

The Best of the Fair

Lesson 1: Vocabulary Game

Focus Questions

Why was the World's Fair an important part of Chicago and world history? What were some of the groundbreaking innovations showcased for the first time in Chicago in 1893? What about Chicago appeals to or excites people?

Core Understandings

Students will understand that the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition helped secure Chicago's status as a major city and cultural center after the Great Fire of 1871. Chicago's geographic location and features attracted people from diverse places, making it a trade and transportation hub.

Knowledge

Students will know that the World's Columbian Exposition was a significant historical event—locally, nationally, and internationally. They will gain an understanding of how Chicago evolved in the geographic area represented in the narrative.

Skills

Students will be able to recognize, define, and use important vocabulary in context. They will use language arts skills to interpret the past. They will be able to discern fact from fiction.

Common Core ELA Standards

CCSSR1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSSR4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

ISBE Social Science Standards

Goal 15: Understand economic systems, with an emphasis on the US.

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the US, and other nations.

Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society, with an emphasis on the US.

Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the US.

In This Lesson

By engaging students with an imaginative bulletin-board display and vocabulary game, students will learn about Chicago's status as a center for innovation at the time of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Story elements of setting, character, obstacles/problems, and resolution are addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Beatrice Quatroche.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Activity

Prior to the lesson, create a bulletin-board display about Chicago and the World's Fair in the 1890s to serve as a central resource for students. Use printouts of the artifact images from *The Best of the Fair*. Additional image sources are listed under the Materials & Resources section. http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_fair.pdf

Next consult the vocabulary words that accompany *The Best of the Fair*. Write each word large on a piece of construction or butcher-block paper and post around the room. (You may wish to incorporate them into your bulletin-board display.) Write the definitions on separate pieces of paper, reserving them until later in the lesson. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/worldsfair/vocabulary.php>

When class begins, distribute individual copies of *The Best of the Fair* to each student. http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/The_Best_of_the_Fair_by_Kris_Nesbitt.pdf

Read the story aloud to the class, asking students to highlight the vocabulary words in their copies as they read along. They should also write down what they think the words mean. To enhance the activity, have students write on sticky notes.

When you are finished reading, go through the vocabulary words one by one and have students try to define them. Or have the students stick their notes under the appropriate vocabulary word. Next, bring out the correct definitions one by one and have students match them to the correct words. They can volunteer individually or vote as a group.

Finally, have students create a list of their top five new inventions to see at the World's Fair and explain why they chose them.

Materials & Resources

- **Printouts of *The Best of the Fair* narrative:** http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/The_Best_of_the_Fair_by_Kris_Nesbitt.pdf
- **Printouts of *The Best of the Fair* artifact image set:**
http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_fair.pdf
- ***The Best of the Fair* vocabulary words:**
<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/worldsfair/vocabulary.php>
- **Three of the Chicago History Museum's History Lab lessons provide excellent images for the bulletin-board display:**
 - “**The World's Fair of 1893: A Tribute to Agriculture and Advertising**”
http://chicagohistory.org/static_media/pdf/historylab/CHM-historylabCWFL2.pdf
 - “**What Is Art? Planning a Public Art Program**”
http://chicagohistory.org/static_media/pdf/historylab/CHM-historylabCWFL1.pdf
 - “**The First Ferris Wheel**”
<http://www.chicagohistory.org/education/resources/history-lab/the-first-ferris-wheel>
- ***American Family of the 1890s: Paper Dolls in Full Color* by Tom Tierney** (includes detailed illustrations of the clothing of the era)
- ***The Chicago World's Fair of 1893: A Photographic Record* by Stanley Appelbaum** (includes 128 vintage photographs; available for checkout at many Chicago Public Library branches)
- **Construction or butcher-block paper**
- **Sticky notes** (optional)

Instructional Notes

As you read the story, you may wish to point out the corresponding artifact images on your bulletin board to help students connect the primary source material to the text.

Extension Activities

“The First Ferris Wheel,” one of the Chicago History Museum’s History Lab lessons, offers a number of valuable learning activities about this awesome engineering achievement.

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/education/resources/history-lab/the-first-ferris-wheel>