



Sensing Your Community

This activity is intended to be a companion activity to **Sensing New York City**, a similar activity suggested for completion while you were in New York City. By exploring New York City students learned that cities use all sorts of methods to attract attention, play to your emotions and make people feel in certain ways about it. The purpose of the following activity is to have students attend to the ways the built environment in their own community plays to the senses.

Activity

Have your students explore their community taking note of their senses that are awakened or used. Here are a few sensory experiences that students should note:

Where do they notice color first? What is their first reaction?

What sounds get their attention? Where and why?

When and where is movement the first thing they notice?

What aromas did they notice? Where? How do these aromas make them feel?

When and where did the *whole* of the community seem to change?

Describe the things that changed from one section of the community to another.

When you return to the classroom have your students report their initial reactions. Compare what each student observed and felt.

Then ask students to generate all the sensory words they can that describe their community ---- cold, hot, bright, dull, groovy, popping, hopping, sleepy, etc. Ask what they saw that made them use these words.

Ask students to, as they go home from school, evaluate **each intersection** they come to. They are to report the results of their evaluation back to the class in the form of **a descriptive word for each intersection**.

Take your students on a tour of their school and have them note the same sensory experiences as above.



After their tour of the school have your students brainstorm ways to add sensory experiences to the school experience. For example:

Paint all the doors bright yellow!
Play jazz in the hallways between classes!
Have the principal give one school broadcast a week in rhyme!

Have students locate artwork that awakens their senses or evokes an emotion from them.

Have students locate music that awakens their senses or evokes an emotion from them.

For one week have your students dress each day in a way that expresses an assigned sensory feeling or emotion. For example:

Monday is groovy day.
Tuesday is dull day.
Wednesday is bright day.
Etc.

Materials Needed

Permission for students to explore their community
Permission for students to explore their school
Access to the internet or to other research tools

Good Websites for Information About Our Senses

1. http://www.nanooze.org/english/articles/specialedition_5senses.html --- This is a cute sight basically for young children. But it has some good information about the way our sensory systems work.
2. <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/chsense.html> --- This site offers some experiences and experiments for students to try.
3. <http://www.hhmi.org/senses/> --- This is a link to part of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. It has some really good information about the way our senses work.
4. <http://psychology.about.com/od/sensationandperception/a/colorpsych.htm> --- This site has a nice description about the psychology of color.
5. <http://www.moosetpeterson.com/techtips/color.html> --- This is the site of a wildlife photographer who knows color and the psychology of color. He gives some nice stories about first-hand experiences.
6. <http://www.bobolinkbooks.com/Gestalt/HowFormFunctions.html> --- This is a link to a book/essay about Gestalt Theory published by Roy Behrens.
7. <http://gestalttheory.net/> --- This is the official site for the Society for Gestalt Theory and Its Applications. It has good information about events and people interested in Gestalt.

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How Did You Draw These Buildings?

This activity is intended to be a companion to *Draw These Buildings*, located among our suggestions for activities to be completed before your visit to New York City and to *Seeing the Buildings You Drew*, located among our suggested activities to be completed while you are in the city. In this activity students get the opportunity to evaluate their visual literacy and their ability to turn words into visions.

Activity

Before you visited New York City you had students (or student teams) draw the following buildings.

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.

Focus again on these drawings. Have your students discuss them in comparison to the photograph/drawing the students created in New York City when they actually visited these buildings.

What words gave them problems?

Which words tended to allow for many different perceptions?

Have each student generate a verbal description for **one of the three buildings** as they saw them on their visit. Ask students to present their descriptions to the class and have other students guess which of the three buildings is being described.

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Ask each student to create a verbal description of a building located in their school community. Have each student present his/her description to the class and have the rest of the class guess which building is being described.

For a different perspective of New York City, provide videos about the city from the popular culture.

Materials Needed

Student drawings from verbal descriptions that were previously created
Photographs of the three buildings visited in New York City
Popular movies or videos about New York City

Good Websites About New York City

1. <http://www.listsofbests.com/list/910> --- This site has a good list of movies set in New York City.
2. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/artcom/html/home/home.shtml> --- This is the official site for the Art Commission of the City of New York. It has lots of fascinating information about public art in the city.
3. http://www.art-collecting.com/galleries_ny.htm --- This site offers links to many of the city's art galleries.
4. <http://www.mta.info/mta/aft/muny/> --- This is part of the official site for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of New York State. This section outlines the music that can be found in the subway stations under the city.
5. <http://www.ny.com/music/classical/> --- This site provides links to all of the classical music venues in New York City.



Designing The New York City of the Future

The activities in this section require students to use the past and the present to speculate on what the future might bring. Students must conduct research to learn the visions of some influential New Yorkers then take these visions forward.

Activity1

Your students are not the first to be called on to speculate about the future of New York City. Below are the names of some influential men who speculated at the turn of the 20th century about the future of New York City. They all had some very interesting visions for what the city would look like in the future. Help your students discover these visions:

Hugh Ferris
Harvey Wiley Corbett
Hudson Maxim
Raymond Hood

Divide your students into teams and have each team research the vision of **one** of these men. After their research is completed have each team present their research findings to the class.

Each team's presentation must include the pluses and the minuses of the vision they researched.

Each team's presentation must include the next step in the vision researched. A team must incorporate the researched vision as part of their own vision for New York City at the end of the 21st Century.

Presentations may be written and read, drawn/sketched or performed.

Video your students' presentations.

Activity 2

Have your students speculate everything and anything related to **the Empire State Building** at the end of the 21st century.

Will the Empire State Building exist at the end of the 21st Century?

Will the Empire State Building look different at the end of the 21st Century? How might it be different?

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What changes will happen in New York City by the end of the 21st century that might cause changes in the Empire State Building?

On what are you basing your thoughts?

Activity 3

Have your students write a script for a NY SKYRIDE experience located at the Empire State Building at the end of the 21st century.

Materials Needed

- Access to the Internet or to other research tools
- Historical photographs of New York City
- Drawing supplies
- Students' memory of the Empire State Building NY SKYRIDE

Good Websites About the Past and the Future of New York City

1. http://thenonist.com/index.php/thenonist/permalink/hugh_ferriss_delineator_of_gotham/ --- This website has a lot of information about Hugh Ferriss. It also has some of his drawings.
2. <http://www.loggia.com/parti/frontage/ferriss.html> --- This is a short report about Hugh Ferriss' use of light and scale.
3. <http://davidszondy.com/future/futurepast.htm> --- This is a personal site that presents all kinds of ideas from the past for the future. It's fascinating!
4. http://www.skyscraper.org/PROGRAMS/NYMODERN/nym_corbett.php --- This link takes you to part of the Skyscraper Museum's site. It presents a video lecture about Harvey Wiley Corbett.
5. <http://siris-archives.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?uri=full=3100001~!209964!0&term=#focus> --- This is a Smithsonian Institution site. It has some beginning information about Raymond Hood and a few suggested links to other sites.
6. <http://walkingoffthebigapple.googlepages.com/thenewyorkofraymondhood,architect> --- This site presents a bit more information about Raymond Hood and the buildings he designed in New York City.
7. http://www.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/FUTURE_CITY/NEW_YORK_MODERN/walkthrough_1_900.php --- This is another link to the Skyscraper Museum. In this section you will find a bit of information about Hudson Maxim.

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