TEACHER’S GUIDE

NEW YORK

A DOCUMENTARY FILM

Directed by Ric Burns

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Dear Teacher,

I vividly remember the first moment I realized I had to live in New York. It was in the summer of 1974. I was nineteen years old, riding down Fifth Avenue on the Number 4 bus, when it occurred to me that people from Michigan (where I grew up) could live here. This simple thought sent an electrical current surging through my body so strong that it made my heart pound as hard as it is possible to pound without having a heart attack. I’ve lived here ever since.

There really is no place in the world quite like New York. For generations, its dark beauty and inimitable power have stirred men and women to the depths of their souls, seeming the very embodiment of all ambition, all aspiration, all romance, all desire. The very names of New York’s streets and districts have been woven into our collective imagination, until they have become shorthand for the whole range of human experience. Broadway and Times Square. Wall Street. Madison Avenue. Fifth Avenue. Park Avenue. Harlem. Grand Central Station.

New York confronts us with the most basic questions. What forces converged to make such a city possible? What does it tell us about ourselves as a people? Is there any way of explaining something so dense, complex, incomprehensibly vast, multiple and overpowering?

For seven years, I’ve been working on NEW YORK: A DOCUMENTARY FILM, struggling with my production team to create a single narrative out of the nearly four hundred years, four hundred square miles, and millions and millions of people that collectively constitute the polyglot, complex history that is New York. I’ve never been more challenged or obsessed by a subject in my life.

More than any other place in America, New York is the city Americans love to love, and love to hate — the King Kong of cities, the city that has inspired greater ambivalence than any other city in America. Yet, for almost 400 years, New York has been the cauldron of capitalism and democracy in America, and the supreme laboratory of modern life, where the most crucial American experiment of modern times continues to unfold — the exhilarating, often harrowing experiment to see if all the peoples of the world can live together in a single place.

I hope that this guide is useful in provoking thoughtful debate in your classrooms about the themes, stories and lessons included in our series, about your own city or town, about the importance of cities in general, and perhaps most crucially, about the nature of America itself.
New York: A Documentary Film
Directed by Ric Burns

New York is one of the most exciting cities in the world. It’s a center of economic and cultural life, attracting people from around the globe. New York is where ambitious people come to test themselves, where those who feel different can find a sense of belonging. Some of its buildings and industries are synonymous with modernity, while evidence of its rich past is everywhere. Its contrasts of great wealth and poverty, its incredible organization and apparent defiance of logic — so dense, so complex, so difficult to grasp at once — lead one to ask: Why did this happen here, and not someplace else? How did New York come to be what it is today?

NEW YORK: A DOCUMENTARY FILM is a six-part PBS series that examines the history of the city, from its beginnings in 1624 as a Dutch trading post through its transformation into an urban colossus — a center of trade, finance, and culture, and a source of ideas that have shaped our country. It illuminates little-known facets of American history, and provides perspective on social, political, economic, and cultural trends in our nation today.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
This guide is intended to help you use NEW YORK: A DOCUMENTARY FILM as a supplement to junior-high and high-school social-studies courses. Selected activities may also be used in language arts, music, and art classes.

THEMES
Key themes in this guide include governance, public health and other reforms, culture and public policy, immigration and race, economic life, and the role of women in New York City’s history. The guide is intended to help students consider crucial questions related to these themes, and to help them use what they’ve learned about the history of New York as a starting point for finding out more about their own community.

TEACHER’S PAGES
The teacher’s information pages provide scene lists for the first five episodes of NEW YORK — tables of contents for each two-hour film — to help you determine which segments of the programs to use in class. (A scene list for Episode Six was not available at press time.) Vocabulary words, brief descriptions of prominent people and places, and resources for each program (books and Web sites) are also included. General-interest resources are listed on the back cover of the guide.

LOG ON — THE NEW YORK WEB SITE
Learning Adventures in Citizenship: From New York to Your Town is an educational Web companion to NEW YORK for young people. Teachers, kids, and parents can learn about the history of New York and do activities designed to help kids learn more about and participate in their own communities. Funded by the Markle Foundation, the Web site is full of video clips from the series, historical documents, illustrations, and fun, explorable environments. Lesson plans for teachers and guidelines for parents are included.

To take a virtual tour of “hidden” New York, to play a New York trivia game, or learn more about the six episodes and the making of the series, visit the NEW YORK series Web site. Both Web sites are at www.thirteen.org/newyork/ or www.pbs.org/newyork/

BROADCAST INFORMATION
The first five episodes of NEW YORK will be broadcast on the following dates on PBS (check local listings):

- Episode One, The Country and the City (1609–1825) Sunday, November 14, 1999
- Episode Two, Order and the City (1609–1825) Monday, November 15, 1999
- Episode Three, Sunshine and Shadow (1865–1898) Tuesday, November 16, 1999
- Episode Four, The Power and the People (1898–1914) Wednesday, November 17, 1999
- Episode Five, Cosmopolis (1914–1931) Thursday, November 18, 1999


VIDEOTAPING RIGHTS
Off-air taping rights of NEW YORK: A DOCUMENTARY FILM are available to educators for one year following each broadcast release.
Overview

New York City began as a Dutch trading post. In 1609, Henry Hudson, a British explorer hired by the Dutch, sailed into what would later become one of history’s busiest, wealthiest harbors. Hudson had planned to find a faster route to the Orient for the Dutch, to give them a competitive edge. Although Hudson failed to find the fabled “Northwest Passage,” he saw the potential for trade with the native people in the Manhattan area, who called themselves the Lenape. A thriving fur-trading business in New Amsterdam sparked Manhattan’s role as a leader in the world of commerce and capitalism. The colony welcomed hard-working people from different nations. By the 1640s, there were 18 different languages spoken there.

“The Country and the City” chronicles New York’s history from its early years as a Dutch colony to its takeover by the British Empire in 1664, to its pivotal position during the American Revolution. Although America’s capital moved from New York to Washington, D.C., in 1790, Manhattan became the economic capital of the nation. The program ends in 1825 with the triumphant completion of the Erie Canal, championed by DeWitt Clinton and accomplished by numerous immigrant laborers. Clinton’s entrepreneurial act ensured New York’s position as a financial and cultural center.

Questions

1. The grid commission assigned the streets numbers (e.g., 1st Street, Fifth Avenue) rather than names. How did this facilitate the buying and selling of land? How does this urban plan reflect the ideals of democracy?

2. In what ways do you think Manhattan’s natural landscape needed to be changed in order to execute the grid plan?

3. Compare this grid to a current map of Manhattan. What similarities and differences do you notice? What clues suggest that parts of lower Manhattan were developed prior to the 1800s?
Complete one of the following activities.

THE “NEGRO PLOT” OF 1741

On March 18, 1741, mysterious fires broke out in New York near the governor’s house. Soon after, other unexplained fires destroyed more homes and businesses. Although there was almost no evidence, the English government became convinced the fires were part of a “Negro Plot.” Nearly half the adult male slaves in New York were thrown in jail. In brutal punishments reminiscent of the Salem Witch Trials, 13 slaves were burned at the stake, 16 blacks and 4 whites were hanged, and 70 more New Yorkers were deported. Using books and Web sites, work with a small group of students to research the “Uprising of 1741.” With suggestions from your teacher, create a simulated TV news program that describes the events of this uprising. Be sure to include debate among the different points of view, such as a slave who lost a family member; Mary Burton, the young white servant who testified; Justice Daniel Horsmanden, the key investigator; an English businessman; and so on.

STREET NAMES AND STRUCTURE

Using resources from your local historical society or public library, find out how some prominent streets in your town got their names. Who made the naming decisions? Are any streets named after founders of your town? Are any streets named after a person whose business has played an important role in your city’s economy? Then, with help from your local historical society or public library, research how your town’s current organizational plan originated. For example, why is “downtown” located where it is? Present your discoveries in the form of a large map or mural that shows an overview of your town or city and how it came to be. If you wish, offer a proposal for how you would re-organize your town if you were in charge. What industries and businesses would you want to attract? Would you add more public parks? Improve public transportation? Add another zoo? Another shopping mall?

A TRIP DOWN THE ERIE CANAL

Although the Erie Canal is no longer used for commercial purposes, in the mid-1800s, this waterway was essential for transporting products and people to and from New York City. Research the history of the Erie Canal. Find out, in detail, how a canal boat got from one end to the other. What kinds of boats were used? How did stone locks help during the journey? How long did it take for a boat to get from Buffalo, New York, to Manhattan? Once you’ve gathered enough research, create a diary of a student traveling down the Erie Canal during the 1830s, with one entry per day of your trip. Describe the sights you see, and include some excerpts of dialogue you “overhear.” Your goal is to help your readers feel as though they’ve gone back in time. When you’re done, share your Erie Canal diary entries with your class. You may also view the Erie Canal slide show at the NEW YORK Web site, at http://www.thirteen.org/newyork/lai/c/episode1/topic7/e1_s1-ec.html

EARLY INHABITANTS AND SETTLERS

• Who were the first people to live in your area?
• Did they belong to a Native American tribe?
• When did settlers arrive from elsewhere in the world?
• Did the Native Americans and the other settlers get along?

• Were any famous battles fought in your area?
• In what ways has your town or city changed since older people’s childhood days?

Work with another student to research the answers to these questions. To gather additional information about your area’s history, you can use an audiotape or videotape recorder to interview some elderly townspeople (possibly relatives) about their earliest memories. Alternately, you could interview an expert at a local history organization. If there is a Native American organization nearby, interview one of its members about his or her tribe’s history in your area. Share your findings with others in your class in the form of a written report, a short play, or a videotape presentation.
Overview

In 1825, New York was peaceful, orderly, and rural, with a population of less than 175,000 people. The next few decades brought the tensions and possibilities of the modern age to Manhattan. Its residents were faced with problems including crime, gangs, fires, and disease. New public services were urgently needed. A huge wave of immigration from Europe brought hundreds of thousands of new arrivals, who had to find somewhere to live.

The city rose to the challenges of expansion, and Walt Whitman celebrated New York's energy and spirit in his masterpiece, Leaves of Grass. By 1865, the city had a new fire department, waterworks, popular newspapers, a world-class Central Park, mass entertainments, and whole new communities of immigrants who added to its diversity and energy. Still, during the Civil War, New York was the site of the worst urban riot in America's history, in which working-class white mobs murdered blacks in reaction to new federal draft laws. The aftermath of the riots brought the founding of a new police force and important reforms on behalf of the poor.

The land where Central Park was built was not uninhabited. The map below shows Seneca Village, a thriving community of African Americans that existed from 1825–1856, located between 81st and 86th Streets near Eighth Avenue. It was demolished during the construction of Central Park.

Study the “Topographical Survey for the Grounds of Central Park.” Seneca Village's population was stable. The AMA Zion Church (considered to be a "wealthy coloured people's church"); the Union Methodist Episcopal Church, which housed one of the few black schools in New York City; and All Angel's Church served the community. Irish and Germans began moving into the area in the 1840s. The All Angels Church ministered to a mixed population.

The map shows a village that contains farmlands, houses, and churches. The dark squares and rectangles represent structures, most of them homes.

Questions

1. How would you describe Seneca Village based on the map?
2. Why do you think the park designers were willing to destroy Seneca Village to create the park? How would the designers of Central Park defend their actions?
3. What defense could the leaders of Seneca Village use to try to stop the park's development?

Show Winslow Homer’s painting “Skating in Central Park.”

1. How are the people in the painting making use of Central Park? Why? Which classes of people are in the painting — upper class, middle class, or lower class? How do you know? What does the painting suggest about the purpose and function of Central Park?
2. Using the sources, explain which class of people appeared to have benefited from Central Park. How can you tell? Which group of people may not have benefited? Explain.

Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman (1819–1892) was one of the most extraordinary American poets of the 19th century. He grew up in Brooklyn and worked as a teacher, journalist, and editor of the newspaper The Brooklyn Eagle before publishing the first edition of Leaves of Grass (1855), a passionate work of poetry that celebrates egalitarianism and his own individuality, as well as sexuality and regeneration in nature. Considered the “father of free verse in American literature,” Whitman has influenced generations of American poets.
Complete one of the following activities.

**P.T. BARNUM AND POPULAR CULTURE**

Divide into cooperative groups. Each group should use library or Web resources to research and study one or more of the following items from P.T. Barnum’s American Museum:

- an itinerary of Jenny Lind’s appearances
- The Wedding of Tom Thumb
- sheet music from the circus shows
- a description or pictures of the “Seven Salons” of the Museum
- an excerpt from The Illustrated Guidebook

**Answer the following:**

1. Describe the entertainment value of your story or document.
2. Why did Barnum include it in his museum?
3. What does it tell you about popular culture in New York and the United States at the time?
4. Why did the sideshow exhibits feature people of different races?

**LINCOLN’S COOPER UNION SPEECH**

Using a text from the library or the Web ([www.netins.net/showcase/creative/lincoln/speeches/cooper.htm](http://www.netins.net/showcase/creative/lincoln/speeches/cooper.htm)), analyze a copy of Lincoln’s “Cooper Union” speech from February 27, 1860. Answer the following questions:

1. What is Lincoln saying about the Republican Party’s relationship to abolitionism? To John Brown?
2. As a class, debate whether Lincoln’s speech was a unifying or dividing force in America.

**LEAVES OF GRASS**

Using library resources, find and share excerpts from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, such as “Song of Myself” or “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry.” With a partner, discuss your first reactions to the poem. What do you think Walt Whitman is talking about? Who is he glorifying? After discussing the poems with the class, write an essay explaining whether you agree or disagree with Walt Whitman’s views of democracy in New York City, and why.

After you develop your answers to the questions, each group should report its findings to the class. Based on the answers and the information in Episode Two, discuss the following:

1. To what extent did Barnum’s museum appeal to the racist sentiments of the time?
2. To what extent was Barnum’s museum an expression of American and urban culture?

**THE DRAFT RIOTS**

Work in cooperative learning groups to create a Cause-and-Effect chart on the 1863 draft riots. After each group completes its chart, take turns presenting the information you feel is essential to each column. After the presentations, analyze the draft riots by answering the following questions:

1. Why did the rioters engage in such violence? Were they justified in their frustration with the Draft Act? Why?
2. Why did the rioters target African Americans?
3. How do race and class help explain the draft riots?

**Episode Three, Sunshine and Shadow (1865–1898)**

This episode examines the era when the expansion of wealth and poverty — and the schism between them — built to a crescendo. “Sunshine and Shadow” features Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall, the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge, and the annexing of Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island into a single metropolis — Greater New York.
Overview

In the 33 years covered by this episode, New York City changed more dramatically than in any period in its history. From a merchant city to the second largest metropolis in the world, New York took center stage.

Central Park, begun before the Civil War, was supposed to bring peace and breathing space to New York. Instead, the area around it was occupied within decades, as the "Gilded Age" brought stunning wealth to J.P. Morgan, Jay Gould, and Jim Fisk, who built mansions on the park's eastern border, Fifth Avenue. At the same time, legions of new immigrants arrived, most squeezed into tenements in the older corners of the city far from the park that had been promoted as beneficial to them. The bosses of Tammany Hall and the photographs of Jacob Riis served these new poor in different ways, but by the turn of the century, the gap between rich and poor had never been greater.

New Yorkers also tackled tremendous projects during these years. They raised the money to put together the Statue of Liberty and raised her to her feet in New York Harbor. They built the Brooklyn Bridge, an engineering marvel that cost the lives of many and connected Brooklyn, America's first suburb, to Manhattan. And, in the most extraordinary "structure" of all, by a vote of all New Yorkers in December, 1897, Brooklyn joined Manhattan, Staten Island, Queens, and the Bronx to become part of New York City.

Questions

Use the cartoon, Episode Three, and a little research to answer the following.

1. Who are William M. "Boss" Tweed (Tweedledee) and Peter Sweeny (Sweedle-dum)? What is Tammany Hall?

2. What social class are the people receiving the money? How can you tell? Where is the money coming from? At what time of year is this cartoon taking place? Does it matter? Why?

3. What is the Clown (Tweed) suggesting when he says, "Let's blind them with this, and then take some more."

Activities

1. Draw a cartoon with a political message. You don't have to be a skilled illustrator to do so. Even stick figures will do. If you can, in your cartoon, comment on some local political issue or on some issue in your school. You are welcome to be biased!

2. Stage a debate with at least five other students in your class that wrestles with the following situation: You are on the edge of poverty. Would you support a politician or an organization with your votes that, though shady or even dishonest in public dealings, made sure to support you, if you had an economic crisis or had trouble with the law?


Horatio Alger

Horatio Alger (1832–1899) was a popular writer whose more than one hundred novels glorified the American Dream. A number of his works focused on the experiences of New York newsboys. While his works were fiction, Alger's descriptions of the neighborhoods of New York helped a generation of young men who were moving from farm to city find their way.
Complete one of the following activities.

FRESHMAN CLASS: 1898

Lucky you! It’s 1898 and the president of a brand new and totally fictional college, the University of New York, has asked you to serve on its admissions committee. You and the other committee members, your classmates, will be selecting the first eight students in the freshman class at UNY. Eighteen historical figures have applied. (Some are dead, but that’s OK; remember, this is a simulation!) The applicants are: Joshua Beal, Russell H. Conwell, Thomas Alva Edison, Jim Fisk, Henry George, Jay Gould, J.P. Morgan, Thomas Nast, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jacob Riis, John Augustus Roebling, Emily Roebling, Washington Roebling, Al Smith, Emma Stebbins, William M. Tweed, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Walt Whitman. In making your selections, you should consider all of the applicant’s accomplishments as adults up to and including 1898.

Your teacher will assign you your role. Depending on the size of your class, either one or two of you is responsible for presenting the candidacy of one of the applicants. You and your partner, if you have one, may decide that your applicant is wildly inappropriate for UNY. That’s fine.

Using the content of NEW YORK and any additional research you wish, write up your presentation and share it with your teacher at least a week before the admissions board meeting. Your teacher will return it to you in a few days with suggestions for improvement, if any are needed.

When the presentations begin, listen closely and take notes. (Your teacher may give you a sheet to guide your notetaking.) Doing so will help you, because, just after the admissions committee has heard about all the potential candidates, you will have to write a paper in which you rank your top eight students. It is very important to write an opening paragraph in which you outline your goals for the University of New York, with specific reference to as many of these topics as possible: governance, public health and other reforms, culture and public policy, immigration and race, the role of women, and economic life. The students you select should square with your goals, because they will influence life in New York in the 20th century.

Finally, the admissions board will meet and debate the merits of each applicant. After eight are selected, each of you, using your notes, will make roommate assignments.

HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

The camera for Jacob Riis became an instrument of social change. Now, more than a hundred years later, can you do the same? With your teacher’s and your parents’ approval, document some situation or condition in your hometown, and, like Riis, provide the text to accompany it.

As an alternative, you may write an imaginary letter from Jacob Riis to your local newspaper commenting on the homeless in American cities today. Then write a letter responding to Riis that accuses him of bias and of staging the vignette in the photograph from How the Other Half Lives.

From Jacob Riis’s How the Other Half Lives, “In the Homes of an Italian Rag-Picker, Jersey Street”
Overview

As the twentieth century dawned, New York underwent extraordinary transformations that made the city the social, cultural, and economic center of the United States. Skyscrapers, such as the Flatiron Building, changed both Manhattan’s skyline and the lives of its people; the subways opened a new world beneath the city. In one generation, Greater New York’s population more than doubled—from 1.91 million in 1880 to 4.77 million in 1910—as an endless wave of immigrants made its way across the Atlantic, the newcomers displacing earlier arrivals in the teeming slums of lower Manhattan and in the needle and construction trades. One hundred forty-two of them (mostly teenaged girls) died in the Triangle Fire in 1911, a preventable tragedy that renewed the efforts of progressive reformers and political figures like Al Smith to improve urban housing, public health, and working conditions. In seeking governmental solutions to urban ills, New York again set the agenda for change nationwide.

Primary Source

Below, an English historian, H.G. Wells, describes a day at Ellis Island in 1906 as thousands of immigrants “from Ireland and Poland and Italy and Syria and Finland and Albania” and elsewhere wait in long lines for permission to enter America.

Questions

1. Like many other commentators on immigration, H.G. Wells was struck by the relative youthfulness of the newcomers to America. What was there about emigration (leaving the old country) and immigration (entering the new) that made the process especially appealing to the young?

2. What was Wells’s reaction to the volume of immigration as he observed it in 1906? What groups then in America might have taken a different point of view? What reasons would they give for their position? How would Wells respond to them?

3. Many immigrants to America were torn between their desire to maintain their cultural identity and their wish to be assimilated as Americans. In 1898-1914, what major factors helped immigrant New Yorkers hold on to “old country” ways? What factors led them to become Americanized? Does that tension between “old country” and “new” exist in American society today?

Activities

1. Research the immigration history of an ethnic group or nationality living in New York from 1898 to 1914. (You might choose one from your own heritage.) Answer these questions: How many had entered America by 1914? What was the peak year of immigration? What conditions in their homeland led them to America? Did they face special problems on arrival here? Report your findings to your class.

2. Imagine yourself as an immigrant at Ellis Island in 1900. Write a letter to a friend in the old country about your experiences from the time you left home until this moment when you wait to be cleared for entry into the United States.

3. Before 1880, immigrants were denied entry to America only for disease, a murder conviction, or a disability that prevented employment. Between 1881 and 1924, Congress voted more than one hundred other restrictions, including political behavior, race, and ethnicity. With other classmates, form two teams and debate the proposition: “It is in the national interest that immigration to the United States be open and unrestricted.”

The Flatiron Building under construction in 1901 at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue. For a brief time, its 21 stories made it the tallest building in Manhattan north of the financial district.

Questions
1. What does this photo reveal about New York City in 1901?
2. What technological and commercial changes in the late 19th century, as described in this episode of NEW YORK, made possible the construction of buildings like the Flatiron?
3. What changes would you expect to find in such things as transportation, street traffic, buildings, and architectural style if this site were photographed today?

Complete one of the following activities.

RIVER VIEWS AND CATTLE CARS
Report to your class on the benefits and drawbacks to city living of high-rise buildings and public transportation (like subways and elevated railways).

INVESTIGATING THE TRIANGLE FIRE
Turn your class into a legislative committee investigating the Triangle Fire. Take testimony from “experts” on such questions as these: “Who is responsible for safety in the workplace?” “If government has a role, what is it?” “What laws or regulations should be written to protect workers from tragedies like the Triangle Fire?”

As an alternative, research and report on how fire and safety regulations were changed because of the Triangle Fire.

EVIDENCE FOR THE FUTURE
Take a photograph or make a sketch of an important intersection in your community. (Date your work and indicate the time of day.) How do you think future historians might interpret what you show?

ALTERNATIVE REALITY: NEW YORK CITY
Write an essay about what might have happened to New York if buildings had not risen above six stories, the subway had not been built, and the population had not been increased by mass immigration.

Lillian Wald
Lillian Wald (1867-1940) came to New York from Cincinnati to study and remained for a lifetime of public service among the poor. Appalled by the overcrowded, disease-ridden slums where many immigrants lived, she was convinced that poverty could be eradicated through neighborhood improvements in housing, schooling, and public health. A trained nurse, she made public-health services her principal means of transforming urban life. Aided by philanthropists like Jacob Schiff, Wald established the Henry Street Settlement (1895) to provide visiting nurses to the homes of the poor. Within a decade, Henry Street was internationally renowned for its free, comprehensive programs in health-care, hygiene, and cultural education for immigrant families. In 1902, Wald and Lina Roberts set up the nation’s first public-school nursing service in New York. Ten years later, Wald was instrumental in getting Congress to create the U.S. Children’s Bureau. Throughout her long career, she was guided by her belief that everyone was entitled to dignity and compassion, and that each person had a responsibility for the well-being of others.

Episode Five, Cosmopolis (1914–1931)
In a short but dazzling period, New York became the focal point of an extraordinary array of human and cultural energies, reaching its highest levels of urban excitement and glamour. “Cosmopolis” features artistic creations like George Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue,” the Harlem Renaissance, the rise of the new media industries of advertising and radio, and the construction of the Empire State Building.
Soon after the First World War, New York City blossomed into an extraordinarily creative and progressive place, which F. Scott Fitzgerald called “the land of ambition and success.” New York's affluence, sophistication, and decadence during “the Jazz Age” were epitomized by Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*. During this time, New York's skyline took shape, as skyscrapers such as the Chrysler Building were built. Fueled by the migration of hundreds of African-American writers, artists, and musicians, Harlem became the undisputed capital of black culture in America. During the Harlem Renaissance, Manhattan provided a nurturing environment for writers such as Langston Hughes. African-American musicians such as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong dazzled the nation's jazz-music fans. During this era, New York also became a media center, due to new radio networks, recording companies, and the booming advertising and publishing industries. On October 29, 1929, when New York's stock market crashed, “roaring '20s” New Yorkers had to face reality again.

### Zora Neale Hurston

During the literary and cultural moment known as the Harlem Renaissance, Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) wrote her famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Based on oral histories, life experience, and her studies of African-American folklore, this story tells the tale of a black woman's search for spiritual growth in an oppressive society. Hurston, who viewed her racial heritage as a source of deep pride, once wrote: “I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it.” Although Hurston died penniless and mostly forgotten in 1960, interest in her work was revived during the 1980s, particularly due to the efforts of author Alice Walker.

### Questions

1. During what period in American history do you think this paragraph was written? What clues from the text support your guess?

2. What did F. Scott Fitzgerald think was “the crowning error” of New York City? Why?

3. Research Alfred E. Smith. Using clues from this excerpt, what was the “rash gift” he gave to the citizens of New York?

4. Using clues from this excerpt, infer some reasons why people such as customs agents, barbers, and waiters acted differently than usual during “The Jazz Age.”

5. If Fitzgerald were alive today, what observations do you think he would make about his “lost city”? Would Fitzgerald still regard New York as a lost city?
WOMEN OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

During the 1920s, patron A’lelia Walker organized lavish events to bring together African-American authors with publishers and other patrons. Her personality and lifestyle inspired Langston Hughes to dub her the “joy goddess of Harlem’s 1920s.” Another prominent woman during this time was Zora Neale Hurston, author of novels such as Their Eyes Were Watching God. Research the life of Walker or Hurston and find out more about their role during the Harlem Renaissance. Then, create a presentation about them to share with your class. It can be in the form of a biographical paper, a play, an oral report, a multimedia presentation, or a mural.

HIGH AS THE SKY

Research the dramatic story of the construction of New York City’s famous icon, the Empire State Building. To set the stage, discuss the “skyscraper wars” from the ‘20s, including the competition between the Chrysler Building and the Bank of Manhattan Building. Find the answers to these questions: What factors helped the rapid construction of the Empire State Building? What role did Alfred E. Smith play in creating this famous skyscraper? For how many years did the Empire State Building remain the tallest skyscraper in the world? Write a research paper or create an annotated mural (with photographs if possible) that shares with other students what you’ve discovered. As an alternative, research the construction of a famous historical building in your town or city. Find out what buildings, if any, needed to be demolished beforehand. What was the original purpose of this building? Has this purpose changed over the years?

SO LONG, SALOONS!

In 1917, Congress approved the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment—known as Prohibition—stated that, as of 1920, it would be illegal for Americans to manufacture, sell, or transport liquor. Many Americans rebelled against this law. People called “bootleggers” made their own liquor, gangsters smuggled in alcohol from other countries, and illegal bars called “speakeasies” thrived. In 1933, Congress acknowledged the failure of this experiment by passing the 21st Amendment, which ended national Prohibition. Write a research paper or oral presentation in which you discuss the pros and cons of national Prohibition (e.g., effects on people’s health, organized crime). Find out how this law affected your town or city. What methods did your local government use to try to combat illegal drinking? Conclude your paper or presentation by examining contemporary attitudes toward alcohol and other drugs in America.

GOING UP, GOING DOWN

In this activity, imagine you have $10,000 to invest in the stock market. Use the business section of the newspaper, or an Internet site such as Yahoo finance research (http://finance.yahoo.com), to track five stocks over the period of a month. Write down your reason for selecting each of the stocks. By keeping daily logs (or an online chart) of the ups and downs, as well as noting events that might have contributed to these changes, you will gain a greater understanding of both the stock market’s volatility and its profitability.

AND IF YOU ORDER TODAY...

The advent of national radio programs supported by mass advertising helped develop a “consumer society” in America. This shift in consumer purchasing had to do both with mass production and attitudes about aspiration, “keeping up with the Joneses.” Use your local library to research some print advertisements that appeared in newspapers, magazines, or catalogues during the 1920s and 30s. Create a written report in which you contrast these ads with ones you find in modern publications. Do you think people in the ‘20s and ‘30s were more gullible than they are today? Discuss the ways in which you believe you are susceptible to advertisements and ways in which you are aware when companies are trying to persuade you to buy products you don’t really need.
Overview

During Depression-era New York, poverty and social unrest drove many New Yorkers to the brink of desperation. In response, New Deal programs—direct descendants of New York’s social programs of the previous 20 years, administered by Franklin D. Roosevelt and a team of New York-trained policy makers—began a flow of money from Washington to the city. Mayor La Guardia aggressively took advantage of the new largesse, and with his master builder Robert Moses, used the untold billions to rebuild New York—not only bringing the city out of its doldrums but also giving it a remarkable infrastructure for future growth.

These federal programs precipitated a dramatic change in New York’s hegemony as the center of American power. Yet, following the 1939 World’s Fair and World War II, New York emerged as the de-facto capital of world culture, ratified by its selection as home to the United Nations. New York’s post-war growth seemed boundless as Moses marshaled enormous power to reshape the geography of the metropolis, focusing resources on suburban expansion and the middle-class, rather than addressing the needs of the expanding urban underclass and the now-rotting inner-city infrastructure.

The destruction of Penn Station served as a wake-up call to the city’s landmarks-preservation movement, and urbanists like Jane Jacobs reaffirmed the need to preserve city neighborhood life.

The motto of New York City’s 1939 World’s Fair was “Building the World of Tomorrow.” The City of the Future diorama was the central focus of the General Motors Futurama exhibit there. Visitors moved in chairs equipped with individual loudspeakers around the 36,000-square-foot model. Although there were 600 moving chairs, this design gave each rider the feeling of experiencing a private show. The last words visitors heard the narrator say were, “All eyes to the future.”

People coming off the ride found themselves standing in front of an impressive, life-size intersection, imagining how the streets they had just seen in the diorama would look in 1960. They saw that the cars were on the street level while pedestrian sidewalks were raised one level above.

In 1939, GM’s Futurama depicted 1960 as a car-centered world, including seven-lane highways and enormous skyscrapers.

Research the inventions and ideas that were introduced to the world for the first time at this exhibit.

Questions

1. Did everything introduced at the exhibit become part of American daily life in 1960, as promised?
2. What was the vision that inspired the creators and builders of the 1939 World’s Fair?
3. What impact did the automobile and the highway have on the quality of life in New York City? In the nation?
4. Brainstorm the actions that could be initiated to ease and eventually eliminate automobile traffic and congestion where you live.

Activities

1. See if you can find old maps of your town or city at the local historical society, city hall, or public library. Discuss what changes have occurred over the years, and make guesses as to what factors caused these changes.
2. Working in teams, choose a variety of intersections in your neighborhood and build a diorama showing how you want your area to look in the year 2020. Place your school at the center, and branch out from there. Make a list of what should be improved. Decide what action steps can be taken to create these improvements. What resources will be needed? Develop a timeline that shows how this dream can happen. You may also create a school club whose members will work on this continuing project long after you graduate.
Complete one of the following activities

SOCIAL UNREST AND CREATIVITY

“When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake.” — Plato

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it is rarin'.
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are
a-changin'.

—from “The Times They Are A-Changin’” by Bob Dylan

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Special Rider Music

Pioneering civil-rights legislation outlawing racial discrimination in government-assisted and private housing, in employment, and in education was first written and enforced in New York City. However, there is still plenty of work to do to correct the failures and fulfill the nation’s great promise of a diverse, democratic, and just society.

Along with being a place of hope and promise, New York can often be a place of cruelty and contradiction. Use the library and the Internet to research the civil and social unrest of the 1960s in New York City and across the nation. Divide up into three groups and find examples of five songs, five films, and five books that reflected the social tension of this time. Work together to create a presentation for your class that illustrates how this social upheaval was expressed through the talent of these specific musicians, filmmakers, and writers. Who are their counterparts who are creating in the 2000s?

NEIGHBORHOOD URBAN PLANNING

Brainstorm the following urban-planning scenarios in small groups:

- How would street life change if local residents banned automobiles in your neighborhood?
- How would planting and caring for trees, shrubbery, and flowers change the life and spirit of a city street and its residents?
- What is gained when historic buildings are treated as treasures?

With your teacher’s help, write a survey and distribute it to people in your neighborhood, asking what makes a city street vital and safe. Tabulate the responses and discuss the results in class, or circulate them in a printed newsletter or on the Internet.

CHALLENGING THE SYSTEM

Two women challenged the power of Robert Moses. While Lillian Edelstein lost the battle to save South Bronx neighborhoods from bulldozer destruction in the Fifties, Jane Jacobs stopped Moses’ invasion of Greenwich Village during the Sixties. Working in teams, research, write, and produce two one-act plays or hold two mock debates that vividly illustrate the dramatic clashes these courageous women had with New York City’s power broker of urban renewal.

Here are some suggested ways to approach your research:

- Find out how Robert Moses was written about at the time of his death. Why was he such a controversial figure in New York City history? Were the means Moses used to achieve his public works compatible with the principles of a true democracy?
- Imagine New York City without Robert Moses. How would the city be different? What would the South Bronx look like today? How would it feel? What would the noise levels be? Find and compare a map of the city before the Moses building projects with a map of the city at the end of his career.

Perform the plays or the debates for your class as a dress rehearsal and then for your school. Afterwards, have an open discussion on the personal strength it takes to stand up and fight for what you believe is right for your neighborhood, your city, your country, and your world.

PROFILE

Robert Moses

New York City’s great public-works builder, Robert Moses (1888-1981), was never voted into public office, but he wielded enormous power over five mayors and six governors. A man with a dynamic personality, great intellect, and indomitable will, he built highways, parks, and controversial public-works projects over a period of 44 years. Moses’ influence was felt nationally when he mentored the engineers who designed the interstate highway system. Ironically, even though his urban planning vision centered on automobiles and highways, Moses never drove a car.

When asked by a Fordham University student after a lecture in the 1970s, “What obligation does an urban planner owe to the future?”, Robert Moses replied, “None.” In the end, he became the type of arrogant power broker he once despised as a young, idealistic public reformer.
Episode One

The Country and the City (1609–1825)

Sunday, November 14, 9–11 P.M.

SCENE LIST
1. Introduction
2. New Amsterdam
3. English Colony
4. 1741 Slave Revolt
5. American Revolution
6. The Deal
7. Alexander Hamilton and the American City
8. DeWitt Clinton: The Grid and the Erie Canal
9. Epilogue

VOCABULARY
DeWitt Clinton: a descendent of the early Dutch settlers of New York; term derived from the writer Washington Irving’s pseudonym, Dietrich Knickerbocker
Lenape: Native American tribe that originally inhabited what is now New York City
real estate speculation: buying land or buildings to resell them for large profits
shipping: sending out or receiving goods by ship

PEOPLE
Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804): New York statesman and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury
Washington Irving (1783–1859): author of the fictitious History of New York
Peter Stuyvesant (1610–1672): Dutch administrator of New Amsterdam

Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794–1877): industrialist

PLACES
Erie Canal: artificial waterway through New York State, completed in 1825, connecting the Hudson River with the Great Lakes
Manhattan Island: the first part of New York City settled by Europeans
New York Harbor: a port since the 1600s, and the mouth of the Hudson River

RESOURCES
Books
Nonfiction

Peter Stuyvesant and the Trumpeter, (The Wrath of Peter Stuyvesant), by Asher B. Durand


Folk Tales

Web Sites
Delaware (Lenape) Tribe of Indians: Homepage http://206.103.98.155/
New York Canals: The First Boat that Passed through the Erie Canal http://www.canals.state.ny.us/history/b2p21-3.htm
New Netherland Project Home Page http://www.nnp.org/

Episode Two

Order and Disorder (1825–1865)

Monday, November 15, 9–11 P.M.

SCENE LIST
1. Introduction
2. The Impact of the Erie Canal: Economic Boom
4. German and Irish Immigration
5. Problems: Nativism, Crowding, Disease, and Class Conflict
6. Walt Whitman: Leaves of Grass
7. Central Park
8. The Gathering Storm: Lincoln and the Outbreak of Civil War
9. The Draft Riots
10. Epilogue

VOCABULARY
draft lottery: federal-government system to conscript soldiers for the Civil War; included a clause allowing drafted men to buy their way out for $300
Irish Potato Famine: crop failures in Ireland beginning in 1854 that spurred immigration to New York City
Know-Nothing Party: a 19th-century secret political organization hostile to the political influence of Roman Catholics and recent immigrants

tenement: an apartment house in the city that meets minimum standards for safety and comfort

PEOPLE
P.T. Barnum (1810–1891): dime-museum showman
Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865): 16th president of the United States

Background photo: © CORBIS IMAGES
**Teacher Information**

**Frederick Law Olmsted** (1822–1903): landscape architect of Central Park

**George Templeton Strong** (1820–1875): lawyer and diarist

**Walt Whitman** (1819–1892): journalist and poet, author of *Leaves of Grass* (1855)

**PLACES**

- **Central Park**: Manhattan’s 873-acre park, constructed during the mid-19th century
- **Five Points**: a notorious, crime-ridden former neighborhood in lower Manhattan
- **Kleindeutschland**: Little Germany, a New York neighborhood on the Lower East Side settled in the mid-1800s
- **Seneca Village**: small African-American neighborhood demolished in 1857 during the construction of Central Park

**RESOURCES**

**Books**

- **Nonfiction**

- **Web Sites**
  - Barnum Museum
  - Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman
  - Abraham Lincoln’s Cooper Union Address
    - [http://www.netins.net/showcase/creative/lincoln/speeches/cooper.htm](http://www.netins.net/showcase/creative/lincoln/speeches/cooper.htm)
  - The Five Points Home Page
    - [http://R2.gsa.gov/fivept/fphone.htm](http://R2.gsa.gov/fivept/fphone.htm)

**Vocabulary**

- **capitalism**: economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by private investment, and by distribution of goods determined by competition in a free market
- **graft**: money or other rewards gained illegally or dishonestly
- **minstrel show**: a performance in blackface of African-American-style songs and jokes
- **panic**: sudden, widespread fear in financial affairs resulting in a depression
- **patronage**: a politically advantageous power to make appointments to government jobs
- **political machine**: a highly organized political group under the leadership of a boss
- **Tammany Hall**: political organization, also called the Society of St. Tammany or Columbian Order, that helped New York’s immigrants but was notorious for scandals

**PEOPLE**

- **Thomas Edison** (1847–1931): inventor
- **J.P. Morgan** (1837–1913): financier
- **Thomas Nast** (1840–1902): cartoonist for *Harper’s Weekly*
- **Jacob Riis** (1849–1914): photographer, social reformer, and writer
- **John Roebling** (1806–1869) and **Washington Roebling** (1837–1926): builders of the Brooklyn Bridge
- **Al Smith** (1873–1944): Tammany Hall Democrat, reformer, and governor of New York

**PLACES**

- **Brooklyn Bridge**: steel suspension bridge across the East River linking Manhattan and Brooklyn, completed in 1883
- **Wall Street**: financial center and location of the New York Stock Exchange

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**Episode Three**

**Sunshine and Shadow (1865–1898)**

**Tuesday, November 16, 9–11 P.M.**

**SCENE LIST**

1. Prologue: Sunshine and Shadow
2. Introduction: Post-War Boom, Railroads, and Growth
3. The Bridge I: 1867–69
4. Tammany Hall and the Tweed Ring
5. Al Smith
6. Interlude I: Panic of 1873; J.P. Morgan; Edison and District One
7. The Bridge II: 1882 Opening
8. Interlude II: The Rich, Statue of Liberty, Henry George Campaign
9. Sidewalks of New York
10. Jacob Riis and the Poor
11. Greater New York: Consolidation of 1898
RESOURCES

Books

Nonfiction

Fiction

Web Sites
Harpweek http://www.harpweek.com
The Gilded Page http://www.wm.edu/~srnels/gilded.html
Cartoons of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era http://www.history.ohio-state.edu/projects/uscartoons/GAPECartoons.htm

Episode Four

The Power and the People (1898–1914)

Wednesday, November 16, 9–11 P.M.

**SCENE LIST**

1. Prologue: Emma Lazarus
2. Introduction: Birth of the Movies
3. The New Immigration: Ellis Island
4. Skyscrapers
5. Al Smith in Albany
6. Immigrant Energy: The Lower East Side
7. Building the City: Subways & Grand Central and Penn Stations
8. Hudson-Fulton Celebration 1909
9. Progressive Reform: Public Health and Housing
10. Women's Garment Strikes of 1909 & 1910
11. Triangle Fire and Factory Commission
12. Epilogue: Governor Smith

**VOCABULARY**

**general strike**: an organized work stoppage across a number of industries to force employers to meet demands

**greenhorn**: a newly arrived immigrant to the U.S.

**progressive movement**: a widespread political effort to promote social improvement through government action

**skyscraper**: an extremely tall building

**sweatshop**: a small factory in which workers are employed for long hours at low wages in unsafe conditions

**tenement**: an apartment house in the city that meets minimum standards for safety and comfort

**PLACE**

**Ellis Island**: island in New York Bay; the point of entry into the U.S. for sixteen million immigrants between the years 1892–1924

**Flatiron Building**: unusual skyscraper erected in 1902

**Lower East Side**: neighborhood of tenements in lower Manhattan known for its large population of immigrants

**Times Square**: section of midtown Manhattan centered at the intersection of Seventh Avenue and Broadway

**Triangle Shirtwaist Factory**: garment-manufacturing company that was the site of the worst factory fire in New York City's history

**RESOURCES**

Books

Nonfiction

Fiction


Web sites

Ellis Island http://www.ellisisland.org/
On the Lower East Side: Observations of Life in Lower Manhattan at the Turn of the Century http://acad.smumn.edu/history/contents.html
From “Shepp’s New York City Illustrated” http://acad.smumn.edu/manhattan/TOC.html
The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/cover.html

Background photo: © COLLECTION OF THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
**New York: A Documentary Film**

**Episode Five**

**Cosmopolis (1914–1931)**

Thursday, November 17, 9–11 P.M.

**Scene List**

1. Prologue: City of Desire
2. Introduction: Homecoming 1919
3. The Boom
4. This Side of Paradise: F. Scott Fitzgerald
5. The Red Scare
6. Mongrel Manhattan: Harlem, Jazz, and Broadway
7. Sell Them Their Dreams: Midtown, Radio, and Advertising
8. Celebrity
9. Ambivalence: NY vs. America
10. Fitzgerald II
11. Al Smith for President 1928
12. Skyscraper War
13. The Crash
14. Empire State Building

**People**

**Louis Armstrong**
(1901–1971): jazz trumpeter and singer

**Duke Ellington**
(1899–1974): jazz composer, bandleader, and pianist

**F. Scott Fitzgerald**
(1896–1940): novelist and short-story writer

**George Gershwin**
(1898–1937): composer

**Langston Hughes**
(1902–1967): poet and playwright

**Midtown:** the center of Manhattan, between 34th and 59th Streets, and the site of the Chrysler Building, the Empire State Building, and Rockefeller Center

**Times Square:** a section of midtown Manhattan known for entertainment, named for the nearby New York Times building on 43rd Street

**Resources**

**Books**

Nonfiction

Essays

Fiction

Poetry

**Web Sites**

- The Jazz Age Page http://www.btinternet.com/~dreklind/threetwo/Jazzhome.htm
- Rhapsodies in Black http://www.iniva.org/harlem/home.html
- Jazz Roots: Early Jazz on Jass.com http://jass.com/
- Zora Neale Hurston http://i.am/zora

**Vocabulary**

- **Black Tuesday:** October 29, 1929, the date on which the stock market lost over $14 billion
- **Isolationism:** a national policy of avoiding international political or economic relationships
- **Jazz Age:** the 1920s boom in commerce and popular culture
- **Speakeasy:** a place where alcoholic drinks are sold illegally
- **Speculation:** taking on unusual risk in a business transaction with the hope of great gains
- **Suffragettes:** women who advocate for a woman’s right to vote
- **Xenophobia:** fear and hatred of foreigners or of anything that is foreign
### Episode Six


Airing in Spring, 2000

(The scene list for this episode was not available at press time.)

### VOCABULARY

**adaptive re-use:** renovating old buildings and using them for new purposes

**Great Depression:** period of great economic hardship beginning with the stock market crash in 1929

**New Deal:** 1930s federal aid programs created by Franklin Roosevelt’s administration in response to the Depression

**parkways:** landscaped, limited-access highways, many of which were built by Robert Moses

**Title I:** federal program for urban rebuilding, frequently used to destroy older buildings

### PEOPLE

**Jane Jacobs (1916–):** author

**John Lindsay (1921–):** mayor of New York, 1965–1973

**Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (1908–1972):** congressman, minister, and civil rights leader


### PLACES

**Jones Beach:** public beach on Long Island, opened in 1929

**Levittown:** Long Island suburb featuring low-cost, pre-assembly housing

**Triborough Bridge:** three-bridge structure, opened in 1936, linking Manhattan, the Bronx, and Queens

### RESOURCES

#### Books

**Nonfiction**


**Fiction**


#### Web Sites

- Triborough Bridge (I-278) [http://www.nycroads.com/crossings/triborough/](http://www.nycroads.com/crossings/triborough/)
- LIHistory.com: The Master Builder (Robert Moses) [http://www.lihistory.com/7/hs722a.htm](http://www.lihistory.com/7/hs722a.htm)
- A Close-Up View, Warts and All, of an Arrogant, Endearing Man (Robert Moses) [http://www.lihistory.com/7/hs722b.htm](http://www.lihistory.com/7/hs722b.htm)

### General Interest Resources

**BOOKS**


**WEB SITES**

- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture [http://www.nypl.org/research/sc](http://www.nypl.org/research/sc)