have some incredible photos of the construction of the Empire State Building that educators may use.
2. http://www.skyscraper.org/WEB_PROJECTS/VIVA2/viva2_intro.htm --- This is a link to the website of the Skyscraper Museum in New York
3. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/thegates/html/artists.html> --- This is a link to a kit for building your own Empire State Building and other tall buildings.
4. <http://www.constructioncompany.com/historic-construction-projects/empire-state-building/> --- This site has a great description of what made the construction of the Empire State Building so incredible.

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5. <http://www.generalcontractor.com/resources/articles/empire-state-building.asp> --- This is another site with really good information about the construction of the Empire State Building.

Good Website for Information About the Causes of the Great Depression

1. <http://www.huppi.com/kangaroo/THE GREAT DEPRESSION.htm> --- This site has lots of information about the Keynesian Theory of the causes of the Great Depression and a clear timeline for events of the Depression. However, it is unclear who created and supports this site.
2. http://econ161.berkeley.edu/TCEH/Slouch_Crash14.html --- This site was created by an associate professor of economics at the University of California at Berkeley and NBER.
3. <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/greatdepression/> --- This is part of the official website of the Government of Australia. It describes the affect the Great Depression had on Australia. It discusses causes and describes conditions as well.
4. <http://www.archives.gov/nae/education/lesson-plans.html> --- A good site for printable original documents of all sorts.



Marvel Comic Marathon

These activities focus on comics as a means of communicating about American society. Students will be asked to read many of the Marvel Comics and formulate a picture of American life from what they read. Then when your students arrive in New York City they will have an opportunity to visit many of the sites frequented by the Marvel characters and see the settings for themselves. Students will have the opportunity to try their hand at creating their own cartoons using visual images and/or the printed word. These activities also include a look at the use of violence in comics.

Activity 1

In preparation for reading Marvel Comics, have your students research the history of the cartoon or comic form --- history, description, creators, dates, future, etc. Have them select one historic comic from any period and one contemporary comic that they really like and present them to the class with a description of why they like each. Their presentation must also include what they think their selected cartoons/comics contribute to society.

Activity 2

Present your students with Marvel Comics about characters such as the following:

- Captain America
- Spiderman
- Fantastic Four
- Yancy Street Gang
- The Thing
- Daredevil (Matthew Murdock)
- Nick Fury
- Johnny Storm
- Prince Namor, the Sub-Mariner
- X-Men
- Bernard the Poet
- Dr. Strange
- Ironman (Tony Stark)
- Iceman (Bobby Drake)
- Doctor Octopus
- New Avengers
- Damage Control, Inc
- Doctor Doom
- Human Torch
- Gorr the Golden Gorilla
- Klaatu
- The Hulk

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Thor
Zodiac
Power Man (Cage)
Atlas
Green Goblin (Norman Osborn)
Molecular Man
Squirrel Girl

Divide students into teams and have each team choose five (5) characters they would like to get to know. Each team must read as many related Marvel comics as it takes to *get to know* each of the characters they chose

After researching and getting to know their characters, students will be responsible for providing the following information about each of their character:

Describe where this character lives and spends his/her time.
Be able to describe life in the city where this character lives.
List a few of the other Super Heroes he/she calls friends.
Describe his/her super powers.
Evaluate how the character uses his/her super powers.
Describe the problems this character has.
Discuss some of the character's main enemies and tell why they are enemies.
Describe how this character fits into American society.

After the student teams have completed their research, have each team present their characters to the rest of the class. Teams may do this in lecture/report form or they may act out their characters.

Engage your students in a conversation about violence in the Marvel Comics. Here are some questions you might explore with them:

What do you think is the purpose of violence in the Marvel Comics?

What role do you think the feelings, motives, conflict and guilt of the characters play in these comics?

To what or to whom do you relate in the Marvel Comics?

Does the un-real aspect of Marvel Comics help tone down the violence?

How much violence of any kind is too much violence?

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Do you think reading these comics affects your behavior? Why or why not?

Would you allow your younger brother or sister to read Marvel Comics?

Why are some people drawn to stories that contain violence?

Do you think violence such as presented in the Marvel Comics causes aggressive behavior in children and teens?

Etc

Have students bring in comics **of all kinds** and discuss the issue of violence in these comics. Have them to discuss how characters in comics solve problems without violence. Ask your students to include historical cartoons and political cartoons in their collection.

Activity 3

In this activity students take a closer look at the New York City addresses familiar to the Marvel Comic Super Heroes.

Present your students with all sorts of Marvel Comics. Ask them to read the comics then, as a class, describe what Marvel Comic events happened at each of the following New York City sites:

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

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The Solomon Guggenheim Museum
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
American Museum of Natural History
Columbia University
Brooklyn Bridge
Statue of Liberty

Allow student descriptions to be presented as verbal reports or as dramatizations of the events that occurred at each location.

Have students decide if they think these addresses are real sites, fictional sites with fictional addresses or fictional addresses with real life counterparts. **When your students visit New York City they can check out these locations.**

Have students locate, on a New York City map, **the real, present day**, location of the Marvel Comic offices.

Activity 4

Have students research the following people associated with Marvel Comics and describe their association with the comics and with each other:

Stan Lee
Jack Kirby
Joe Simon
Steve Ditko
Martin Goodman
Ronald Perelman

Have your students discuss what it takes to be associated with a cartoon/comic series ---

what skills it takes
what type personality is best suited for the job
what commitment of time is required, etc.

If your students have questions about the creation of the Marvel Comics Super Heroes, prepare a list of these questions and contact the Marvel Offices for a response. The issue of violence in comics might be a good question to pose to the professionals at Marvel Comics.

Activity 5

This activity calls for students to create their own cartoon/comic about their own school or home community.

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Begin by brainstorming with your students as a total class some possible scenarios that would make good cartoons.

Have your students draw or act out a cartoon about their school or their home community.

Materials Needed

Marvel Comics
Historical Comics
Political Cartoons
New York City Maps
Access to the Internet or other research tools
Props for acting out the Marvel Comics as needed

Good Websites About Cartoons/Comics

1. <http://cartoons.osu.edu/index.php> --- This is the official site of the Cartoon Research Library on the campus of Ohio State University. It is considered to be one of the best collections devoted to the American cartoon. You can easily search their archives.
2. <http://www.politicalgraphics.org/> --- This is the official site of the Center for the Study of Political Graphics. The Center maintains an archive of graphics that have been used for social change.
3. <http://www.bcdb.com/> --- This is the Big Cartoon Database which has a searchable data base of cartoon information, animated guides, cartoon characters and crew lists. It does have adult cartoons as well.
4. <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/cartoons/> --- This is the cartoon site of the New York Times.
5. http://www.marvel.com/universe/Main_Page --- This is the official site for Marvel Comics. Here you can find biographies of all the Marvel characters.
6. <http://www.toonopedia.com/marvel.htm> --- This site has lots of good articles on Marvel Comics.
7. http://www.lifescrpt.com/quiz/quiz.asp?bid=52730&trans=1&du=1&qclid=COLgig6ZtpMCFQytGgodNykaCw&ef_id=1350:3:c_49c41dedce9f2ecffb1d86dbd2000a_710972465:lceczENIYX0AAC4IJIMAAAAE:20080520231024 --- This site has a quiz about the Marvel Comic Super Heroes.
8. <http://drawsketch.about.com/library/weekly/aa122202a.htm> --- At this site you can read an interview with a professional cartoonist.
9. <http://www.marvel.com/catalog/> --- This is a site for purchasing Marvel Comics.

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The Great Gatsby and the 1920's

The purpose of this activity is to have students gather more information about life in the early part of the 20th century. The research tools to be used are an American novel, **The Great Gatsby** and the New York Times. The activity will give students the opportunity to compare their views with those of other students their age. This activity will also allow students the opportunity to analyze what they read in fiction and in the news.

Activity 1

Present your students with copies of the first chapter of the 1925 novel **The Great Gatsby** by F Scott Fitzgerald. Have students read the chapter. (You might make this an oral reading activity). Ask each student to note the descriptions of life in the 1920's that are presented in the chapter. Share these notes as a group. Have students compare life in 1920 with their lives today:

- What's the same?
- What's totally different?
- What sounds like it would be cool?
- What sounds like it would be hard?
- Which character is the most like you? Why?
- Which character sounds totally weird to you? Why?

Further discuss the chapter focusing, this time, on the concept of the *green light* presented there and how this related to the belief that in America it's possible to achieve anything you want if you work hard enough for it --- This is the *American Dream*.

Have students decide what themes they found most relevant to their lives in **The Great Gatsby**.

Present students with the article *Gatsby's Green Light Beckons a New Set of Strivers* from the **New York Times** (See Materials Needed section below). This article discusses how high school students in Boston interpreted the **Great Gatsby**. Have your students compare their own thoughts about the novel with those of the students in the article.

Activity 2

Have students scan local newspapers for articles that describe people as they go about their daily lives. Have them particularly look for articles that will give students of the future a picture of life today. Ask them to predict what the students of the future will take away from these articles.



Activity 3

Present your students with newspapers from around the world. Lead them in a discussion comparing the way these different newspapers present stories about people. Here are some points of comparison:

- Does the article present isolated facts, is it descriptive or does it tell a story?
- Does the author of the article tell how and/or where he/she got the information for the article?
- Is the article summarized? If so where --- in the beginning or at the end of the article?
- Does the article try to make you to think or feel one way or another about the people it presents? What makes you think as you do about this?
- Do you feel like the article gives you the whole picture of what happened?

Materials Needed

The first chapter of **The Great Gatsby** found online at:
http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/fitzgerald/f_scott/gatsby/.

“Gatsby’s Green Light Beckons a New Set of Strivers” from the New York Times article which can be found online at:

http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20080220wednesday.html

Paper and pencils for taking notes

Large chalk/dry marker board for displaying students’ thoughts

Current local newspapers

Newspapers from all over the world

Good Websites for Information About the 1920’s

1. <http://www.archives.gov/nae/education/lesson-plans.html> --- This is part of the website for the National Archives. It’s a great place to get original documents in printable form.
2. <http://kclibrary.nhmccd.edu/decade20.html> --- A fun site with lots of interesting information about the 1920’s. There is a wealth of information here!!
3. <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/il/state/alhn1920.html> --- This site was created by Illinois Trails and has photographs as well as facts, figures and stories.
4. <http://www.authentichistory.com/1920s.html> --- This site has audio clips from the 1920’s.
5. http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/keys/games/game_0_1920s/ --- This is part of the site for the Musee McCord in Quebec, Canada. It has a quiz about surviving life during the 1920’s.
6. <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/gatsby/> --- This site gives an overview of the Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald.
7. <http://www.gradesaver.com/classicnotes/titles/gatsby> --- This is another study guide to the Great Gatsby.

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Traffic Signs - Can You Read Them? Are You Sure?

Everyone who has a driver's license is familiar with traffic signs. We all think we know what they mean and can easily follow the instructions they provide. But this is not necessarily so. Most of us are familiar with a few signs and don't pay attention to the rest. This activity requires students to research signs that provide all kinds of traffic and parking information and to evaluate their effectiveness and ease of use.

Students must use their visual literacy, reading skills and skills of attending. This activity will prepare students for a similar activity to be completed when they arrive in New York City.

Activity

Without looking have student describe all of the traffic signs:
surrounding their school
surrounding their home
surrounding their favorite restaurant

Create a list of your students' responses and post it for everyone to see.

Now actually take your students on a walk around their school neighborhood to read the street signs located there and check how accurate their perceptions were. Take note of the signs they correctly remembered and those they failed to remember.

Have students photograph the signs they find on your walk. Create a gallery of these photographs.

When you return to the classroom, have your students discuss the following:

Why are the signs located where they are?
Who is the audience for these signs?
What happens if people ignore these signs?
Is there a better option than a sign for each of these sites?

Discuss any patterns to the signs that were remembered. Was it –

a certain type of sign that was remembered best?
a certain location that had the most signs remembered?
a certain sign design that was remembered best?

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Have your students research where and how our traffic signs are created. Then have them research where and how they are made.

Have your students take the Road Sign Test located at the following site:

http://www.usa-traffic-signs.com/Test_s/50.htm

(Taken in part from the Federal Highway Administration's website)

After they take the test discuss their results as a class.

Materials Needed

Cameras for photographing street signs

Gallery space for displaying student photographs

Good Websites for Information About Traffic Signs

1. http://assembly.state.ny.us/member_files/032/20071204/ --- This website has a wonderful calendar explaining what traffic signs in New York City are to be obeyed and when their enforcement is suspended. Now that's confusing!
2. <http://www.traffic-signs.com/> --- This site will boggle your mind! There are so many kinds of traffic signs.
3. <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/> --- This is the official site for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. It reports projects related to and information about the safety of vehicular travel.
4. <http://www.tsi.dot.gov/divisions/highway/default.aspx> --- This is the official site for the US Department of Transportation's /Research and Innovative Technology Administration's Transportation Safety Institute. It provides links to programs for all kinds of transportation efforts.
5. http://www.usa-traffic-signs.com/Safety_s/41.htm --- This is the website of a company that makes traffic signs. The Road sign Test can be found on this site.