

New York World's Fair

The Basics

Time Required

2-3 class periods

Subject Areas

US History

The great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945

Common Core Standards Addressed:

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

Author

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The Lesson

Introduction

The New York World's Fair opened on April 30, 1939. Boldly futuristic, its theme was "The World of Tomorrow." Like the Fair, the 'official song' offered by the Gershwins was an affirmation that the Depression was over, though songs had promised that since it began!

<http://recollectionbooks.com/siml/library/mirror/Depressionmusic2.html>

Guiding Questions

Show photographs/images of the 1939 New York World's Fair and ask students to describe what they see.

Learning Objectives

Students will visualize the hope for the future through the songs "Dawn of a New Day" by George and Ira Gershwin (1938) and "I.G.Y." (International Geophysical Year) by Donald Fagen (1982)

Preparation Instructions

Songs used for this lesson:

"Dawn of a New Day"

“I.G.Y.”

Lesson Activities

1. On the Smartboard (or chart paper) put the word HOPEFUL. Ask the students to share what they think it means.
2. Introduce/review vocabulary: sound, brass, roll, wonders, unfold, resist, hail, and dawn.
3. Play the song “Dawn of A New Day” by Horace Hiedt And His Musical Knights. Ask the students to describe the feeling of this song.
4. Hand out a copy of the lyrics. Read them aloud.
5. Using a Step-In graphic organizer or song analysis worksheet, ask the students to complete it while re-listening to the song.
6. Discuss the student responses.
7. Share an overview of the 1939 World’s Fair in NY: Excerpt from The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division: <http://www.michelle.koenig-schwartz.com/media/nywf39fa.pdf>

The New York World's Fair of 1939 and 1940 was held in Flushing Meadows in the Borough of Queens. Participants included close to 60 nations, 33 states and U.S. territories, and over a thousand exhibitors, among them some of the largest corporations in the United States. The Fair was scheduled to open on April 30, 1939, the 150th anniversary of George Washington’s inauguration in New York City; but while the Fair paid tribute to the past, the uplifting theme, “Building the World of Tomorrow,” emphasized the promise of the future. A press release issued by the Corporation articulated its progressive goals: “The Fair will exhibit the most promising developments of ideas, products, services and social factors of the present day in such a fashion that the visitor may get a vision of what he could obtain for himself, and for his community, by intelligent, co-operative planning toward the better life of the future.”

8. Play the youtube video of the song with the pictures of the Fair. Does it match their responses? Why or Why not?
9. Introduce/review vocabulary: ‘stars and stripes’, ‘graphite and glitter’, streamlined, leisure, and eternally.
10. Play the song “IGY” (aka “What a Beautiful World”) by Donald Fagen. Ask the students to describe this song.
11. Hand out a copy of the lyrics. Read them aloud.
12. Using a Step-In graphic organizer or song analysis worksheet, ask the students to complete it while re - listening to the song.
13. Discuss the student responses.
14. Share the story from The National Academies Website: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/history/igy/>

From July 1957-December 1958, The International Geophysical Year (IGY), allowed scientists from around the world to take part in a series of coordinated observations of various geophysical phenomena. Although representatives of 46 countries originally agreed to participate in the IGY, by the close of the activity, 67 countries were involved. The I.G.Y. centered on a global series of events highlighting physical sciences and their applications, including seismology, meteorology, and rocketry. It was highly successful.

15. In groups of 2-3, using the song comparison graphic organizer, students will compare and contrast the 2 songs.
16. Students will share their responses with the class.

Assessment

Students will create a poster or poem about the view of the future using words/phrases from the 2 songs.

Resources

Images of the 1939 New York's World's Fair

Lyrics

"Dawn of a New Day"

Sound the brass, roll the drum,
To the world of tomorrow we come.
See the sun through the grey -
It's the dawn of a new day!

Here we come, young and old,
Come to watch all the wonders unfold.
And the tune that we play -
It's the dawn of a new day!

Tell the world at the door
That we don't want him 'round anymore!
Better times are here to stay
As we live and laugh the American way!

Listen one, listen all!
There can be no resisting the call!
Come, hail the dawn of a new day

"I.G.Y."

Standing tough under stars and stripes
We can tell
This dream's in sight
You've got to admit it
At this point in time that it's clear
The future looks bright

On that train all graphite and glitter
Undersea by rail
Ninety minutes from New York to Paris
Well by seventy-six we'll be A.O.K.

What a beautiful world this will be
What a glorious time to be free

Get your ticket to that wheel in space
While there's time
The fix is in
You'll be a witness to that game of chance in the sky
You know we've go to win
Here at home we'll play in the city
Powered by the sun
Perfect weather for a streamlined world
There'll be spandex jackets one for everyone

What a beautiful world this'll be
What a glorious time to be free

On that train all graphite and glitter
Undersea by rail
Ninety minutes from New York to Paris
(More leisure for artists everywhere)
A just machine to make big decisions
Programmed by fellows with compassion and vision
We'll be clean when their work is done
We'll be eternally free yes and eternally young

What a beautiful world this'll be
What a glorious time to be free.....

