



Suggested Activities to Complete While In New York and at the NY SKYRIDE

Activities with a Focus on the Arts

The Chrysler Building Full View

The New York Shape of Things

New York City Streetscapes (Includes walking tour)

* New York City As the Artists See It

Describing New York City

Imagined Sites

* Next Station, Bleeker Street (Includes walking tour)



New York City Streetscapes

New York is unquestionably one of the most vibrant cities in the world. Its streets are teeming with colors, sounds, aromas and ideas from different cultures. It is a collection of different ideas and experiences. This activity introduces students to some of these experiences. It requires students to attend to everything in the Empire State Building's neighborhood. Students will practice using their visual literacy skills to read the built environment.

Activity #1

Assign each of the following New York City streets to a team of students. All are neighbors of the Empire State Building. Have each team photograph/sketch/write about the current street scenes (streetscapes) they find on these streets:

7th Avenue between West 32nd and West 35th Streets

West 34th Street between 7th Avenue and 5th Avenue

West 33rd Street between 7th Avenue and 5th Avenue

5th Avenue between West 32nd and West 35th Streets

Encourage students to include **everything** in their streetscapes. Have them explore their assigned blocks recording what they see.

Remind students they will be recording/describing/documenting a moment in history --- the history of Manhattan in New York City, in New York State in the United States of American in the year -----
?????

After students have completed the assigned task, discuss what they captured with their drawing, their photograph or their words. What was the story they wanted to tell about the city? Discuss what they chose to leave out. Discuss what they missed. What part of the city's story is missing?

When you return to the classroom display your students' work.

Have your class watch selected scenes from *West Side Story* to note the streetscapes chosen for this movie. Have students look for anything they missed when they explored the city.



Activity #2 – Alternative Activity

Divide students into small teams. Each team should choose **just one thing** found on a Manhattan street on which to focus/ document/describe --- **just this one thing** as they see it. A team might focus on:

- the pattern of the streets
- the traffic flow
- all the shops found there
- the decoration seen on buildings
- the pattern of shadows and sunshine
- the signs in the windows
- the people

(It's best if you generate your own list of things on which to focus, based on student interest and previous lessons).

Remind students they will be recording/describing/documenting a moment in history --- the history of Manhattan in New York City, in New York State in the United States of American in the year -----
????

Assign students a city block (as in Activity #1) and have them explore this assigned block recording (via writing, drawing or photographing) what they see and hear in their chosen category.

After students have completed the assigned task, discuss what they captured with their drawing, their photographs or their words. What was the story they wanted to tell about the city? Discuss what they chose to leave out. Discuss what they missed. What part of the city's story is missing? If they told the story of the patterns of the built environment, did that mean they missed the story of the people who used these patterns? If they told the story of the shops found in the neighborhood, did that mean they missed the story of the patterns of use inside these shops?

When you return to your classroom lead your students in a discussion about the streetscapes they saw and captured:

- Did they like the architecture on their assigned street?
- How did they capture the city aromas they discovered?
- Did they find lots of colors or few colors?
- What did the signs on the street look like? What did these signs direct people to do or not to do?

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Did the size and shape of the buildings they found make them feel small or big?
What were the people in the neighborhood doing?
How did they capture the city sounds they heard?
Did they like the patterns of the city?
How did life in the neighborhood compare to life in their community?
What did they not see on their assigned city street?
What they would change about the street they explored?

Materials Needed:

Sketching supplies
Cameras
New York City Maps
Compasses (not required)
Method of displaying student work
West Side Story Video



New York City As the Artists See It

[See Student Worksheet I](#)

This activity focuses on the basic visual elements that are used to create everything in our environment. Students will be taught to identify these elements and learn that they are a different type of language used to communicate ideas. A mural created by Fine Art students at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) is used as the basis for this activity. It depicts New York City in a number of ways --- in a literal way, in a representational way and in an abstract way, all utilizing this "other" language. Students will be asked to apply this new language to the mural of New York City.

Activity

As your class is waiting for the NY SKYRIDE gather everyone around and study the mural carefully. Have students locate sections of the mural that:

- tell about the services people who live here receive
- show the geometry of city streets
- tell about a city of the past
- point to the future
- make the viewer want to know more
- present other messages

Have students discuss what it is about each section that delivers the message.

Is it ---
the colors
the shapes
the movement
the angles
the lines
the texture
the tone
the form
the volume?

Have each student photograph the section of the mural that he/she relates to best --- the section that makes him/her the most interested in New York City.



As your class is exploring the streets of Manhattan, ask them to look at the city in the different ways it was represented by the artists who painted the mural. **Look for color, line, shape, value or tone, texture, volume or form.** Have students document examples of these visual elements via photographs or drawing/sketching.

Discuss and compare the photographs of the mural with the photos students took on the streets. Help students create direct association between the two, showing them just how present these elements are, everyday, in all environments. This will enable them to understand how the mural interprets the city in areas that do not contain words or other literal explanations.

When you return to school, view the video of the FIT students creating the mural at the NY SKYRIDE (Included for your use). Talk to the students about how they would approach creating a mural now that they see the different methods of expressing their ideas. Give each student an 18X24 piece of paper and have him/her create a section of their community that will later be combined together with everyone's in the class to become their own mural. Encourage students to be VERY creative with their materials.

Hang the mural sections around the classroom or in a long hallway. The installation of these "pieces" to form the whole will become a part of the lesson. Consider the *Principles of Design* when combing the work --- Consider the balance, proportion, rhythm, emphasis and unity of the total mural. Look at the mural sections as a group and discuss how they should be arranged. What areas are successful or visually (aesthetically) pleasing? Resolve, rearrange or make adjustments to areas that don't seem to work together and discuss why.

Have students create a collection of the different ways cities are visually represented.

Materials Needed

Cameras

Photos: *Documenting the NY SKYRIDE Mural* --- photos and a video for later use in the classroom. **(See Student Worksheet I)**

18X24 paper for each student

An assortment of supplies that could include- markers, paint, paint brushes, palette knife, glue, scissors, colored yarn, construction paper, ruler, as each student wishes.

Access to the Internet or other research tools



Good Websites About Ways of Representing Cities

1. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html> --- This is a link to the Library of Congress's Map Collection.
2. <http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/usa.html> --- This is a collection of outline maps from Houghton Mifflin Publishers.
3. http://www.yourchildlearns.com/us_map.htm --- This site has some free maps for downloading.
4. http://www.oilpaintingsbuy.com/oilpainting_subcate_4_2.html --- This is a commercial site but it gives a good overview of the many different ways artists have described cities.



Imagined Sites!

This activity focuses students' attention on art that can be found in public places in New York City. An exhibit of photographs showing proposals for art in public places, *Imagined Sites #6*, created by artists from New York's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) for the entryway to the NY SKYRIDE is used as the basis for this activity. Through this exhibit students will be introduced to the concept and historical purposes of public art and encouraged to create their own art for public spaces.

Activity

Gather students around the photographic exhibit, *Imagined Sites #6*, located in the entryway to the NY SKYRIDE and discuss the works of art presented here by the FIT artists. All the works presented are virtual. The students actually created the pieces of art that you see in the photographs then they inserted them via computer (Photoshop) into the public spaces to create the scene captured in the exhibit.

Here are a few questions to help your students focus:

1. What makes you notice the work of art in each photograph?
2. Does the piece make you think first or feel first?
3. Does the piece honor someone? If so whom does it honor?
4. Does the piece give you information?
5. Does the piece make you notice the setting around it?
6. How do you think this piece was created?
7. Do you think the piece was designed for the setting or did the artist design the piece first then look for an appropriate setting?
8. Is the piece beautiful? Why do you feel as you do?
9. When you look at this work of art can you think of additional settings for it in a city?
10. Does the piece call to mind other types of art --- music maybe?
11. How does each work of art contribute to the space in which it's located?

Have students choose their favorite work of art presented in the exhibit and explain why it's their favorite.

As you explore New York City have students point out spaces that would be enhanced by art --- and explain why.

When you return to your classroom have students discuss ideas for art in public places that would enhance their community.



Materials Needed

Student imagination!

Good Websites for Learning About Art in Public Places

6. Just go to Yahoo and enter "Art in Public Places" and you can see what cities around the world have commissioned. You will be amazed!!
7. <http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/> -- This is the website of Jeanne- Claude and Christo, the creators of the Gates in Central Park and other works of public art.
8. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/thegates/html/artists.html> --- More about Jeanne-Claude and Christo.
9. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/artcom/html/home/home.shtml> --- This is the website for the Art Commission of the City of New York.
10. <http://www.blueofthesky.com/publicart/index.htm> --- This is a link to a Public Art curriculum created by a high school teacher in Harlem.
11. <http://www.zhaosuikang.com/Hmain.html> --- This is the website of one of the FIT faculty that advises the FIT artists. He has done a number of public art projects throughout the United States.



Describing New York City

The NY SKYRIDE describes what New York City looks like today. But it is just one of many ways to tell about the city.

This activity requires students to come up with their own way of recording what New York City looks like today. The possibilities are endless!

Activity

After experiencing the NY SKYRIDE, tell each student that he/she must come up with his/her own way of describing New York City. To help students prepare for this activity, begin a discussion of the different ways they might go about presenting their own personal views. They might:

- Create a video
- Write a factual account
- Write a fictional story
- Create a mural
- Design wallpaper
- Write a poem, etc.

Regardless of the method chosen, here are some questions students will need to address before creating their presentation:

1. What is the message I want to send about New York City?
2. Why do I want to send this message?
3. Do I want to persuade, educate or entertain the audience?
4. Who is my audience?
5. What feeling do I want the audience to come away with?
6. What will I omit, on purpose? Why?
7. What techniques will I use to capture the attention of the audience?

Discuss the itinerary for the rest of your visit and have students think about the information they will need to gather at each site.

Help students decide how each wants to gather the information about New York City that he/she will need to create a personal view of the city --- video, photography, sketching, journal entries, etc.

Assist students in collecting information about New York City.

Don't forget to record your students as they go about completing this activity.



Materials Needed

Video equipment
Cameras
Paper and pencils
Drawing supplies
Street maps of New York City

Good Websites About Media Literacy

1. <http://www.medialit.org/>
2. <http://themediaspot.org/>
3. <http://www.mtr.org/events/medialiteracy/index.htm>



The Chrysler Building, Full View

It is possible to see the built environment through drawings or photographs in a book. But it is not until you feel the built environment that you really understand it. And to feel it you have to be in its presence and explore it in different ways. The purpose of this activity is to have students feel the magnitude of New York's Chrysler Building. They will be asked to attend to its size and height and to feel its magnitude. This activity challenges students to see ALL of the Chrysler Building --- at the same time. This is not an easy task!

Activity

Have students attempt to photograph the Chrysler Building, **in its entirety**, from top to bottom, all in one photograph. It will be interesting to see where students must stand to capture this image! Make sure they note the address of the successful spot --- if there is one.

Later have students find their photo spots on a New York City map.

Remind students that with their photos they will be documenting how the Chrysler Building and New York City looked at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Create an exhibit at your school of your students' photographs.

Materials Needed:

Cameras for each student to use
Street maps of New York City



The New York Shape of Things

The purpose of this activity is to improve students' visual acuity for shapes in the built environment. They must first find some of the basic and most familiar shapes but then they are challenged to search for more advanced shapes and shapes combined with other shapes.

Activity

Below is a list of shapes that are found all over New York City. Find out how good your students are at recognizing them.

Have students find five (5) examples of these on New York City streets

- Squares
- Rectangles
- triangles

Have students find four (4) examples of these

- parabola
- parallelograms
- semi-circles
- cones

Have students find three (3) examples of these

- hexagons
- octagons
- trapezoids
- pentagons

Have students find two (2) examples of these

- triangular pyramids
- rectangular pyramids
- cylinders

Have students find two (2) example of each of these

- angles
- symmetry
- congruence
- tessellation

Have students photograph each shape they discover and note the address of their discovery.

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Materials Needed

Paper and pencil for recording where students find the shapes
Cameras

Good Websites About Geometric Shapes

1. <http://www.mathleague.com/help/geometry/polygons.htm> --- This is a great site that has examples of lots of geometric shapes.
2. <http://www.puzzles.com/PuzzlePlayground/Stomachion/Stomachion.htm> --- You can find a Stomachion at this site.
3. <http://artchive.com/artchive/P/picasso.html> --- This site provides a good biography of Picasso and an explanation of Cubism.



Next Station, Bleeker Street

See Student Worksheet G

The purpose of this activity is to have students focus on New York City's Subway system to get a beginning understand of how transportation systems affect a city's development and the lifestyle of its residents. Students will be asked to do some first-hand research while in the city based on some assumptions about the problems associated with creating an underground transportation system. They may also explore the present day system taking a look at the art work placed there and how it relates to the activity and energy of the city.

Background

By the middle of the 19th century overpopulation in New York was a severe problem. The influx of blacks from the South and immigrants from Europe had created a density of living in lower Manhattan that was unimaginable. Living conditions were deplorable.

But as the century drew to a close, things began to change. New York experienced a grand movement beyond its northern city limits. On what is now the Upper West Side, William Earle Dodge Stokes built the Ansonia Hotel, a great Beaux Arts style building adorned with ornate scrolls, brackets, balconies, and cornices. It was magnificent. And it was just the beginning. Other builders followed suite.

Edward Clark, head of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, built a row of 27 private homes and invested \$1 million in his family hotel at Central Park West and 72nd Street (This hotel later became known as the Dakota). Every apartment in this hotel was rented by the day it opened.

Not far behind, at the beginning of the 20th century the "subway", a new, underground transportation system was in the making and it would change where and how people lived. Now people had the ability to access parts of the island that had been accessible only to the wealthy. Private homes were replaced by enormous apartment buildings, especially near the new subway stops. Broadway became a commercial thoroughfare. Offices and banks sprang up everywhere. New Yorkers moved northward.

Shortly after this the subway would carry New Yorkers into the outer boroughs, off the island of Manhattan. The city would never be the same.



Activity #1 Creating A Subway

After or before a day of exploring in New York City have students think about the city's subway system. It's simple, right? You dig a hole, lay some track, buy some trains, hire staff and suddenly you have a subway! Wrong! Begin a discussion with your students about the variables they think would be involved in creating a subway system.

Here are a few of the variable that might be involved:

- Where should the system be?
- Who needs it and why? And When?
- Who will pay for the system?
- What will be done to keep disruption to city life at a minimum while the system is being created?
- What will the fare be? How do you go about deciding this?
- Are there problems with the ground underneath the city that will affect the creation of the system? If so, what are they?
- What size trains do we need/can we use?
- What will riders want to have in the stations?
- How do we construct the system to allow for expansion in the future?
- What are the safety issues that should be considered?
- What do we want the stations to look like?

After a general discussion divide students into Observation Teams based on the variables that were discussed. These teams should be of your choosing but might be such as the following:

- Observation Team #1 --- Subway Location
- Observation Team #2 --- Subway Station Function
- Observation Team #3 --- Subway Aesthetics
- Observation Team #4 --- Trains

Have each team summarize the variables discussed that relate to the topic they have been assigned.

Plan an excursion for the very next day that involves riding the New York subway. Plan to spend some time in at least 5 different subway stations. At each station have the teams evaluate that station based on their topic/variables.

Compare observations at the end of the day.



Discuss what the section of the city around each station visited would be like if there were no subway stop there or nearby.

Materials Needed

- Paper and pencils for recording observations
- Cameras for recording observations
- New York Subway maps
- New York City maps

Activity #2 The Stories Told By Art in the Subway, A Challenge

Prepare students for a few hours exploring the art found inside the New York City Subway. Present each student with a map of the city's subway system and discuss how to read it. Begin by learning all there is to know about the legend. When you're ready to read the stops begin by finding the closest stop to your present location and branch out from there.

After students have a basic understanding of the subway system, introduce them to their task for the day --- **to complete a matching challenge all about the art in the New York City subways.**

Present students with the Student Worksheet: *Art In Transit Challenge* and explain their challenge:

Their challenge is to complete a three-way-match. They must match each of the artists presented on the worksheet with the artwork that he or she created for a New York City Subway Station. To do this they must visit each of the stations listed and find the artist's creation. Then they must select one of the descriptions provided for this work of art.

Last, but not least, they must give the work of art their own name for it.

The Student Worksheet: *Art in Transit Challenge* has a workspace for making these three-way-matches.

At the end of the day, have students compare their answers to the *Art in Transit Challenge*.

Have students give their opinion about the works they saw. Did they like them or not? Why or why not? What would they change about them --- the topic used, the materials used, the colors chosen? Would music have added anything?

You may have students who would like to create their own work for one of the stations visited. Ask for ideas.



Materials Needed

Copies of the New York Subway Map for each student
Student Worksheet: *Art in Transit Challenge*
Pencils
Cameras

Good Websites for Information About the New York City Subway

1. www.nycsubway.org/ --- This is the official site of the New York City Subway. It has a great collection of historical documents and photographs. It also has a list of all the artwork scattered throughout the subway system.
2. <http://www.mta.info/index.html> --- This is the Metropolitan Transit Authority's home page. It's a great site for viewing the art in the New York City subways.
3. <http://www.nycsubway.org/maps/historical.html> --- This is another link to the New York City subway. This one leads directly to their collection of historic NYC subway maps.
4. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/97/nyunderground/> --- This is a National Geographic site that gives information about lots of things under New York City.