

Lesson 4: CHANGES in a CITY OVER TIME

grade level: elementary (2-6)

► OVERVIEW

As population, transportation, businesses, and other elements change in a city, so does the urban landscape. Students will compare and contrast images of New York City's streets and skyline to infer how and why the city changes. They will draw conclusions related to city planning and the development of skyscrapers. Using this knowledge, they will make informed predictions of future or past New York City skylines.

► GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How and why do cities change?
- Why are laws needed to govern the way a city develops?
- What types of structures should be considered landmarks?



► MATERIALS and PREPARATION

- Make copies for each student of Activity Sheets 1 and 2.
- Make copies of Historic New York City Skylines for small groups.
- Supply art materials, including typing paper, rulers, posterboard or butcher paper, colored pencils, markers, compasses, erasers, index cards, yarn, and thumbtacks.
- The night before, encourage students to bring in postcards, books, or newspaper clippings of city skylines and prominent buildings. These can be incorporated into the lesson introduction or into the morning message to invest students in their learning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Examine images to determine how and why New York City has changed over time.
- Understand how cities plan for growth and change.
- Understand the role of the skyscraper in New York City history.
- Consider choices in urban development.
- Illustrate a hypothetical skyline of New York City supported with logical reasons based on observations.

► MATERIALS to download

- Activity Sheet 1: Changes in New York City Over Time
- Activity Sheet 2: Manhattan Street Map
- Historic New York City Skylines

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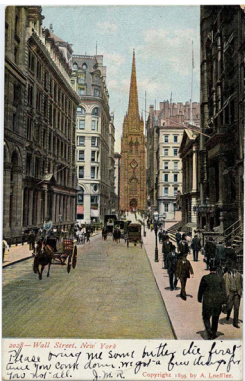
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► VOCABULARY

City Planning	Actions taken by a city to control the growth and development of public spaces, streets, and buildings
Landmark	A building or place with historic importance (the White House), a strong identity (the Empire State Building), or distinct characteristics (the Pentagon)
Urban	Related to a large city or town
Zoning Laws	Laws that manage the planning and growth of public spaces, streets, and buildings for different parts of a city

► I. INTRODUCTION: *WHAT DOES URBAN CHANGE LOOK LIKE?*

- Students will work in pairs to complete Activity Sheet 1: Changes in a City Over Time. Students should practice close looking in order to note as many details as possible about each image.
- As a class, discuss observations recorded on the chart, particularly those related to specific buildings and changes in urban life.
- Provide students with background information for each picture.



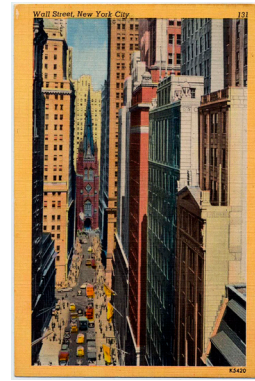
1895

View of Wall Street looking west toward Trinity church. Wall Street has gone through many changes over time. In fact every building pictured here was replaced again by 1930.



1909

View of Wall street looking west towards Trinity Church. In a matter of just fifteen years, automobiles had replaced horse-drawn carts, and skyscrapers had already replaced many of the post-Civil War building on Wall Street.



1940

View of Wall Street, looking west towards Trinity Church. The late 1920s and early 1930s saw an explosion of construction on Wall Street that transformed it into the canyon of skyscrapers pictured.

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▶ II. CONTENT BUILDING: *HOW IS URBAN CHANGE MANAGED?*

Guide students from discussion of the introductory activity to the following concepts.

- Buildings that have special historical or architectural significance, or a strong identity are called **landmarks** and may be protected from demolition. Can you find any landmarks in the pictures on Activity Sheet 1?
- **Zoning laws** regulate how land is used in cities. For example, these laws control the size of a building on its lot, or uses in its neighborhood, such as residential or commercial zones. These laws also affect park, street, and sidewalk space. What zoning laws may exist in New York, based on your observations of Activity Sheet 1? What zoning laws may exist in your neighborhood?
- **City planning** is a practice that ensures the needs of a city are met. For example, some **urban** areas need to plan to make sure there are enough schools, parks, trees and grass. Could you see any parks or greenery in the pictures on Activity Sheet 1?
- **City planners** also make sure people have access to many forms of transportation, such as sidewalks for walking, subways, buses, bicycles and roads for cars. Can you think of anything else a city planner may be responsible for?

▶ III. APPLICATION and EVALUATION: *HOW CAN URBAN CHANGE BE ANTICIPATED?*

- Give small groups of students the set of three images from Historic New York City Skylines (see Materials to Download).



c. 1925

This view of Lower Manhattan shows the waterfront ringed by shipping piers and a concentration of skyscrapers in the center. The tallest tower at the center, near City Hall, is the 792-foot Woolworth Building, the tallest in the world when completed in 1913.



1975

Aerial view of Lower Manhattan, from southwest, showing the World Trade Center and the beginnings of Battery Park City, which would be created on landfill that covered the old piers. The view demonstrates the extreme changes in Lower Manhattan's skyline over the 50 years of skyscraper building.



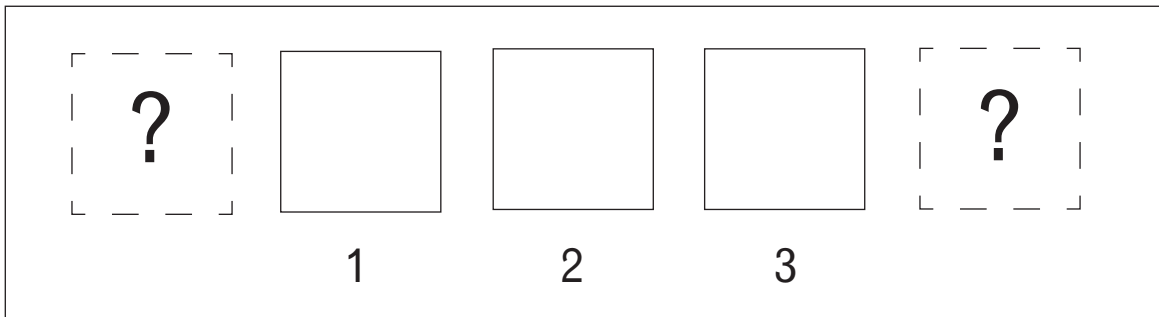
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Aerial view of Lower Manhattan from the harbor. Battery Park City can be seen on the west (left) side of the island. High-rise buildings now rise on the landfill started with the foundations of the World Trade Center, which was destroyed in 2001.

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- Students will work collaboratively to note details that will allow them to put these images in chronological order.
- Using art materials, students will then create one historic and one futuristic image of New York City to bookend their sequence of images. Remind students to focus on details such as people, transportation, technology, greenspace, landmarks, and other factors that distinguish the past and envision the future. They may consider the following questions:
 - How does technology affect the size and height of buildings?
 - How does population influence the need for buildings and public space?
 - What makes a city comfortable and convenient to live in?
 - What buildings or other structures make a city unique?
- Create a classroom gallery by giving students a posterboard or butcher paper on which to affix their images chronologically (as illustrated below).



- Distribute index cards, yarn, and thumbtacks so students can label and explain the various parts of their drawings using vocabulary terms and concepts from this and other lessons.
- Allow students to view one another's gallery images. They should discuss their observations, particularly if they saw something they found interesting or well thought out. Possible questions to stimulate discussion include:
 - What buildings did you add/remove? Why?
 - What transportation and greenspaces are visible? Explain the reasons for these.
 - What landmarks are in your skyline? Why are they landmarks?

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Supplementary Material: NYC Historic Skylines



1899

View of Lower Manhattan, looking east from Hoboken, NJ. The area that would become the World Trade Center is in the center of the view. The tallest building in this picture is the new 32-story Park Row Building, the tallest office building in the world at the time.



1915

View of Lower Manhattan, looking east across the Hudson River. The skyline of Lower Manhattan was transformed during the first decades of the 20th century by an array of new, increasingly tall office buildings. This image records three "tallest buildings in the world," built within thirteen years of each other (The Park Row, Singer and Woolworth Buildings).

- Use these images to compare students' visions of the New York City skyline before 1925 to what it actually looked like. You may consider asking the same questions as above to stimulate discussion.

► PART IV. INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS & LEARNING EXTENSIONS

- Use Activity Sheet 2 as a basis for discussion around the geometry and density of New York City streets. Note how streets in Lower Manhattan are placed closely together and are more often at angles other than right angles. Students may also know from experience that these streets are also narrower than the streets farther north. As city planning improved, streets became better laid out and clear numeric labeling systems came into use.

► New York State LEARNING STANDARDS

- Social Studies Standard 1
- English Language Arts Standards 1 and 3