

PROGRESS? AN OVERVIEW OF THE ST. LOUIS WORLD'S FAIR, 1904

ABSTRACT: The 1904 World's Fair not only was a huge event in American cultural history, but also reflects the shifting political ideology from isolationism to imperialism of the time. Using racial "science" to justify expansion was also a large theme of this fair and a reflection of the culture at this time. In order for students to understand this, they need a basic background of the purpose of world's fairs and the political and cultural climate of 1904.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

- What was life like in the early 19th century?
- What defines progress?
- Who has the authority to define progress for others?
- How can politics affect the economy and cultural events of a time period?

ASSESSMENT: The teacher will utilize the answers given on the [Analyzing Pictures Worksheet](#) as well as class discussion to gain insight into student understanding.

SETTING THE PURPOSE: In this lesson, students will gain background knowledge on the concept of "world fair" as well as background on the 1904 fair. Students will analyze primary source images and gained knowledge about life in 1904 to come up with theories about why so many people wanted to go to this fair and what the purpose of putting such a large-scale event such as this might be.

DURATION: 1-3 class periods

PROCEDURE:

PART 1:

- Start class by writing on the board: "What is a World's Fair? Brainstorm a list of things you would expect to see at such a fair".
- Give students a few minutes to answer the question, and then have students share their answers.
- Using a site such as [World's Fairs Q & A](#), explain that World Fairs are a place where different nations/countries come together to show the technological advances, learning and culture of areas all over the world.
- Based on this definition, have students put a check mark by any item in their brainstorm list that seems to "fit" with the definition of a world's fair.
- Now, give students an overview of the St. Louis World's Fair using the webpage "[History of the Fair](#)". For purposes of the lesson, eliminate any mention of prejudice/people on display. You may want to have the students examine the speech on opening day at the end of the page.
- Using [The Palaces worksheet](#), have kids take notes on the various innovations displayed using [The Palaces Webpage](#). If you have a projector in the room, you may even highlight some of the exhibits using [Virtual Fair](#) from the Missouri History Museum-but for now, avoid the Philippine Exhibit and any of the Anthropology Dept.
- Further, you will want to mention all the fun exhibits, were people could go to the zoo, ride the Ferris wheel, play games, enjoy a movie, eat at one of the 35 restaurants, or visit the state buildings (each state had their own). In addition, the 1904 Olympics were held here.

PART 2:

- Many kids will not understand why the St. Louis World's fair was such a big deal without understanding what life was like in 1904. Go [over "Life in 1904: Dying at 47, 4 Cent Sugar"](#) to give them an idea what the average American was experiencing at this time. Encourage them to take some notes because they will need to remember this information for the activity they are about to do.
- Distribute the following images to students:
 1. [Entrance to Creation](#)
 2. [Exhibit of Firearms](#)
 3. [1904 World's Fair Ferris Wheel](#)
 4. [Festival Hall](#)
 5. [Floral Parade of All Nations](#)
 6. [Forming a Procession on Pike Day](#)
 7. [Grand Entrance: Hall of Manufactures](#)
 8. [Man's Greatest Achievement](#)
 9. [Missouri Corn Palace](#)
 10. [Night view of the World's Fair](#)
 11. [Palace of Electricity](#)
 12. [Palace of Art](#)
 13. [Palace of Electricity](#)
 14. [Restaurant Pavilion](#)
 15. [Stadium, Olympic Games](#)
 16. [T.C. Benbow in his "Meteor"](#)
 17. [View Along the Pike](#)
 18. [Palace of Machinery](#)
 19. [Sunken Garden](#)
 20. [Water Parade](#)
 21. [William Avery Gliding](#)
 22. [Windmill Exhibit](#)
- You can choose to distribute all the photos to groups, give one picture per student, or pick certain photos to display to the class.
- Have students analyze the pictures using [Analyzing Pictures Worksheet](#).
- After students have had time to reflect on their picture, discuss general answers as a group. Focus specifically on why an everyday citizen might want to go to this fair, and who and what might motivate someone to put on such a big event like this.
- Now distribute the following:
 1. [Ainu Group at their Lodge](#)
 2. [American Indians from Various Tribes Practicing Archery](#)
 3. [Antonio, Chief of the Igorrotes](#)
 4. [As God Made Them](#)
 5. [Council of Chippewas](#)
 6. [Chinese Girls](#)
 7. [Colony of Samal Moros](#)
 8. [Effa Rhodes and Amy Enos](#)
 9. [Geronimo](#)
 10. [Igorrote Villiage](#)
 11. [Jetta](#)
 12. [Kickapoo Lodge](#)
 13. [Negreta Bowman](#)
 14. [Navaho Mother and Child](#)

15. [Patagonian Giant](#)
 16. [Princess Omena](#)
 17. [Pueblo Indians](#)
 18. [The Bedouin](#)
 19. [The Celestial](#)
 20. [Tugema](#)
 21. [Visayan Girls](#)
- Tell students that there is some connection between the first set of pictures and the second set of pictures. On the back, have them write down what they think the connection might be, and why they believe their connection might be correct.
 - Tell students they will learn more about the second set of photos and their importance in the following lessons.

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PRIMARY SOURCES:

Students will use [Analyzing Pictures Worksheet](#) to analyze all primary source photos from the Missouri Museum Library and Research Center.

- [Entrance to Creation](#)
- [Exhibit of Firearms](#)
- [1904 World's Fair Ferris Wheel](#)
- [Festival Hall](#)
- [Floral Parade of All Nations](#)
- [Forming a Procession on Pike Day](#)
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- [Visayan Girls](#)

TIES TO NATIONAL PRIMARY SOURCE OR SOURCES:

- All of the primary sources listed in this lesson are of both local and national significance. The 1904 World's Fair was one of the biggest and reflected national thinking towards national and world politics as well as world cultures at the time.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Analyzing Pictures Worksheet.](#)
- [The Palaces worksheet](#)