

KEY TEACHING STRATEGIES

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The Skyscraper Museum's programs and educational materials rely on **object-based inquiry**. This approach requires close looking and critical analysis of the documents and images used to create and represent skyscrapers as part of our built environment. By exploring the material culture of skyscraper design and construction, students will learn about New York City and some of its most characteristic and majestic buildings. They will come to appreciate the role skyscrapers have played in the history and development of New York City as one of the world's most important centers of business and culture.

Why object-based inquiry?

The Tower Tube includes photographs, historic drawings and images, maps, and plans used in the design and construction of New York City skyscrapers. These objects and images provide information about the people, places, and ideas that shape the world in which we live. Asking questions about the buildings seen every day, how they came to be, and how they have changed over time helps to understand the past, present, and future possibilities of the city in which we live.

Object-based inquiry teaches students to use what they already know to uncover new meanings. Through careful observation, students practice the skills of inquiry, analysis, and inference to find and examine evidence, make connections to their own experiences, and support conclusions based on evidence and reasoning.

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Teachers are encouraged to use the methods of object-based learning to support the following social studies skills¹:

Thinking

- Identifying cause and effect
- Drawing inferences and making conclusions
- Evaluating
- Handling diversity of interpretations

Research and Writing

- Getting information
- Organizing information
- Interpreting information
- Analyzing information
- Synthesizing information

Sequencing and Chronology

- Using the vocabulary of time and chronology
- Placing events in chronological order
- Understanding the concepts of time, continuity, and change

Graph and Image Analysis

- Decoding images
- Interpreting images
- Making predictions

¹ From New York State Social Studies Instructional Strategies

LEARNING STANDARDS

CONNECTION TO SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING STANDARDS

While the topic of skyscrapers is interdisciplinary in nature, the Tower Tube resources ideally connect to the subject of social studies and the skills of historical analysis. Students engage in critical thinking while focusing on the history of the skyscraper in New York City and themes related to the historical development of the city's urban environment.

Using the resources in this kit, students will

- Practice inquiry skills for *close looking* at the materials and architectural tools.
- Examine evidence to interpret the role of skyscrapers in the built environment.
- Make inferences about the socio-historical context of specific skyscrapers in New York City.
- Discuss and debate the development of skyscrapers and the social, political, and economic development of New York City.

The content and activities in this guide support the New York State Social Studies Learning Standards 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 for elementary and intermediate levels.