

Timeformations Webquest

Visit to www.skyscraper.org. On the right side of the page, you will see a menu of options, including Web Projects. Select “Manhattan Timeformations,” to complete the following Webquest.

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Introduction

It is the year 2309, and you recently learned in your history class that Manhattan used to be covered with tall buildings called skyscrapers. This claim is astounding, as you know Manhattan as an off-shore island for adventure vacations.

As part of your studies, your teacher has provided a recently discovered computer program from 300 years ago that will illustrate the growth of the Manhattan skyline during its most active years. This program will help you to distinguish the old layers of New York’s skyline to explore patterns of building construction across different economic cycles.

Timeformations Webquest

Part One

1 Click on the *TIME* rectangle in the lower left hand corner. Click on the text, “*MANHATTAN THROUGH TIME: TIMEFORMATIONS.*”

Timeformations reveals the development of New York City over the last four centuries and the growth of high-rise office buildings from the last decade of the 19th century through the 21st century. The New York skyline has changed dramatically over time and continues to evolve as new construction projects develop. The map that appears on your screen shows the multiple layers of construction that have developed over time.

2 Look at the bottom of the *Timeformations* page and click on the grey text that says “*TRANSPARENT NEW YORK.*”

On this map, you can see the development of New York by using a number of different tools. To the right of the map you should see a timeline of Office Buildings. To the left is a list of elements that make up the infrastructure of New York City, including the layout of Manhattan’s roadways, transportation systems, and street patterns.

3 Select the grey box next to *DUTCH SETTLEMENT* in the key to the left to see the location and extent of the 17th century Dutch colony.

When the Dutch first settled Manhattan, where did they choose to build? Suggest at least two factors that might have influenced where they built. Suggest two different factors that might have limited the size of the settlement.

4 Next, click on *BRITISH COLONIZATION* in the key to the left.

Describe what happened to the Dutch settlement when the British took over. (British rule of the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam, renamed New York City, lasted from 1664 until the conclusion of the Revolutionary War in 1783.) Use at least three specific adjectives.

5 Finally, select *LANDFILL, GRIDS, and 1811 GRIDS.*

Now you should see a more expansive map of New York, similar to what exists today. Where does “landfill” appear on this map? What is landfill? What do “grids” represent?

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Part Two

You will now examine specific periods of construction using close-ups of the two major areas of skyscraper construction: Lower Manhattan and Midtown.

Click on either of these words to open up a new, larger view of this area of Manhattan. Use the key on the right side of the map to compare the construction of high-rise office buildings during different periods of New York City's history. Use the list on the left side to understand some of the other types of construction.

Look at the periods of construction listed on the right. Suggest two reasons why the years might be grouped as they are (e.g., 1893-1916, 1917-1940).

What two time periods appear to have the most construction for each area?

What do you notice about the change in the rate of office building construction from 1999 – 2005 as compared to the other time periods?

Provide two other observations or inferences based on your examination of this "Timeformation."

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Part Three

Based on the information you collected above and using the computer program as a reference, complete one of the following activities. Use both facts and observations to support your work.

Select a timeframe during which you might have liked to be a resident of Manhattan. Write a paragraph explaining when and why you would have wanted to live in New York City.

Think about how long it took for New York City to go from a Dutch settlement to a densely built environment. Attempt to create a line graph (or another representation) to show the relationship between specific time periods and urban growth.

Imagine you are a guide on a double decker tour bus with a group of tourists who have never visited New York City. A man raises his hand and asks, "Since Manhattan is famous for its skyscrapers, I thought we would see them everywhere. I see now, however, that this is not true. Can you please explain?" In a short paragraph, answer the tourist's question by explaining why you think Manhattan's high-rise office buildings are clustered together in Midtown and Downtown.