

Exploring Brooklyn's History: The Brooklyn Bridge

Grades 2-4

Duration:

Life Before & After

6 minutes
43 seconds

Building the Bridge

8 minutes
15 seconds

Transit via the Bridge

4 minutes
9 seconds

More Resources:

Picture This!:

[Brooklyn Bridge Curriculum Kit](#)

Picture This!:

[Brooklyn Bridge Student Worksheets](#)

Concepts

- The Brooklyn Bridge solved a number of problems for people living in what are now called Brooklyn and Manhattan
- Building the Brooklyn Bridge involved innovative construction techniques and materials and was both difficult and dangerous
- The Brooklyn Bridge has changed with the times and has been modified to accommodate new modes of transportation and increased traffic

Objectives

- Understand how the Brooklyn Bridge solved economic and transportation challenges for early New Yorkers
- Explore the process of building the Bridge and its architectural importance as a landmark
- Understand the Bridge's modern role in life and transit in NYC

Prompts for class discussions

- Why do you think the Brooklyn Bridge is important to Brooklyn and New York City? How has its role changed over time?
- How does the process of building the Brooklyn Bridge differ from today's construction practices? How long do you think it would take to build this type of bridge today?
- How might developments like the Brooklyn Bridge cause harm to communities or environments?
- In what other ways have New Yorkers adapted to their environments or built structures to make life easier?

RELEVANT NYC & NYS Performance Standards

Grade 2 – Social Studies: My Community & Other Communities

Key Ideas	Conceptual Understandings	Themes	NY Social Studies Learning Standard
2.5 Geography and natural resources shape where and how urban, suburban, and rural communities develop and how they sustain themselves.	<p>2.5b – The location of physical features and natural resources often affects where people settle and may affect how those people sustain themselves.</p> <p>2.5c – Humans modify the environment of their communities through housing, transportation systems, schools, marketplaces, and recreation areas.</p> <p>2.5d – The location and place of physical features and man-made structures can be described using symbols and specific geography vocabulary.</p>	Geography, Humans, and the Environment	3
2.6 Identifying continuities and changes over time can help understand historical developments.	<p>2.6a – Continuities and changes over time in communities can be described using historical thinking, vocabulary, and tools such as time lines.</p> <p>2.6b – Continuities and changes over time in communities can be examined by interpreting evidence such as maps, population charts, photographs, newspapers, biographies, artifacts, and other historical materials.</p>	Time, Continuity, and Change	3
2.7 Cause-and-effect relationships help us recount events and understand historical development.	2.7a – Cause-and-effect relationships help us to understand the changes in communities.	Time, Continuity, and Change	1, 2
2.8 Communities face different challenges in meeting their needs and wants.	2.8a – The availability of resources to meet basic needs varies across urban, suburban, and rural communities.	Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems	1

Social Studies Practices			
A2	B1	C4	D2
A6	B3	C5	D3
	B5		D5

Grade 3 – Social Studies: Communities Around the World

Key Ideas	Conceptual Understandings	Themes	NY Social Studies Learning Standard
3.3 Geographic factors often influence where people settle and form communities. People adapt to and modify their environment in different ways to meet their needs.	<p>3.3a – Geographic factors influence where people settle and their lifestyle. Some geographic factors make a location more suitable for settlement, while others act as deterrents.</p> <p>3.3b – People make adaptations and modifications to the environment. Advancements in science, technology, and industry can bring about modifications to the environment and can have unintended consequences on the environment. People have attempted to take actions to protect the environment.</p>	Geography, Humans, and the Environment	3
3.9 Communities meet their needs and wants in a variety of ways, forming the basis for their economy.	<p>3.9a – World communities use human and natural resources in different ways.</p> <p>3.9b – People in communities have various ways of meeting their basic needs and earning a living.</p>	Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems	3, 4

Social Studies Practices				
A2	B1	C4	D2	E1
A6	B2	C5	D3	E2
	B3		D5	
	B5			
	B6			

Grade 4 – NYS and Local History and Government

Key Ideas	Conceptual Understandings	Themes	NY Social Studies Learning Standard
<p>4.3 Colonial and Revolutionary Period in New York: European exploration led to the colonization of the region that became New York State. Beginning in the early 1600s, colonial New York was home to people from many different countries. Colonial New York was important during the Revolutionary Period.</p>	<p>4.3b – Colonial New York became home to many different peoples, including European immigrants, and free and enslaved Africans. Colonists developed different lifestyles.</p> <p>3.3b People make adaptations and modifications to the environment. Advancements in science, technology, and industry can bring about modifications to the environment and can have unintended consequences on the environment. People have attempted to take actions to protect the environment.</p>	<p>Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures</p> <p>Time, Continuity, and Change</p> <p>Geography, Humans, and the Environment</p> <p>Development and Transformation of Social Structures</p> <p>Power, Authority, and Governance</p>	1, 3, 4
<p>4.6 Westward Movement and Industrialization: New York State played an important role in the growth of the United States. During the 1800s, people traveled west looking for opportunities. Economic activities in New York State are varied and have changed over time, with improvements in transportation and technology.</p>	<p>4.6c – Improved technology such, as the steam engine and the telegraph made transportation and communication faster and easier. Later developments in transportation and communication technology had an effect on communities, the State, and the world.</p> <p>4.6e – Entrepreneurs and inventors associated with New York State have made important contributions to business and technology.</p>	<p>Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures</p> <p>Time, Continuity, and Change</p> <p>Geography, Humans, and the Environment</p> <p>Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems</p> <p>Science, Technology, and Innovation</p>	1, 3, 4

Social Studies Practices				
A1	B1	C2	D2	E1
A2	B2	C4	D3	E2
A6	B3	C5	D5	
	B5			
	B6			

Vocabulary

Anchorage: the large structures at either end of the bridge span, inside which the cables are securely fastened

Cable: on the Brooklyn Bridge, one of four large wire ropes bound with soft metal, from which the roadway is suspended

Cable car (or trolley): a kind of vehicle used to carry multiple passengers, run on a track and is attached at the top to a large cable which helps propel the vehicle

Caisson: a large, airtight structure shaped like a box and open on the bottom, used to carry out underwater construction

Caisson disease: an illness suffered by men working in the bridge's underwater caissons, caused by entering and exiting the caisson too quickly and not allowing the body to adjust to changes in air pressure (high pressure inside and normal pressure outside); characterized by paralyzing pain, often in stomach and ears. Also known as "the bends" because sufferers bend over in pain

Carriage: an early form of covered transportation with wheels and pulled by horses

Commuting: traveling from home to work on a regular basis

Engineer: a person trained in engineering, one who plans and supervises a large construction project involving complex engineering issues, such as a suspension bridge

Ferry: a vehicle that travels over water with the purpose of carrying people to and from

Horsecar: a large wagon used for public transportation pulled by horses whose metal wheels run on tracks like a trolley

Immigrant: a person who comes into a new country to live

Pedestrian: a person walking on a street or sidewalk

Roadway: the area beneath the promenade used for vehicular traffic, such as horse-drawn carriages or automobiles

Suspension Bridge: a bridge that has its roadway suspended from two or more cables usually passing over towers and securely anchored at the ends

Toll: fee, usually charged when crossing a bridge or using a road

Towers: the large, stone structures over which the cables are hung, characterized by their distinctive Gothic arches

Transportation: means of movement or travel from one place to another

Vehicle: any form of transportation used to carry something from place to place