

# The Best of the Fair

## Lesson 4: New Product Advertisement

### Focus Questions

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

### 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 express new information orally and in writing. They will use language arts skills to interpret the past and gain an understanding of how works of art are produced.

### 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.

CCSSR3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.W.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

### 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.

### ISBE Fine Arts Standard

Goal 26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

### In This Lesson

By creating their own advertisement for a new product (circa 1893), students will strengthen their understanding of Chicago as a center for innovation and the World's Fair as a showcase for new technologies. This lesson was researched and written by Beatrice Quatroke.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

## Activity

Prior to the lesson, gather the following products (or some representation of them) for a class presentation of foods introduced for the first time at the 1893 World's Fair: Cracker Jack, Aunt Jemima syrup, Cream of Wheat cereal, Juicy Fruit gum, hamburgers, and diet soda. Begin by asking students if they can guess what the products all have in common.

Break students into small groups and give each group one of the products. Have them create an advertisement touting the product, imagining that no one has ever heard of, seen, or tasted it. Be sure to have students include the best thing about the product, why people should try it, what they will love about it, and, of course, a catchy slogan. Students can imitate the graphic style of the 1890s using the World's Fair guidebook cover as an example (included in the artifact image set). You may also be able to find other examples of vintage advertising for students to follow on the Internet.

When the ads are finished, have each group present their creative work to the entire class as if they were "selling" the product to people who have never seen or heard of it.

## Materials & Resources

- Cracker Jack, Aunt Jemima syrup, Cream of Wheat cereal, Juicy Fruit gum, hamburgers, and diet soda (or some representation of them)
- Drawing supplies
- Printouts of *The Best of the Fair* narrative:  
[http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/The\\_Best\\_of\\_the\\_Fair\\_by\\_Kris\\_Nesbitt.pdf](http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/The_Best_of_the_Fair_by_Kris_Nesbitt.pdf)

## Instructional Notes

It may be helpful to have examples of contemporary ads from magazines or other sources for students to follow. Products such as Cracker Jack and Juicy Fruit can be given to students as a treat or prize for the best ad. Add the completed advertisements to your bulletin-board display, created in Lesson 1.

## Extension Activities

Have students design an ad featuring what they find to be the most exciting new technology introduced at the fair. The intramural railway was the first elevated electric railway ever built. The electric boats, moveable sidewalk, Ferris wheel, telephone, internal combustion engine, and kinetoscope (which showed moving pictures) were also revolutionary exhibits. This activity may be assigned as a Home Connection.