World's fairs and expositions held in the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries celebrated the past while introducing visions of the future. The World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893, was a “city of realized dreams,” proclaimed Catholic World.

After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, Chicago established itself as America's architectural capital by pouring energy into innovation and building, especially related to skyscrapers, for the next twenty years. This philosophy led some fair planners to believe that the overall design of the fair should represent innovation. Others believed that Chicago would gain respect as a cultural center by imitating more traditional styles. This battle of wills played itself out in the fairgrounds at the World's Columbian Exposition.

Key concepts
Civic pride, aesthetic taste, vision, and urban planning

Key questions
What is art? What are the similarities and differences between fine art and public art? Who decides what is tasteful and what is offensive? How do decisions made by fair organizers still dictate the city's attitudes toward public art?

Goal of this lesson
This lesson will familiarize students with one of the principle objectives of the fair and demonstrate that Chicago had become one of the world's great cultural centers in the 1890s. “For [Chicago] businessmen, ‘culture’ was to be both a sign of their wealth and a civilizer—an antidote to the preoccupation with material gains that created their wealth” (Hirsch, 106).

Objectives
1. Students will identify the “masterful illusion” of the fair. Rather than celebrating diversity, the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, like others before it, presented a calculated division of the world into “civilized” and “primitive” realms (Lewis, xii).
2. Through photo-analysis activities, students will recognize the importance of photography to the fair’s success.

3. Through a fairground-mapping activity, students will understand the organization of the fair and recognize how it continued to influence urban institutions and planning far into the future.

4. Students will examine and discuss the controversy between those who supported neoclassical design and those who supported modernist design theories. Students will identify the “victor” in this design controversy.

**Materials**

Master copies of all handouts and photographs are provided.

1. Movements and Movers worksheet
2. Map of the fairgrounds
3. Photo Analysis worksheet
4. Photographs of the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893

**Procedures**

1. Divide students into small groups and ask each group to research a few of the terms from the “Movements and Movers” worksheet, or distribute the worksheet as a homework assignment prior to the start of the lesson.

2. Review the worksheet information as a class. Make certain that students are familiar with each movement and mover before beginning the Photo Analysis worksheet.

3. Divide students into groups of four, and distribute a copy of the map of the grounds of the World’s Columbian Exposition to each group. Give students time to examine the map and then ask them to answer the following questions: What types of exhibition buildings were included on the grounds? How was the fair organized? Can they detect a pattern or structure to the mapping of the physical spaces?

4. Distribute a World’s Fair photograph to each group. Ask students to determine, based on their previous research, if the photograph was taken in the White City or on Midway Plaisance. Challenge students to locate their photograph on the fair map.

5. Distribute a copy of the Photo Analysis worksheet to each group. Use an additional photograph to complete a sample copy of the worksheet as a class. Demonstrate how the physical evidence (or details) of the photograph can be used to draw inferences or conclusions about the image. Discuss and clarify the terms “evidence” and “inference.” Give each group time to complete their Photo Analysis worksheet and then ask the groups to share their findings with the class.

6. Discuss various public-art projects in Chicago, such as Cows on Parade (1999) and Music Everywhere (2002). Explain that each year the City of Chicago sponsors public-art, and ask students to design the next project. In their plan, students should include preliminary sketches and explain the rationale behind their design: What will the project be? Who will the organizers have to persuade to support the project? How will the project benefit the aesthetic quality of the citizenry? Encourage students to send their finished plans to their city officials.

**Suggestions for student assessment**

Assess students primarily on the creativity, thoughtfulness, and thoroughness of their public-art plan. The “Movements and Movers” and “Photo Analysis” worksheets can also serve as a tool for assessment.

**Additional resources**


**Websites**

Chicago Historical Society  
www.chicagohistory.org

Chicago Public Library, www.chipublib.org

**Extension activities**

Ask students to make dioramas or physical models of the buildings and artwork of the World’s Columbian Exposition that represent either the classical/neoclassical or modernist movements.

**This lesson fulfills the following Illinois Learning Standards:**

**English Language Arts**

- State Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.
- State Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.
- State Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.

**Social Science**

- State Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations.
- State Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the United States.

**Fine Arts**

- State Goal 27: Understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present.

*History Lab* is made possible through a generous grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation. These materials were researched and written by Anthony Millspaugh. Images and artifacts included in this lesson are for classroom reference and research use only and are not to be used for commercial reproduction, display, broadcast, or publication unless authorized by a letter of permission from the Chicago Historical Society. *History Lab* coordinated by Heidi Moisan of the Chicago Historical Society. The Chicago Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Chicago Park District’s generous support of all of the Historical Society’s activities.
Movements and Movers Answer Key

Movements

Classicism: aesthetic attitudes and principles based on the culture, art, and literature of ancient Greece and Rome, characterized by emphasis on form, simplicity, proportion, and restrained emotion.

Neoclassicism: a regard for tradition and reverence for the classics, with an accompanying distrust for innovation; a concern for social reality and the communal commonplaces of thought that hold it together; a concern for nature—or the way things are, are the way they should remain.

Modernism: commonly refers to forward-looking architects, designers, and artisans from the 1880s that forged a new and diverse vocabulary to escape the tyranny of previous historical movements.

The Chicago School of Architecture: refers to a group of forward-thinking architects who felt that the architect’s broader contribution was to city and regional planning. The group’s most prominent members were Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, and Dankmar Adler.

The “City Beautiful”: a “movement” whose advocates sought to improve their city through beautification. The beatification would sweep away social ills and inspire civic loyalty and moral rectitude among the impoverished. Cities would be in cultural parity with their European counterparts through the use of the beaux-arts idiom, and inviting city centers would appear to draw the upper classes to work and spend money in urban areas.

Other Terms

Staff: probably from the German staffiren (to trim). A building material with a plaster of paris base used as the exterior wall covering of temporary buildings, such as those at the World’s Columbian Exposition.

Midway Plaisance: site of the amusement portion of the World’s Columbian Exposition. It was connected to, but separated from, the main fairgrounds. More generally, an avenue at a fair, carnival, or amusement park used for concessions and amusements.

White City: the nickname given to the main fairgrounds at the World’s Columbian Exposition because all the buildings were painted white.

Movers

Daniel Burnham, 1846-1912, one of the chief architects in the Chicago school. He arrived in Chicago in 1873 and was named chief planner of the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1891.

John W. Root, 1852-91, partner of Daniel Burnham, noted for the architectural genius of such buildings as the Rookery. Root caught pneumonia and died after taking visitors on a visit to the proposed grounds of the World’s Columbian Exposition.

Louis H. Sullivan, 1856-1924, an important member of the Chicago School of Architecture and partner with Dankmar Adler. Sullivan coined the phrase “form follows function.” Most experts consider the Auditorium Theatre to be his most important building. After he and Adler dissolved their partnership in 1895, he had few solo commissions and died penniless.

Daniel Chester French, 1850-1931, one of America’s foremost sculptors. French designed the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1922.

Augustus Saint Gaudens, 1848-1907, famous American sculptor. He created sculptures in a simple, naturalistic style and reduced details to express the essential character of the subject. He created standing and seated statues of Lincoln for Chicago parks in 1887 and 1906.
Frederick Law Olmsted, 1822-1903, American landscape architect, city planner, and writer on social issues. Through his landscape designs and writings, he tried to recast the form of America’s cities and suburbs and promote the refinement and culture he thought the citizens of a republic could attain. He was responsible, in large part, for the layout of the World’s Columbian Exposition and the design of New York City’s Central Park. He also designed the suburban community of Riverside, Illinois.

Charles F. McKim, 1847-1909, partner in the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White. American architect who helped to popularize the building styles of the Renaissance and of classic Greece and Rome.

William R. Mead, 1846-1928, partner in the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White.

Stanford White, 1853-1906, leading American architect and partner in the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White. He began his career as an assistant to Henry Hobson Richardson, and his work was noted for its rich texture and ornamentation. A “friend,” Harry K. Thaw, the jealous husband of Evelyn Nesbit, shot him to death. White’s murder and Thaw’s trial created a sensation.

Sophia Hayden, 1868-1953, the first woman graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s program in architectural design. Her design for the fair’s Woman’s Building emulated designs of the Italian Renaissance and fit in with the beaux-arts design elements throughout the rest of the White City.
PHOTO ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Each member of the group should select one quadrant of the photograph to study in detail. Use the back of this worksheet to record the evidence found in your quadrant. Then unite the four quadrants to form one picture and share your observations with each other. Finally fill in the following table as a group. If available, use the magnifying glass to observe detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVIDENCE: List physical details found in the photograph.</th>
<th>INFERENCE: What conclusions can you draw from the evidence?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a group, answer the following:

1. When your photo is whole again, give it a title and a caption: _____________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

2. Is the subject of the photograph posed or captured spontaneously? Why is this important in understanding the image? _____________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

3. In your opinion, what were the photographer's intentions? He or she probably had an agenda in mind when taking this photograph. What might it have been? _____________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

4. What points of view or beliefs are not included in the photograph? _____________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

5. What is the message of the photograph? What ideas does it express? _____________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
MOVEMENTS AND MOVERS WORKSHEET

Directions

The “movers and shakers” of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition supported the five movements listed below. Write a brief definition for each “movement” and for the three “other terms.” Then write a brief biography about each “mover.” Remember to cite your source(s). You may find the information you need both in printed sources and on the Internet.

MOVEMENTS

- Classicism ____________________________________________________________
- Neoclassicism _________________________________________________________
- Modernism ____________________________________________________________
- The Chicago School of Architecture ________________________________________
- The “City Beautiful” __________________________________________________

OTHER TERMS

- Staff __________________________________________________________________
- Midway Plaisance ______________________________________________________
- White City ____________________________________________________________

MOVERS

- Daniel H. Burnham ______________________________________________________
- John W. Root __________________________________________________________
- Louis H. Sullivan _______________________________________________________
- Daniel Chester French _________________________________________________
- Augustus Saint Gaudens ________________________________________________
- Frederick Law Olmsted _________________________________________________
- Charles F. McKim _______________________________________________________
- William R. Mead _______________________________________________________
- Stanford White _________________________________________________________
- Sophia Hayden _________________________________________________________
World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893
Photograph #1

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World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893
Photograph #2

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World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893
Photograph #3

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World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893
Photograph #4

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World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893
Photograph #5

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World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893
Photograph #6

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Map of Chicago’s World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893
Please give us your feedback! After reviewing and using this History Lab lesson, please send us your feedback. Your ideas and honest assessment will ensure that these lessons keep improving and will provide us with useful insight for future teacher fellows. To fill out this form online or discover additional History Lab activities, visit the educators section of the Chicago Historical Society’s website at www.chicagohistory.org.

Name:______________________________________________  E-mail:_________________________________

School:_____________________________________________  Grade you teach: _________________________

Are you a CHS member? (circle one):               yes                      no

Name of unit you are evaluating (check one):

☐ America’s Documents of Freedom          ☐ Chicago’s World’s Fairs
☐ African American Life in the Nineteenth Century  ☐ Face-to-Face with the Great Depression
☐ The Civil War: Up Close and Personal         ☐ America and Protest

Name of lesson you are evaluating:_____________________________________________________________

1. On a scale of one to five (with five being the best) rate this lesson in terms of the quality of the student learning experience it provides (circle one):

5 4 3 2 1

2. What were the strengths of this lesson? _________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What aspects of this lesson needed additional fine-tuning?_______________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

4. What advice, tips, or suggestions would you give to future users of this lesson? _________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Where does this lesson fit in your course of study (scope, sequence, unit)?_____________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

6. If applicable, how did the use of primary sources impact student learning?_____________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your time. Please send the completed form to:
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