

# CHANGES in a CITY OVER TIME

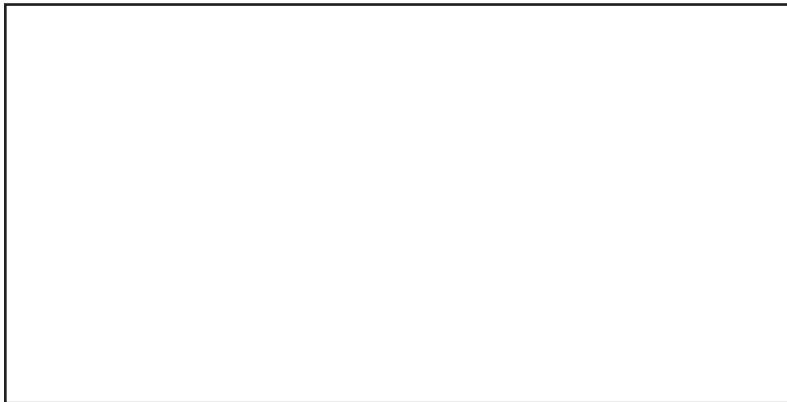
grade level: elementary (2-6)

## ► OVERVIEW

Students will use compare/contrast skills to analyze the changes in the New York City skyline over time. They will infer how and why cities change. They will draw conclusions regarding the need for governance to control or direct city development. Using this knowledge, they will make informed predictions of future or past New York City skylines.

## ► GUIDING QUESTIONS

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



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Identify differences in the New York City skyline over time and the reasons for those changes.
- Define city planning and give present examples of planning considerations from historical documents and the world around them.
- Construct a hypothetical skyline of New York City and support these artistic choices with logical reasons based on observations.

## ► MATERIALS to download

- Student Activity Sheets 1 & 2
- [www.skyscraper.org/viva](http://www.skyscraper.org/viva)  
View and print an assortment of images, enough for each pair of students to have 2-3 documents. You may make multiple copies of a single set of images, or create a variety of sets.

## ► MATERIALS and PREPARATION

- Make copies of Student Activity Sheets.
- Assemble art materials for each group, according to availability. These may include, but are not limited to, typing paper, rulers, posterboard or butcher paper, colored pencils, markers, compasses, erasers, notecards, yarn, and thumbtacks.
- Students may be encouraged to bring in their own postcards, books, or newspaper clippings of city skylines or prominent buildings. These can be incorporated into the lesson introduction or into the morning message to invest students in their learning.

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## ► VOCABULARY

**City Planning:** Actions taken by the city to set rules for controlling public spaces, streets, and private 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 the city passes to manage planning and growth. In New York City, zoning laws determine how buildings are used, and may also affect their shape, height, parking spaces, number of bathrooms, etc.

## ► PART I. INTRODUCTION



Distribute Student Activity Sheet 1 and 2-3 images of different New York City skylines to each pair. Give students about 5-10 minutes to study the images and complete the activity.

## ► PART II. VOCABULARY AND CONCEPT BUILDING

Bring students back together to discuss their observations. Use the following questions to generate student discussion and help them inductively discover key concepts.

- Which skylines seem to be older? Which are more recent? How do you know?
- What buildings appeared in both pictures? Which buildings are no longer pictured? Why do you think some buildings are preserved and others aren't?
- When a building is torn down and replaced with a newer building, what seems to be true of the newer buildings?
- Consider many other aspects of the pictures in addition to the buildings. What about people, plants/trees, and types of transportation? Compare/contrast the various components of the different images. Consider a Venn Diagram to highlight the comparisons.

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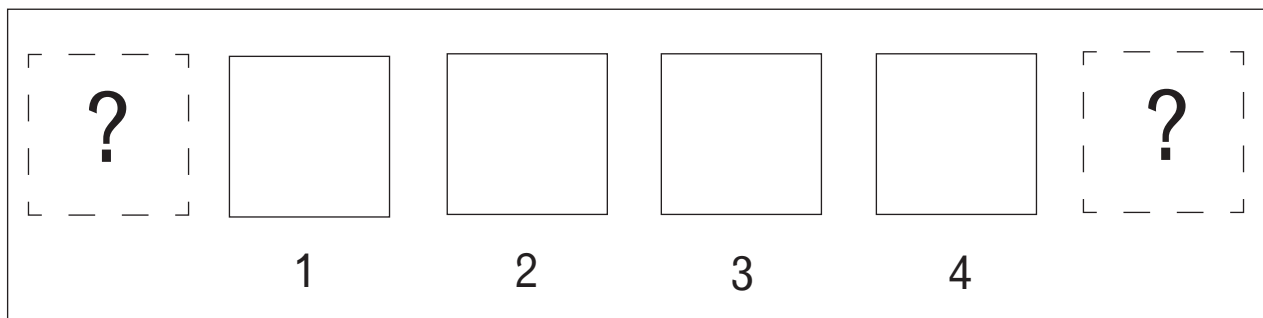
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Facilitate students in sharing their ideas with the whole class through group discussion, on chart paper, or a white board. Discussion conclusions may include, but should not be limited to:

- Older buildings, or buildings that have special historical or architectural significance may be preserved. *These are called **landmarks**.*
- Since space is valuable in a city, older buildings may be replaced by taller buildings. *In order to prevent an area from being completely covered in skyscrapers, offices, apartments, or parking lots, cities use **zoning laws** to govern construction and use.*
- Parks, trees and grass make an **urban** area feel more comfortable and livable. *Before the science of **city planning** was developed, areas were not always set aside for greenery.*
- It is important to have space for transportation, including walking, cars, boats/ferries, buses, and subways. *A **city planner** is responsible for these tasks.*

## ► PART III. PROBLEM SOLVING GROUP WORK

Distribute another postcard to each group, or combine groups so that each team of two or four has 3-4 images from different time periods. Engage students to collaboratively put these images in chronological order based on their discussion and analysis. Students will then create an additional image of their own to show the New York City skyline in either the future or the distant past. This may be larger than the others for ease of drawing. Suggest a time 50 years in the future, or 50 years before their earliest postcard. The postcard can/should include various aspects to indicate historical or futuristic indications (as the other postcards have modeled).



You may choose to give students poster paper on which to affix their images chronologically. Students should create an image that precedes the others in time, or one that envisions the future.

Remind students to think about population, transportation, space, technology, and other factors that would affect the height/size of the buildings, the proximity of structures to one another, the number of trees, etc. Give students 10-15 minutes to create their image.

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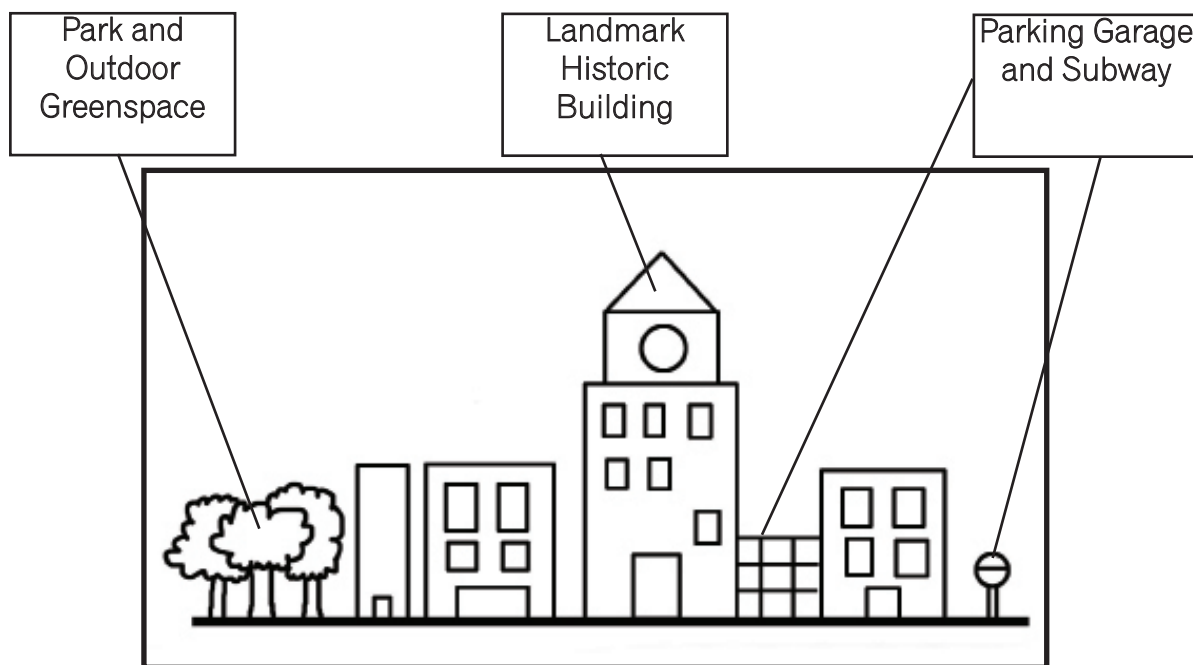
## Reflecting & Debriefing

For reflection, match teams of students together to share about their cityscapes/skylines. Students should discuss their original skylines for 5 minutes using the following questions:

- 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?

Bring the class back together, and ask if anyone saw something in the image of another group that they found particularly interesting or well thought out. As students share, remind them to use vocabulary from this and other lessons where appropriate.

You may choose to hang displays, as below, or simply hand individual student artwork. Give students note cards, yarn, and thumbtacks to label and explain various elements of their illustrations.



Students may provide explanations of their skyline on notecards (above), or you may choose to assign a paragraph or two of explanation

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## ► PART V. INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS & LEARNING EXTENSIONS

- Print grid/street map of Manhattan (Student Activity Sheet 2). Invite students to record observations relating to the geometry and density of the streets. For example, 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

## ► New York State LEARNING STANDARDS

- Social Studies Standard 1: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.
- English Language Arts Standard 1: Students will listen, speak, read, and write for information and understanding. Students will collect data, facts, and ideas; and discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.
- English Language Arts Standard 3: Students will listen, speak, read, and write for critical analysis and evaluation. Students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to present, from a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information and issues.