



Dear Middle School Teacher,

Thank you for bringing your class to view *Timescapes: A Multimedia Portrait of New York*. Attached are several activity sheets designed to encourage your students to engage in the content of the documentary. Instructions are below.

Important things to keep in mind:

- *Timescapes* is a 22-minute documentary that runs on the quarter hour from 10:15am to 4:15pm, Tuesday-Sunday. The theater accommodates up to 35 students and three chaperones.
- Bring your own copies of the attached sheets for students to complete. The Museum cannot provide additional worksheets for self-guided groups.
- No pens are allowed in the galleries. Please provide your students with pencils and clipboards. The Museum cannot provide these materials for self-guided groups.

1. Instructions for “*Timescapes: A Trivia Challenge*”

To play, break your class into two groups (team “A” and team “B”) and ask them to read the questions before the documentary begins. While watching the documentary, they should look for answers to their group’s questions. After leaving the theater, teams should regroup to share and discuss their final answers.

Answers:

Team A:

1. The Lenape
2. The Brooklyn Bridge
3. A nickel

Team B:

1. New Amsterdam
2. Central Park
3. Els or Elevated trains

Trivia Challenge: Tie Breaker

(a) *Manhattan, Brooklyn, The Bronx, Queens, Staten Island*

(b) *Near the end of the 19th century (1898)*

2. Questions for the Class

Timescapes chronologically presents certain important themes and facts about our city. Pose the questions on the sheet to your class before or after viewing *Timescapes* as a way to review information. The answers are provided.

3. Activity for the Classroom

Historical quotations from select chapters in *Timescapes* give students a chance to consider another type of primary source. Use the excerpts provided on the sheet after viewing the documentary by asking your students to reflect on each author’s meaning.

TEAM A: Review these questions before watching *Timescapes*. Directly after, work with your group to answer as many questions as you can. Challenge Team B and see which team found more answers, then teach them what you learned about New York City's history!

1. Who were the first group of people mentioned who lived on Manhattan?

2. What was the name of the world's first major suspension bridge built over the East River that connected two boroughs?

3. How much did it cost to ride the underground subway in the early 1900s?

If the teams tie, try the Trivia Challenge!

- (a) Name the 5 boroughs that make up New York City.

- (b) Near the end of what century were these boroughs united into Greater New York?



TEAM B: Review these questions before watching *Timescapes*. Directly after, work with your group to answer as many questions as you can. Challenge Team A and see who found more answers, then teach them what you learned about New York City's history!

1. The Dutch established a colony on lower Manhattan in 1624. What did they call it?

2. What famous park was built in the mid 1800s?

3. What were the trains called that were used before the underground subway?

If the teams tie, try the Trivia Challenge!

- (c) Name the 5 boroughs that make up New York City.

- (d) Near the end of what century were these boroughs united into Greater New York?



***Timescapes*: Discussion Questions for the Class**

Note for the educator: Below are discussion questions you can pose to your class before or after viewing *Timescapes*. Questions appear in the order of their presentation in the documentary. Chapter titles appear to help guide students as they look and listen for the answers. Many more topics are explored in *Timescapes*; the questions below represent some main themes.

Introduction:

Approximately how many people live in New York today?

8 million and counting!

The Native Environment: Before 1609

Who was the first group of people mentioned who lived on Manhattan?

The Lenape

What is the name of the English explorer who sailed for the Dutch in 1609?

(Hint: NYC has a river named after him!)

Henry Hudson

The Colonial City: 1624-1783

What did the Dutch name their settlement in lower Manhattan?

New Amsterdam

What was traded in this new port city?

Furs, African slaves, rum, sugar, natural resources

The Great Port: 1783-1825

What major industry connected New York with other North American and European cities?

Shipping (or Trade)

In 1811, what was De Witt Clinton's plan to accommodate the city's future growth?

The new city street grid

Why was the Erie Canal built?

To link the Hudson River to the Great Lakes and trade ports in the Midwest

City of Strangers: 1825-1865

How is an industrial city different from a trade city?

An industrial city manufactures items in addition to distributing them.

What opportunities did the industrial city offer those looking for work?

Jobs (factory work, textile mills, building projects, etc...)

From where did these workers come in the early 19th century?

From across America as well as Germany and Ireland in Europe

The Metropolis: 1865-1900

What were the trains called that were used before the underground subway?

Elevated Trains or "Els"

What was the name of the world's first major suspension bridge built over the East River to connect two major cities?

The Brooklyn Bridge

"Greater New York" was formed during this timeframe. What five boroughs did it include?

Manhattan, Brooklyn, The Bronx, Queens, Staten Island

What famous park was built in the mid 1800s?

Central Park

The Modern City: 1900-1920

What Manhattan neighborhood became a refuge for immigrants moving to New York City from across Europe and elsewhere?

The Lower East Side

How much did it cost to ride the underground subway in the early 1900s?

A nickel

The Cosmopolitan City: 1920-1945

What neighborhood became the "Mecca and capital of black American culture?"

Harlem

What kinds of art and culture emerged from this neighborhood?

Jazz and writing as part of the "Harlem Renaissance"

In 1931 what famous skyscraper was built?

The Empire State Building

Name some large city projects that were built under the direction of the urban planner Robert Moses.

Bridges, tunnels, parkways, public parks, swimming pools, housing projects

The Regional City: 1945-1975

Where were new arrivals to New York coming from during this period?

The South and Puerto Rico

Renaissance: 1975-2001

Which new immigrant groups are mentioned as moving to New York more recently?

From around the globe: Asians, Africans, Europeans, South Americans, people from the Middle East and the Caribbean

Concluding Question:

In your opinion, what are the most important characteristics of New York?



Activity for the Classroom

Below are quotations from various chapters in *Timescapes: A Multimedia Portrait of New York*.

After viewing the documentary, invite your students to choose one quotation to explore in depth. They should think back to the content presented in the documentary and write in their own words what they think the author of the quote is describing. Challenge them to provide a historical example that supports or opposes the author's point of view.

Extension: Ask students to write a quotation of their own that, in their opinion, describes New York City today.

“This island is the key and principal stronghold of the country.”
-Reverend Jonas Michaelius, Manhattan, 1628

“This still new city is the queen of commerce and the sovereign of the seas.”
-Francois Marie Perrin du Lac, 1805

“All Europe is coming across the ocean – all that part at least who cannot make a living at home – and what shall we do with them?”
-Philip Hone, 1836

“It is a city of colossal wealth and haggard poverty, representing all that is best and all that is worst in America.”
-David Macrae, 1870

“Big cities have difficulties in abundance... But... cities are not helpless. Lively, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration.”
-Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 19