

VIVA Webquest

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

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Introduction

Congratulations! The Skyscraper Museum has hired you to curate an exhibition called, "Changes in a City Over Time," using images from the Museum's website.

Your exhibit will explain how skyscrapers have shaped New York City's skyline and how skyscraper construction and design have developed over time. Use the Webquest that follows to acquaint yourself with New York City's architectural history, and to look for images that you may want to include in your exhibit.

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A Note on Navigation

1 VIVA will open in a new window.

2 In the bottom of the window, click on the tab that says "Explore by...". What appears next are 6 different ways to view the Museum's archive of digitized images. Click on "Timelines."

3 One at a time, click on each timeline listed below and follow the instructions for each location to answer the accompanying questions. After completing the task for each timeline, click the "close" button at the top right corner of each window to return to the complete list of timelines.

Please note that each image has a menu immediately below it that includes the option, "Enlarge image." Select to see details of the image more clearly. Select "Shrink image" to return to the original size.

VIVA Webquest

Part One Battery Park

Scroll to the earliest date on the timeline. Click on the images and read the captions for the years c. 1900 and c. 1907 to answer the questions.

c. 1900 / Describe the structures in this image that represent the buildings of “the 18th and 19th centuries that skyscrapers of the 20th century replace.”

c. 1907 / Trains in New York City were originally built above ground. What motives can you think of for moving them underground and removing the above-ground rails?

Using your responses to the questions above, describe the changes in the way the land is used in this part of lower Manhattan in the early 20th century.

Part Two Wall Street

Scroll to the earliest date on the timeline. Click on the images and read the captions for the years 1895, c. 1908, and 1920s to answer the questions.

1895 / What does it mean that “banks and insurance companies consolidated wealth during the city’s Gilded Age”?

c 1908 / Which building on Wall Street dominated the area until the turn of the 20th century? To what architectural feature can that dominance be attributed?

1920s / Look back to the street image of 1895. What do you notice about the prominence of Trinity Church in 1920 versus 1895? What other changes have taken place on Wall Street in these 25 years? Use the names of the buildings given in the captions for each image to better understand who was responsible for the changes.

Using your responses to the questions above, write two sentences summarizing the changes on Wall Street from the 19th to the 20th century. Why would having an address on Wall Street be valuable to a company, especially a bank ?

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Part Three Downtown NYC Skyline

Scroll to the earliest date on the timeline. Click on the images and read the captions for the years c. 1901, c. 1903, and the 1930s to answer the questions.

c. 1901 / What economic changes contributed to the need for office space, and consequently new skyscrapers, in the late 19th century?

c. 1903 / What new technologies enabled large skyscraper construction in the early 20th century?

1930s / According to the caption, how long would the Manhattan skyline remain as it appears in this image? Why had the skyline changed considerably in the years leading up to the 1930s?

Using your responses to the questions above, write two sentences describing how economic and technological changes affected the New York City skyline from 1901 through the 1930s?

Part Four World Trade Center Site

Scroll to the earliest date on the timeline. Click on the images and read the captions for the years 1910, c. 1930, c. 1975 to answer the questions.

1910 / What do you think are the advantages of combining commercial office space with a railroad terminal?

c. 1930: From this view of the Financial District of lower Manhattan, does it appear that more skyscrapers are located on the edges or the center of the city? What kinds of structures occupy the riverfront?

c. 1975: What structures are gone from the coastline and what is in their place? Hint: In this context, “infill” means “landfill.”

What can you conclude about the pattern of expansion of high-rise office buildings in lower Manhattan between 1930 and 1975?

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Part Five Presentation

Select any 5-7 images from the VIVA image database for your “Changes in a City Over Time” exhibition. Write captions for each that includes the source of the image, its date, and a brief description (written in your own words) explaining why this image is an important representation of New York City’s history, and how it relates to the exhibition’s theme.