

Joseph's Railroad Dreams

Lesson 1: Then and Now

Focus Questions

What did Chicago look like in the 1890s? What was it like to live in Chicago during the 1890s? What were trains like in the 1890s? How have trains changed since the 1890s? How do photographs provide clues about life in the past?

Core Understandings

Students will begin to understand that the railroads are an important part of Chicago's history. They will understand that Chicago has experienced a lot of transformations, but, while some things have changed, certain things always remain the same.

Knowledge

Students will know how people dressed, lived, worked, and played in 1890s Chicago as well as some similarities and difference between that era and today. Students will know that the railroads altered Chicago's urban landscape and played a prominent role in its evolution.

Skills

Students will use their collective and independent research skills to uncover information about life and the railroads in Chicago at the end of the 19th century. They will make observations, create interpretations, and draw conclusions from historical sources.

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.

CCSSR7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSSW2. 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 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.

In This Lesson

Students will take a virtual train ride back in time to experience Chicago in the 1890s. They will stop at, study, and reflect upon various "stations" depicting the architecture, lifestyles, and clothing of the past and, through writing and drawing, compare them to today. The story elements of opening and setting are addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Hollie Ware.



Activity

Before the lesson begins, hang photographs and illustrations from the 1890s in “stations” around the classroom, organized under headings such as clothing, buildings, work, play, and transportation (make sure to include train images). If possible, enhance the experience by playing music from the era. Have students choose one image they are particularly drawn to from each station and write down what they find most interesting about it. Allow time for students to discuss their observations.

Next lead students through a demonstration of the map interactive for *Joseph's Railroad Dreams*, noting the differences between Chicago in the 1890s and Chicago today.

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/site/storymap/index.html?story=1>

Lesson 1 Home Connection

Have students draw one of the objects, clothing items, or buildings from the 1890s that they observed in class next to a similar object from today, illustrating the differences between then and now.

Materials & Resources

- **Computer access for students in the classroom**
- **Images of the 1890s era. Suggested sources include printouts of the *Joseph's Railroad Dreams* artifact image set:**
http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_joseph.pdf
- **Interesting photographs can also be found in the following History Lab lessons from the *Chicago History Museum* website.**
“Chicago’s World’s Fairs”:
<http://chicagohistory.org/education/resources/history-lab/chicago-s-world-s-fairs>
“The First Ferris Wheel”:
<http://chicagohistory.org/education/resources/history-lab/the-first-ferris-wheel>
- ***A City Comes of Age: Chicago in the 1890s* by Susan E. Hirsch and Robert I. Goler, (available for checkout at the Harold Washington Library or for purchase at the Chicago History Museum store):**
<http://www.chicagotogo.org/citcomofagec.html>
- ***Chicago at the Turn of the Century in Photographs* by Larry A. Viskochil (features 122 historic views from the collection of the Chicago History Museum. Available for checkout at many Chicago Public Library branches and for purchase at the Chicago History Museum store):**
<http://www.chicagotogo.org/chicatturofc.html>
- ***American Family of the 1890s: Paper Dolls in Full Color* by Tom Tierney (includes detailed illustrations of the clothing of the era)**

Instructional Notes

You may want to create an artifact worksheet on which students can note their observations. The size of the worksheet will depend on how many “stations” you choose to create in the classroom. Consult the Classroom Activities section of the *Great Chicago Stories* website for worksheet tips and examples (listed under the Artifact Analysis tab).

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/classroom/artifact.php>

If time allows, lead a class discussion about social differences between the 1890s and the present.

Extension Activities

Take a field trip to the Chicago History Museum to see the Pioneer, Chicago's first locomotive from 1848 and Chicago's first “L” car, built in 1892.

Have students design a set for reader's theater (to be performed in Lesson 4).