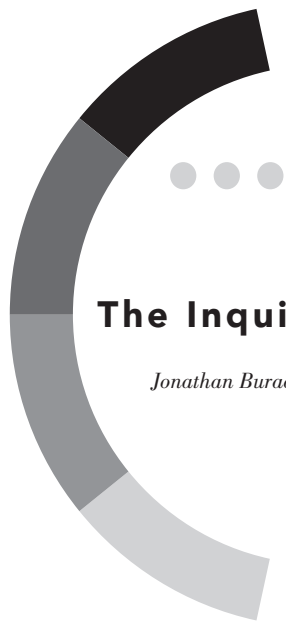


Changes in the New Nation



The Inquiry Arc in U.S. History

Jonathan Burack

The Erie Canal

MindSparks®

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

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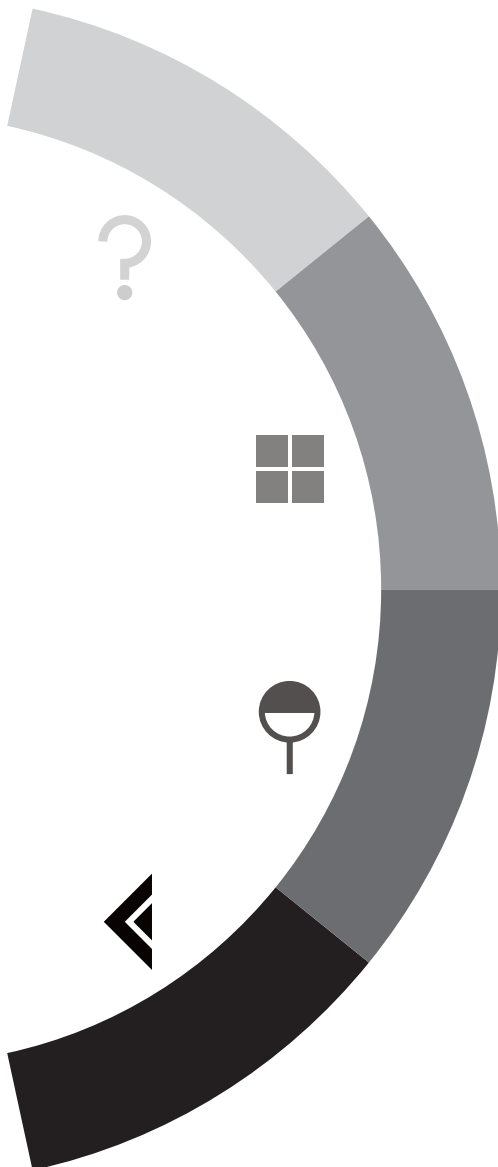
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Contents

Introduction.....	1
Overview.....	5
Teaching Instructions.....	7
Handouts	
Introductory Essay.....	10
History Group.....	13
Civics Group.....	16
Economics Group.....	19
Geography Group.....	22
How to Analyze a Primary Source.....	25
Primary Source Packet.....	26
Communicating Results and Taking Action.....	38
The Erie Canal Rubric.....	39
Primary Source Bibliography.....	40
Sources for Further Study.....	41

C3 Framework

This unit is based primarily on the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards. This C3 Framework is an effective tool offering guidance and support for rigorous student learning. The assignments encourage students to be active participants in learning and to explore the parts of history that they find most compelling. Central to the C3 Framework and our use of it is its Inquiry Arc—a set of four interrelated dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies. The lessons in this unit are based on all four dimensions of the C3 Inquiry Arc. While the C3 Framework analyzes each of the four dimensions separately, they are not entirely separable in practice—they each interact in dynamic ways. As a result, the lessons combine some or all of the dimensions in various ways.



Four Dimensions of the Inquiry Arc

1 Developing compelling and supporting questions and planning inquiries

Questions shape social studies inquiries, giving them broader meaning and motivating students to master content and engage actively in the learning process.

2 Applying disciplinary concepts and tools

These are the concepts and central ideas needed to address the compelling and supporting questions students pose. The C3 Framework stresses four subject fields: history, civics, economics, and geography. Each of our units addresses all of these disciplines.

3 Evaluating sources and using evidence

The purpose of using primary and secondary sources as evidence is to support claims and counterclaims. By assessing the validity and usefulness of sources, including those that conflict with one another, students are able to construct evidence-based explanations and arguments.

4 Communicating conclusions and taking informed action

While this may take the form of individual essays and other writing assignments, these units stress other kinds of individual and collaborative forms of communication, including debates, policy analyses, video productions, diary entries, and interviews. Meaningful forms of individual or collaborative civic action are also incorporated into each unit.

How to Use This Book

These units offer you the chance to implement the entire C3 Inquiry Arc in brief, carefully structured lessons on important topics in U.S. history. Each lesson is driven by a central compelling question, and disciplinary supporting questions are provided. Each unit asks students to apply understandings from all of the C3 disciplines—history, civics, economics, and geography—and they include individual and group tasks in an integrated way.

Each unit includes an introductory essay, detailed teaching instructions, a set of primary sources, and the handouts needed to complete the lesson’s assignments. Rubrics for student evaluation and sources for further study are also provided. The teaching instructions suggest a time frame for completion of each lesson, but the assessments can easily be adapted to fit into any lesson plan.

Each unit is aligned with several C3 Framework standards and Common Core standards. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Literacy emphasize the reading of informational texts, making these lessons ideal for integration into English Language Arts instruction.



C3 Disciplines



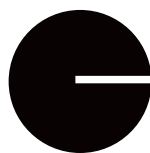
History



Civics



Economics



Geography



The Erie Canal

How Did It Change the United States?

Overview

Introduction

The Erie Canal was planned and guided to completion by men with little engineering experience—they learned as they went along. Thousands of immigrant Irishmen and native-born workers used picks, shovels, and equipment they often had to invent along the way. The Erie Canal opened for business in 1825. It was 363 miles long and cut through the sides of cliffs and over valleys. It included eighty-three locks, the chambers used to raise or lower boats from one level of water to another. The Erie locks enabled boats to be raised 568 feet from the Hudson to Lake Erie. It also opened the way for settlers going west. At first, it was only forty feet wide and four feet deep. Its barges were pulled by mules and horses along tow paths on the banks at only about four miles per hour, but it drastically cut the time and cost to haul bulk goods from Buffalo to Albany. The Erie Canal changed the United States in many ways, but how did it do that exactly? In this unit, students will work with short passages from eight primary sources and one secondary source in an effort to answer this question. While these sources alone won't completely answer this question, they can help to do this. Moreover, they can form the core content for a set of tasks that will help students better understand why the Erie Canal was a transformative event in the nation's history.

Objectives

Students will complete a final task or prepare a final presentation to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about the Erie Canal. They will work individually and in groups to apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

C3 Standards Addressed by This Unit

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of views represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time
- ◆ **D2.HIS.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.CIV.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- ◆ **D2.ECO.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.

- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.
- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.
- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Unit

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Teaching Instructions

Compelling Question

How did the Erie Canal change the United States?

Preparation

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.



Asking Questions about the Erie Canal

This part of the lesson stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework

Day One

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay with the class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class, and remind students to refer back to the handout as they read the primary and secondary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines of Dimension 2 in the C3 Framework—history, civics, economics, or geography. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Provide each student with a copy of all the primary and secondary sources for this unit. Each group may share a source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete Day One of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.



Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence

This part of the lesson stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework

Day Two

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining six sources, they will select one that support their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from the sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the Erie Canal from their group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, or a PowerPoint or another related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

Day Three

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.



Communicating Results and Taking Action

This part of the lesson stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework

Students will complete a final project that expresses understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the lesson's compelling question. The projects may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout, and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review the Erie Canal Rubric so they can understand how their performances will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

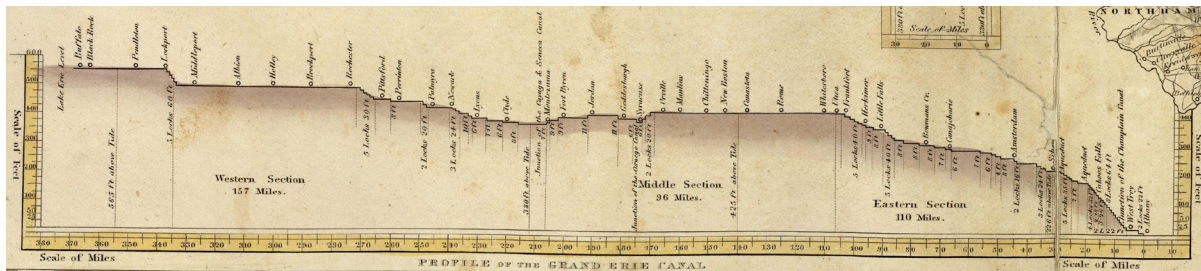
- ◆ Have a small group of students read carefully and discuss Primary Source 3.4 and some of the materials listed in the Sources for Further Study section. The class will pretend that they are passengers going west on the Erie Canal together. Students should keep a group journal of their travels. The group will share this collaborative journal with the rest of the class in a brief discussion of noteworthy events and places people were likely to experience while traveling on the Erie Canal.
- ◆ Have students read Primary Source 3.2 and study Primary Source 3.7. Students will pretend to be DeWitt Clinton viewing the two maps in 1828. They will write a letter to a friend about the Erie Canal and what they think the maps show about its effect on the nation's history up to 1860.
- ◆ Have students do further research of the Erie Canal and the canal-building era of the 1820s and 1830s. From the set of sources for this lesson, students will choose three that they think add details or ideas about this canal-building era that might improve their research sources' treatment of this topic. They should present their findings in a brief talk to the class.

Taking Action

- ◆ The nation's aging infrastructure has been a major news topic in recent years. Over the next few days, each student will find one magazine article, newspaper story, or online account of a local, state, or national infrastructure issue. Students will summarize and discuss these in class. They will list the issues and, as a class, choose three that seem most important now.
- ◆ Students will complete the above assignment and will share the list and their three choices with their district's congressional representative, the mayor of their city or town, or some other political official. They should then invite that official to visit their class and discuss the infrastructure issues they have selected as most important.

Introductory Essay

The Erie Canal



1832 profile of the Erie canal

Could the new nation hold together? Even during the American Revolution, that was a very real question for many people. One way citizens began to ensure that it held together was with the U.S. Constitution, written in 1787. The Constitution set up a stronger central government. The Framers hoped it would unite the thirteen states into a single, powerful nation. At the time, many rightfully feared that slavery might split the South from the North. (In the end, this division did lead to the Civil War.) However, in the 1780s, another possible split seemed just as likely—a split between east and west. Well into the early 1800s, concerns about this split continued to grow. Why?

One simple answer is the Appalachian Mountains. These mountains did not stop settlers from moving west, and, by 1800, increasing numbers were crossing the Appalachians into Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, and points even farther west. The mountains only slowed this movement down. However, the Appalachians were far more of a barrier to anyone shipping goods back east to market. It was much cheaper and faster to float bulky loads of grain, pork, tobacco, and other goods down the Ohio River and the Mississippi to New Orleans. There, goods were put on oceangoing vessels and shipped to cities along the East Coast, where most Americans still lived. What worried many political leaders was that the loyalties of western settlers might follow this pattern of trade. That is, they might lose a sense of being a part of the society east of the Appalachians. They might ally with some other foreign power, or they might form a new confederation all their own.

Until 1803, first Spain and then France controlled New Orleans and the western shore of the Mississippi River. George Washington worried about this proximity, as did Thomas Jefferson. They dreaded a future conflict with either of these great powers, especially France. The western states might decide to leave the union and join with that other power. In 1803, however, French leader Napoleon suddenly decided to sell New Orleans and the huge Louisiana territory to the United States. President Jefferson eagerly accepted. In so doing, he doubled the size of the country.

Yet fears about the hold of the nation on its western states remained. As early as the 1770s, one solution occurred to many people—to link east and west with a canal. Washington himself became heavily involved in planning such a canal in the 1780s. His canal would go west starting from Virginia. It would head up the Potomac River through the mountains to Ohio. The idea was never very realistic. In the end, the river and the mountainous area around it were too hard to get past. The whole project was abandoned.

Soon, others in New York State began to promote a different route. Their hopes were based on the fact that the Mohawk River carved a low valley through the mountains as it flowed east into the Hudson River. Some wanted to link Albany on the Hudson to Lake Ontario, with a canal running up the Mohawk Valley. Later, the plans became more ambitious. In 1808, the state legislature paid to survey a canal all the way from Albany to Lake Erie at Buffalo. The political battle to get the canal built was a long and bitter one. Many doubted it could ever be built. The central figure in fighting for the canal was New York governor DeWitt Clinton—opponents called the canal Clinton's Big Ditch.



Tow path on Erie Canal, near Utica, N.Y.

The Erie Canal was planned and guided to completion by men with little engineering experience; they learned as they went along. Thousands of immigrant Irishmen and native-born workers used picks, shovels, and equipment they themselves often had to invent on the fly. The canal opened for business in 1825. It was 363 miles long, it cut through the sides of cliffs and over valleys, it used eighty-three locks (the chambers used to raise or lower boats from one level of water to another) to rise 568 feet from the Hudson to Lake Erie, and it opened the way for settlers going west. At first, it was only

forty feet wide and four feet deep. Its barges were pulled by mules and horses along tow paths on the banks at only about four miles per hour, but this drastically cut the time and cost to haul bulk goods from Buffalo to Albany. Suddenly, farmers in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan could ship goods through the Great Lakes to Buffalo and through the canal, down the Hudson, to New York City. In time, vast quantities of salable goods were redirected from New Orleans to New York City. In many ways, the Erie Canal altered the entire relationship among the sections of the country. Its effect on the development of the young republic was enormous.

In this lesson, you will examine a small sample of primary and secondary sources on this development. These will provide evidence to help you answer the lesson's key questions. Interpreting the sources is not easy. Keep in mind that they are from a variety of points of view about the Erie Canal. Together, they should help you better understand the extent to which the Erie Canal changed the United States.



Image Source: *Profile of the Canal*. By David H Burr, 1832, New York Public Library, Digital Collections, 433793
Postcard of Tow Path near Utica on the Erie Canal. Unknown, via Wikimedia Commons
Illustration of the Erie Canal. By iStock.com/Whiteway.



History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Erie Canal

Your group's task is to look at the outcome of the Erie Canal from a historical perspective. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Do you think George Washington would have been happy about the building of the Erie Canal? Why or why not?

3. Read and discuss Sources 3.1, 3.5, and 3.9.
4. Read and discuss the following information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

George Washington led the nation through the American Revolution. Later, he led the group writing the Constitution in 1787. He then took charge as the first U.S. president. However, Washington was also a Virginian. He was a big booster of his own state, and, in the 1780s, he worked hard on a project to connect Virginia to the western territories with a canal. His Patowmack Canal project was based along the Potomac River. It involved building several small canals to skirt falls and rapids, and it was designed to make the Potomac navigable all the way to its headwaters in Cumberland, Maryland. This was the doorway to the Ohio country. From that point, goods had to be carried a short distance overland to and from the Ohio River. The Patowmack Canal was beset by many problems. Much of it was built, but it never worked well enough to do what the Erie Canal eventually did.

What would have happened if this project had been substituted for the Erie Canal? Virginia was a Southern slave state. Had the Patowmack

Canal worked, the cities of Virginia, instead of New York City, might have become major trading ports. Settlers might have moved to different parts of the western lands than they did when using the Erie Canal. Trade networks, later canal and road building projects, and many other outcomes might all have differed greatly. The nation's history would have been changed in a great many ways.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 3.1

Secondary Source 3.5

Primary Source 3.9

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Do you think George Washington would have been happy about the building of the Erie Canal? Why or why not?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining six sources for this unit, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief, five- to ten-minute presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



GROUP MEMBERS:

The Erie Canal

Your group's task is to explore the outcome of the Erie Canal from a civics perspective. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Some wanted the federal government, not New York State, to build the Erie Canal. Others said the U.S. Constitution did not give the federal government the power to do that. With which view do you agree more? Why?

3. Read and discuss Sources 3.2, 3.3, and 3.5.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

The Erie Canal was located entirely within the state of New York; however, backers pointed out that it would benefit the whole nation. At first, some of these backers hoped that the federal government would pay for the canal. It was the kind of project Kentucky representative Henry Clay would later certainly favor as a part of his American System—a three-part program: higher tariffs, a central bank, and federal funding for so-called “internal improvements.” Internal improvements meant mainly roads, canals, port facilities, and railroads. These improvements would unify the different sections of the country and help the economy grow.

However, many lawmakers were against the idea. They said the Constitution's Commerce Clause did not allow the federal government to fund such projects. They especially opposed any project located inside only one state. The federal government never did fund the Erie Canal; its funding

came from the State of New York and from private sources. The canal was completed in 1825. Soon after that, in 1827, the federal government did start to help the states pay for canal projects.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, chose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 3.2

Primary Source 3.3

Secondary Source 3.5

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Some wanted the federal government, not New York State, to build the Erie Canal. Others said the U.S. Constitution did not give the federal government the power to do that. With which view do you agree more? Why?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining six sources for this unit, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief, five- to ten-minute presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



Economics Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Erie Canal

Your group's task is to explore the outcome of the Erie Canal from an economics perspective. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

A canal-building mania set in after the Erie Canal was opened. Why might that have added to the economic value of the Erie Canal?

3. Read and discuss Sources 3.5, 3.7, and 3.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

According to one study, there were only 115 miles of canals in the United States in 1808. By 1850, there were more than 4,200 miles of navigation canals. Most were built after the Erie Canal was completed in 1825.

Everyone could see how profitable the Erie was. Even before it was finished, substantial toll revenue was being collected on parts that were open. Farmers could ship wheat and other produce to market in New York City more cheaply and rapidly than ever. New York City merchants could ship goods just as cheaply the other way.

The Erie Canal ended at Buffalo on Lake Erie. From there, ships reached various port cities along the Great Lakes. At first, getting produce to those port cities was still a problem. Roads were poor and few in number. Horse-drawn wagons were slow and could haul far less than canal barges. However, the Erie Canal inspired other canal projects throughout the region. A network of canals was soon built linking inland regions to the Great Lakes or to other major rivers. A "canal mania" took hold, and it

is easy to see why. One horse on a canal's tow path could pull a thirty-ton barge at about two miles an hour. This may sound slow, but compare it to a team of four horses that could move only one ton about twelve miles a day on a typical road in those times.

The canal mania came to an end in a few decades, soon replaced by a network of railroads in the 1840s. Nevertheless, the United States continued to build canals long after that.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Secondary Source 3.5

Primary Source 3.7

Primary Source 3.9

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

A canal-building mania set in after the Erie Canal was opened. Why might that have added to the economic value of the Erie Canal?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining six sources for this unit, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief, five- to ten-minute presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



Geography Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Erie Canal

Your group's task is to explore how geography affected the outcome of the Erie Canal. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary and secondary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

The Erie Canal tied the eastern and the western states together more closely. It also made the North stronger as the North-South split grew. Can you explain why?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 3.4, 3.7, and 3.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to complete the handout.

In the early 1800s, New Englanders began moving west in increasing numbers. Many factors caused them to leave and move west. New Englanders tended to be disciplined, hardworking people. They were also unusually healthy, with fairly large families on average. New England's rocky soils were not as fertile or easy to farm as new lands opening up out west, and a growing population made it harder to find farmland for everyone. Some lands also were being turned over to sheep grazing as the wool industry boomed. The promise of cheap, fertile land was the West's biggest attraction.

The Erie Canal made it easy for this Yankee migration to settle in upper New York State and then keep moving west. From the 1830s to the 1850s, these migrants helped populate the northern parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois, and the southern parts of Michigan and Wisconsin. They brought their Congregational churches and well-ordered

communities with them. Their stern Puritan faith was not always as rigid as we sometimes think. The migration included its share of religious reformers. Many brought fierce antislavery views with them. They spread a distinct brand of American culture across this northern part of the old Northwest. The Erie Canal played an enormous part in shaping this Yankee migration.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 3.4

Primary Source 3.7

Primary Source 3.9

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

The Erie Canal tied the eastern and the western states together more closely. It also made the North stronger as the North-South split grew. Can you explain why?

State your group’s claim here:

7. From the remaining six sources for this unit, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief, five- to ten-minute presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group’s discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group’s presentation.

How to Analyze a Primary Source

In this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differ from ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special critical thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

◆ *Question the source*

Since no primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective, and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

◆ *Consider the source's origins*

This is often simply called “sourcing.” It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source’s purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator’s point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

◆ *Contextualize the source*

“Context” here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be best understood in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide what context is most important.

◆ *Corroborate the source*

This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source back up those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with the source?

◆ *Above all, read the source carefully*

Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source’s creator might have seen in it.

George Washington on the Western Territories

In October 1784, George Washington discussed the importance of the western territories in a letter to Virginia governor Benjamin Harrison. At that time, Spain was in control of the vast territory west of the Mississippi River. In this passage from the letter, Washington expresses fears about foreign control of this region. France later took control of this Louisiana territory and sold it to the United States. The Louisiana Purchase eased fears about foreign interference, but the point Washington makes here—about keeping settlers in the west loyal to the new nation centered east of the Appalachians—was still a major concern well into the 1820s.

Original Document

I need not remark to you, Sir, that the flanks and rear of the United States are possessed by other powers, and formidable ones too; nor how necessary it is to apply the cement of interest to bind all parts of the Union together by indissoluble bonds, especially that part of it, which lies immediately west of us, with the middle States. For what ties, let me ask, should we have upon those people? How entirely unconnected with them shall we be, and what troubles may we not apprehend, if the Spaniards on their right, and Great Britain on their left, instead of throwing stumbling-blocks in their way, as they now do, should hold out lures for their trade and alliance? What, when they get strength, which will be sooner than most people conceive (from the emigration of foreigners, who will have no particular predilection towards us, as well as from the removal of our own citizens), will be the consequence of their having formed close connexions with both or either of those powers, in a commercial way? It needs not, in my opinion, the gift of prophecy to foretell.

The western settlers (I speak now from my own observation) stand as it were upon a pivot. The touch of a feather would turn them any way.

Adapted Version

Other powerful nations threaten us on the south, north, and to the west. I am sure you know how we need to bind all parts of the Union together by helping each region protect its basic interests. This is especially so regarding the territories just west of our middle states. Right now, Spain and Great Britain threaten those territories. However, what if the Spanish or British seek to trade heavily with them and become their allies? What would keep the western territories loyal to us? They are filling up, often with foreigners who feel no loyalty to us. What will happen if they form strong commercial ties with Spain or Great Britain? It is not that hard to tell. The Western settlers seem at a turning point now. It will not take much to push them either way.

Original Document Source: George Washington to Benjamin Harrison, 10 October 1784, in *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. 10, by George Washington, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1890), 407–408. The entire letter is available online from the Online Library of Liberty.

DeWitt Clinton Speech on the Erie Canal

No person was more important in the construction of the Erie Canal than DeWitt Clinton. He backed efforts to study, plan, and build the canal from an early date. He was a member of the Erie Canal Commission from 1810 to 1824, and he was governor of New York during most of the canal construction. He constantly promoted the project in every way he could. This passage is from one of his strongest statements in support of the canal, his "Memorial of the Citizens of New York in Favor of a Canal Navigation between the Great Western Lakes and the Tide Waters of the Hudson." He presented this memorial to the New York State Assembly on February 21, 1816.

Original Document

However serious the fears which have been entertained of a dismemberment of the Union by collisions between the north and the south, it is to be apprehended that the most imminent danger lies in another direction, and that a line of separation may be eventually drawn between the Atlantic and the western states, unless they are cemented by a common, an ever-acting, and a powerful interest. The commerce of the ocean, and the trade of the lakes, passing through one channel, supplying the wants, increasing the wealth, and reciprocating the benefits of each great section of the empire, will form an imperishable cement of connexion, and an indissoluble bond of union. New-York is both Atlantic and western; and the only state in which this union of interests can be formed and perpetuated, and in which this great centripetal power can be energetically applied. Standing on this exalted eminence, with power to prevent a train of the most extensive and afflicting calamities that ever visited the world, (for such a train will inevitably follow a dissolution of the Union,) she will justly be considered an enemy to the human race, if she does not exert for this purpose the high faculties which the Almighty has put into her hands.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Many people seriously fear a breakup of the Union because of conflicts between the North and the South. However, the greatest danger lies in another direction. That is, a split may occur sooner between the Atlantic and the western states. This could happen unless they are united by a common, constantly acting, powerful interest. This unbreakable bond of union can be formed by the commerce of the ocean and the Great Lakes passing through one channel. This channel will supply the wants, increase the wealth, and mutually benefit each great section of our empire. New York is both Atlantic and western. It is the only state able to form and maintain this union of interests. It is the only state where this great unifying power can be energetically applied. New York is therefore in a unique and admirable position. It has the power to prevent a train of terrible calamities, perhaps the worst the world has seen. For such a train will surely follow a breakup of the Union. New York will justly be seen as an enemy to the human race if she does not support this project with all the powers the Almighty has put into her hands.

Original Document Source: DeWitt Clinton, "Memorial of the Citizens of New York in Favor of a Canal Navigation between the Great Western Lakes and the Tide Waters of the Hudson," in *Memoir of De Witt Clinton: With an Appendix, Containing Numerous Documents Illustrative of the Principal Events of His Life* (speech to the New York State Assembly, New York City, February 21, 1816), by David Hosack (New York: J. Seymour, 1829), 420.

Inventor Robert Fulton developed the first commercially successful steamboat in the United States in 1807. He was also very interested in canals. He had studied Europe's canals and experimented with the various engineering challenges that they posed. In this passage, he is quoted in an 1808 report by U.S. secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin.

Original Document

England, which was at one time seven petty kingdoms, has by long habit been united into one. Scotland, by succession, became united to England, and is now bound to her by habit, by turnpike roads, canals, and reciprocal interests.

In like manner, all the counties of England, or departments of France are bound to each other; and when the United States shall be bound together by canals, by cheap and easy access to a market in all directions, by a sense of mutual interests arising from mutual intercourse and mingled commerce, it will be no more possible to split them into independent and separate governments, each lining its frontiers with fortifications and troops, to shackle their own exports and imports to and from the neighbouring states, than it is now possible for the government of England to divide, and form again into seven kingdoms. But it is necessary to bind the states together by the people's interests, one of which is to enable every man to sell the produce of his labour at the best market, and purchase at the cheapest. This accords with the idea of Hume, "that the government of a wise people would be little more than a system of civil police:" for the best interest of man is industry and a free exchange of the produce of his labour for the things which he may require.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

England was once divided into seven small kingdoms. It has long been united into one nation. Scotland became united to England through one of its kings. It is now bound to her by habit, by turnpike roads, canals, and interests each has in common.

All the counties of England, and all the departments of France, are bound to each other for similar reasons. When the United States is linked by canals, these will provide cheap and easy access to markets in all directions. They will provide a sense of mutual interests because of the way all regions will be trading with one another. It will no longer be possible to split them into separate governments, each building forts to line its frontiers. No longer will each want to control and limit trade with the other states. Just as it is no longer possible for the government of England to divide into seven kingdoms again. It is necessary to bind the states together by the people's interests. One major interest is to enable every man to sell his goods at the best market, and purchase goods at the cheapest price. Philosopher David Hume tells us "that the government of a wise people would be little more than a system of civil police." The best interest of man is industry and a free exchange of the products of his labor for the things he needs.

Original Document Source: Robert Fulton, quoted in *The History and Topography of the United States of North America . . .*, vol. 2, by John Howard Hinton (Boston, MA: Samuel Walker, 1852), 383.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

3.4

Anonymous Writer on Population Growth

The Erie Canal expanded trade ties between the western regions of the United States and the eastern coastal states, New York especially. As this passage suggests, the canal also allowed people to move west in rapidly growing numbers. The passage is from *The Genesee Farmer*, a periodical covering agriculture and horticulture.

Original Document

Canal boats filled with emigrants, and covered with goods and furniture, are almost hourly arriving. The boats are discharged of their motley freight, and for the time being, natives of all climates and countries patrol our streets, either to gratify curiosity, purchase necessities, or to inquire the most favorable points for their future location. Several steamboats and vessels daily depart for the far west, literally crammed with masses of living beings to people those regions. Some days, near a thousand thus depart. . . . As I have stood upon the wharves and see the departure of these floating taverns, with their decks piled up in huge heaps with furniture and chattels of all descriptions, and even hoisted up and hung on to the rigging; while the whole upper deck, and benches, and railings, sustained a mass of human bodies clustering all over them like a swarming hive—and to witness this spectacle year after year, for many months of the season, I have almost wondered at the amazing increase of our population, and the inexhaustible enterprise and energy of the people! What a country must the vast border of these lakes become! And Buffalo must be the great emporium, and place of transit for their products and supplies.

CONTINUED

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

3.4

ANONYMOUS WRITER ON POPULATION GROWTH CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Canal boats filled with emigrants, goods, and furniture arrive almost hourly. The boats are unloaded, and natives of all climates and countries roam our streets for a while. They do this out of curiosity or to purchase necessities, or to ask about the best places to settle finally. Several steamboats and vessels daily depart for the far west. They are crammed with masses heading for those regions. Some days, almost a thousand depart. I have stood upon the wharves watching the departure of these floating taverns. Their decks are piled up in huge heaps with furniture and goods of all descriptions. Some are even hoisted up and hung onto the rigging. A mass of human bodies clusters over the upper deck, benches, and railings like a swarming hive. Seeing this spectacle year after year during the warm months, I have to wonder about the amazing increase of our population. I also am amazed at the inexhaustible enterprise and energy of the people! What a country the vast border of these lakes will become! And Buffalo must be the great emporium. It is the central place through which all their products and supplies must pass.

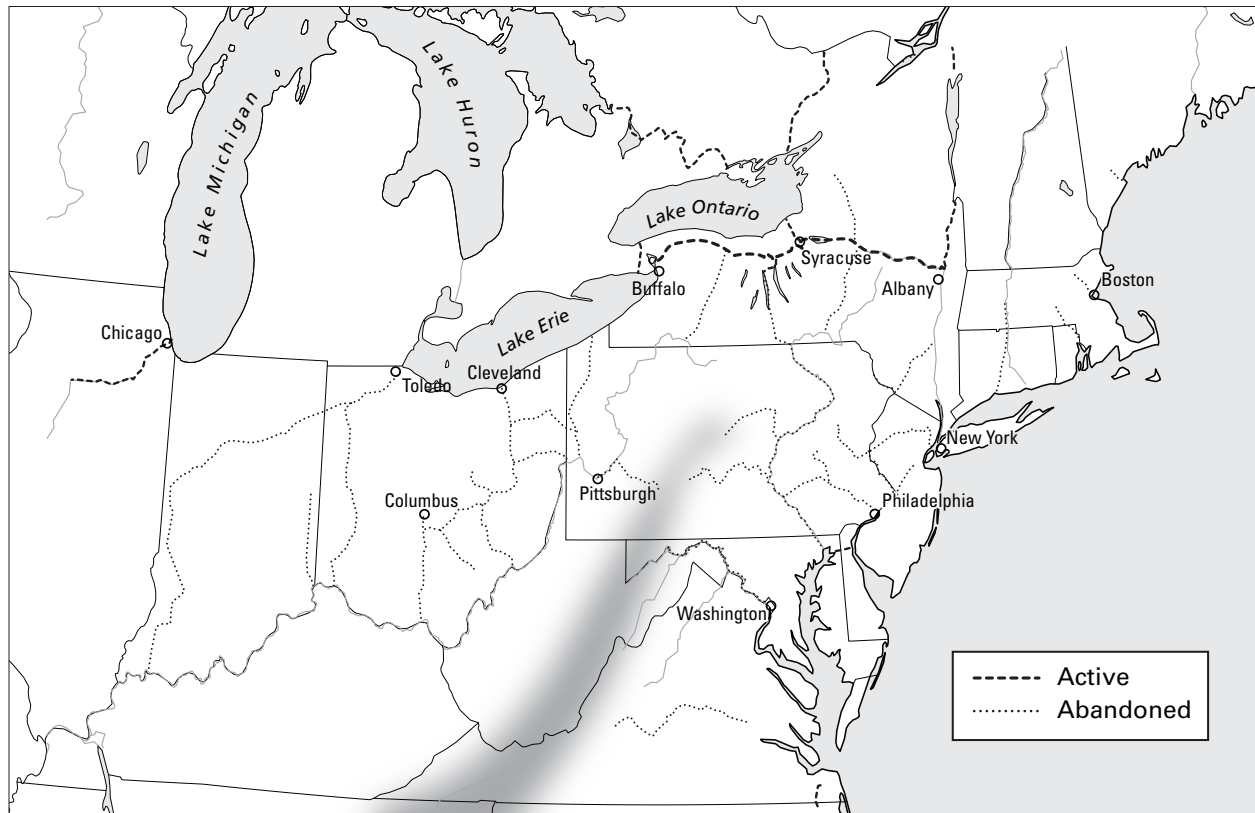
Original Document Source: "Emigration," The Genesee Farmer 2 (June 9, 1832): 180–181.

SECONDARY SOURCE ▶

3.5

Major American Canals of the Nineteenth Century

The Erie Canal launched an age of canal building. Several of these canals added to the Erie Canal's ability to attract goods from all over the western regions, especially the states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The Ohio and Erie Canal, for example, linked Cleveland with the Ohio River. In time, many less useful and unprofitable canals were also built. The railroads and the economic hard times starting in 1837 led to an end to this age of canals.



PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

3.6

Levi Woodbury Letter on the Erie Canal

Many New Englanders were leaving the region and moving west even before the Erie Canal was completed. The canal merely sped up that process. In 1834, former Vermont governor Levi Woodbury wrote to Azariah C. Flagg, one of the Erie Canal commissioners, to thank him for a copy of a recent state canal report. This passage is from that letter.

Original Document

When I reflect on the small territory, rocky mountains and barren soil of my native State and look to the vast resources and high destinies of the empire state I can almost submit to being envious. But a moment's further consideration, that you open your generous arms to welcome the emigrants from our frosty hills & to patronize her sons, whenever their enterprise and industry merit favour, I feel again friend, that we are in many respects but *one People* and that the success of a part is in some degree the success of the whole.

Adapted Version

My native state is of small territory, with rocky mountains and barren soil. When I compare it with the vast resources and great potential of New York State, I have to admit to being envious. But then I reflect that you have opened your generous arms to welcome emigrants from our frosty hills. You have helped Vermont's sons whenever their enterprise and industry merit such help, and so I feel again friend that we are in many respects but *one people*. The success of a part is in some degree the success of the whole.

Original Document Source: Levi Woodbury to Azariah C. Flagg, 22 January 1834, in *Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal, 1792–1854*, by Robert E. Shaw (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1966), 413.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

3.7

Distribution of Population Maps

Americans were already moving west of the Appalachian Mountains before the Erie Canal was completed in 1825. They settled in Kentucky, Tennessee, and along the Ohio River. After the canal was built, the pattern of settlement grew in numbers. It also shifted dramatically in terms of where people came from and where they finally settled. These two maps show how the settlement pattern shifted to the north.

Map 1



Map 2

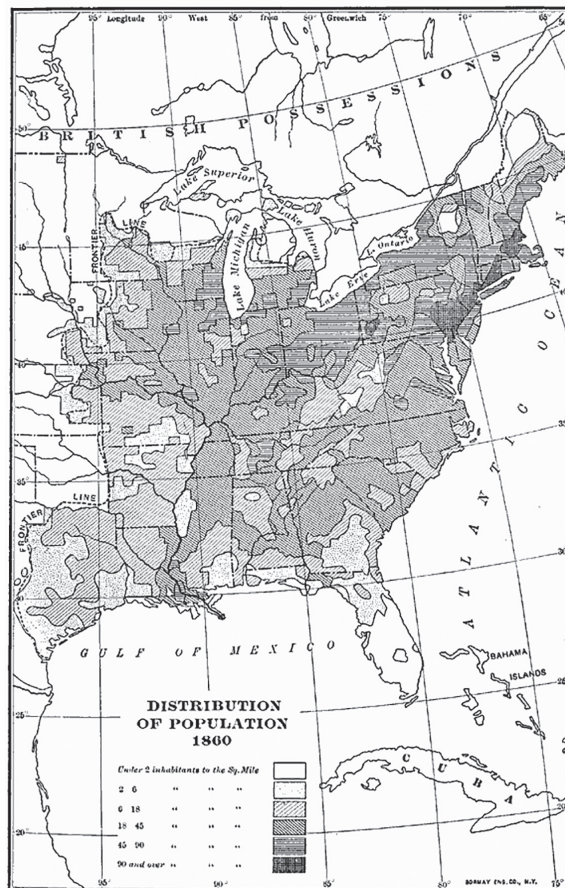


Image Sources: Map 1. By Dixon Ryan Fox, in *Harper's Atlas of American History*, by Dixon Ryan Fox (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), 33, courtesy of the private collection of Roy Winkelman.

Map 2. By Albert Bushnell Hart, in *The American Nation*, by Albert Bushnell Hart, vol. 19 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), 20, courtesy of the private collection of Roy Winkelman.

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

3.8

Drawing of New York and Brooklyn

In 1820, New York City had a population of about 123,000. By 1850, that number had increased more than four times, to about 515,000. This drawing offers an aerial view of New York City and Brooklyn in about 1851. It is titled *Bird's Eye View of New-York & Brooklyn*, and is drawn by J. Bachmann.



Image Source: *Bird's Eye View of New York & Brooklyn*. By John Bachmann, circa 1851, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC, LC-DIG-pga-03106.

Editorial on the Growth of New York City

An editorial in the *Albany Argus*, on August 12, 1845, dealt with the rapid expansion of New York City. In this passage from that editorial, the writer seeks to explain the cause of the transformation taking place in the city.

Original Document

To what may this change be attributed? Is it not clearly to the influence of the western trade, which seems to be a mine of wealth and power and population beyond human calculation. . . . The settlement of Western New-York and Ohio forced the construction of the Erie Canal, which literally united the waters of the western seas with the Atlantic ocean. For only twenty years, the wealth of the teeming West has poured down that avenue, and already it has placed New-York on an eminence as the Commercial Emporium of America. . . . So long as New-York remains at the head of the western trade . . . it must irresistably advance in wealth, influence and population, until she will be known not only as the great city of America, but as the *great city of the world*.

Adapted Version

What has caused this great change [to New York City]? Isn't it obvious? It is due to the western trade, which is a source of wealth and power and population beyond human calculation. The settlement of Western New York and Ohio is what led to the construction of the Erie Canal. This canal then literally united the waters of all the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean. For only twenty years, the wealth of the teeming West has flowed through the Canal and down the Hudson River. Already it has made New York the commercial emporium of America. So long as New York remains at the head of the western trade, its growth cannot be stopped. It will advance in wealth, influence and population until it is known not only as the great city of America, but as the *great city of the world*.

Original Document Source: "The Growth of American Cities: The Commercial Influence of the West," *Albany Argus*, August 12, 1845, in *Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal, 1792-1854*, by Robert E. Shaw (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1966), 283-284.

Communicating Results and Taking Action

Communicating Results

- ◆ Study Primary Source 3.4, which describes immigrants and other settlers moving west on the Erie Canal in 1832, and read and discuss some of the materials listed in the Sources for Further Study section. You easily can find other written sources and visual images online. Have each group member pretend to be a passenger going west on the Erie Canal. You are all traveling together, and you all decide to keep a group journal of your travels. Each of you should write three entries at three different times and locations during the trip. Each of you should also write responses to two or three of the other entries. Share this collaborative journal with the rest of the class in a brief discussion of noteworthy events and places that people were likely to experience while traveling on the Erie Canal.
- ◆ Study Primary Sources 3.2 and 3.7. You may also want to read more about DeWitt Clinton. Some of the materials in the Sources for Further Study section may help, but many other accounts of his life can be found in print and online. Clinton died in 1828, but pretend you are DeWitt Clinton viewing these two maps in 1860. Write a letter to a friend about the Erie Canal and what you think these maps show about its effect on the nation's history up to 1860.
- ◆ Do further research into the Erie Canal and the canal-building era of the 1820s and 1830s. From the set of sources for this lesson, choose three that you think add details or ideas about this canal-building era that might improve your research sources' treatment of this topic. Present your findings in a brief talk to the class.

Taking Action

- ◆ In its time, the Erie Canal was what people called an “internal improvement.” Today, we use the term “infrastructure” for the same idea. “Infrastructure” refers to all the basic facilities that support society as a whole—such as roads, bridges, canals, railroad lines, telephone lines, sewer and water supply systems, power lines, and the Internet. The nation's aging infrastructure has been a major news topic in recent years. Over the next few days, find one magazine article, newspaper story, or online account of a local, state, or national infrastructure issue. Summarize and discuss these in class. List the issues and, as a class, choose three that seem most important now.
- ◆ After completing the previous activity, share the list and the class's three choices with your district's congressional representative, the mayor of your city or town, or some other political official. You should then invite that official to visit your class and discuss the infrastructure issues the class has selected as most important.

The Erie Canal Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
Focus	Tries to respond to task instructions but lacks clear focus on a central idea or thesis	Addresses the task instructions adequately but focus on a central idea or thesis is uneven	Responds to the task instructions appropriately and convincingly; has a consistent focus on a central idea or thesis	Responds to all task instructions convincingly; has a clear and strong focus on a well-developed central idea or thesis
Research	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a relevant way to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources well but does not always connect these clearly to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources accurately and usually connects these to the task instructions and a central idea	Refers to relevant sources accurately and in great detail and connects these clearly to the task instructions and a central idea
Development and Use of Evidence	Uses some details and evidence from sources but does not make clear the relevance to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources generally but not always in support of a clear focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources in a way that effectively supports a focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources along with clear explanations demonstrating deep understanding of the task purpose or instructions
Content	Refers to disciplinary content without clearly understanding it or while using it in an irrelevant or inaccurate manner	Refers to disciplinary content with some understanding but not always with a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Accurately uses disciplinary content and demonstrates a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Uses disciplinary content effectively and explains thoroughly and in-depth its relation to the overall task
Conventions	Demonstrates only limited control of standard English conventions with many errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions with limited errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates adequate command of standard English conventions with few errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions with few errors and a use of language appropriate to the audience and the purpose of the task

Primary Source Bibliography

- 3.1 Washington, George. *The Writings of George Washington*. Vol. 10. Edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1890.
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Sources for Further Study

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