

Imperialism (and Humans) on Display: The 1904 World's Fair

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Lesson #1: "Meet Me in St. Louis, Meet Me at the Fair"

Abstract: In this lesson, students will learn about the purpose of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904. Students will read about the setup of the Fair, as well as the nations that participated in it. They will also compare the 1904 World's Fair to today's major international gatherings.

Essential Questions:

- How did a World's Fair bring together people and cultures from around the world?
- How did the 1904 World's Fair compare to today's major international gatherings?
- How did the 1904 World's Fair reflect growing imperialist sentiment in the United States in the early-20th century?

Assessment: Students will be assessed based on their ability to read and analyze the document about the purpose of the 1904 World's Fair. In addition, students will be assessed based on their ability to analyze a map of the exhibits at the 1904 World's Fair, as well as their discussion of modern-day international gatherings and how those events compare to the World's Fairs of the early-20th century.

Procedures:

- 1) *Setting the Purpose:* Since World's Fairs are no longer held and students may not be familiar with their purpose, this lesson begins with a discussion of major international gatherings around the world today. The teacher should ask the students to brainstorm events at which people from around the world gather in the 21st century. Possible responses include sporting events like the Olympic Games and World Cup, international summits and forums like the G20 and World Bank summits, and events involving the United Nations. The teacher may also wish to show photographs or video clips of some of these events to familiarize students with them. Students should also write down and discuss the purpose of these international gatherings. If it is not discussed, the teacher may also want to introduce the internet as a global forum for international gatherings in the 21st century.
- 2) The teacher should then show the students a map of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. Students should analyze the map and identify the various buildings that housed exhibits during the World's Fair. As students analyze the map, they should discuss the purpose of the exhibits that they can

see on the map. Students should also hypothesize about the overall purpose of the 1904 World's Fair based on their analysis of the map.

- 3) The teacher should then hand out the 1904 World's Fair Overview Reading to the students. Students should read the handout and answer the questions at the end of the reading.

Analysis of Local Primary Sources: During this lesson, students will analyze a map of the exhibits at the 1904 World's Fair. This map will enable students to draw conclusions about the purpose of the exhibits and the Fair as a whole.

Ties to National Primary Sources: The teacher may wish to show photographs or video clips from modern-day international gatherings in order to help students compare these gatherings with the 1904 World's Fair.

List of Materials and Resources:

1904 World's Fair Overview Reading (from http://www.mohistory.org/exhibits/Fair/WF/HTML/index_flash.html)

1904 World's Fair Map