

# Green City Remix

**Developed by:** Mariruth Leftwich

**Subjects:** Social Studies

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Estimated Time:** minimum of 4-6 classroom periods, plus art installation design and production time (the original project was approximately 50 contact hours with students spread over three months)

## About This Lesson Plan:

This lesson plan is based on the Green City Remix project, a learning experience designed by the Green Building Alliance and the Senator John Heinz History Center. The experience interweaves historical research, social change, and design. Cohorts of high school learners actively constructed Pittsburgh's environmental Smoke Control campaign through archival research, analyzed it for social change strategies, and applied their knowledge to issues important to them. Participants remixed what they learned into an art installation that was displayed at the Heinz History Center. Through this experience, learners improved their historical thinking skills, built critical understanding of change, and creatively visualized their learning with hands-on making.

## About Senator John Heinz History Center

Devoted to the history and heritage of Western Pennsylvania, the Senator John Heinz History Center (legal name – the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania) is Pennsylvania's largest history museum and a proud affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. The History Center is an educational institution that engages and inspires a large and diverse audience with links to the past, understanding in the present, and guidance for the future by preserving regional history and presenting the American experience with a Western Pennsylvania connection.

## Pro Tips:

This project is a framework for helping students analyze and engage with primary source materials and thereby reframe their understanding of their local community.

*These materials were developed as part of the Share & Spread Connected Learning Collection, organized by The Sprout Fund with the generous support of the MacArthur Foundation.*

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# Lesson Plan 1: Understanding Change through Primary Sources

## Materials and Resources Required

- Instructors should identify 10 – 15 primary sources that relate to the topic of the project that helps illustrate social change. Select sources that represent multiple perspectives.
- Resource Appendix: Source Analysis for Social Change Framework
- Resource Appendix: Photograph Quadrant Analysis Framework
- Timeline drawn on whiteboard or large sheet of paper (The timeline will be used again in the project, so keep it posted or photograph the final product.)
- Photocopies of the sources that will be taped to the large timeline
- Tape/glue to place sources on the timeline
- Markers for timeline annotation

## Introduction

- Ask learners to share issues that they are concerned about today. Record responses in a Word document and upload to form a word cloud ([www.wordclouds.com](http://www.wordclouds.com)) that highlights shared and varied concerns (used again in Activity 4).
- Hook students with an understanding of the social change issue that you will be 'remixing' by selecting a historic image that documents the issue being discussed. In the case of the Green City Remix project, which focused on air quality, a 'night scene' image was used that shows the city at what appears to be nighttime, but was in fact a mid-day scene that was the result of air pollution (examples on [Historic Pittsburgh](#)). Explore the image with students asking them to identify the issues that they see represented in the image.

## Activity

- Introduce the timeline, which should include basic beginning, ending, and any key dates to the topic being discussed (i.e. key legislation, events, group actions, etc).
- Begin the session by modeling the analysis of a document or image using the analysis frameworks listed in the resource section to answer the key question: how does this source document social change?
- Divide students into groups and have them analyze 1-3 sources depending on the number of groups and sources available.
- Each small group will present their sources to the whole group and place the source onto the collaborative timeline.

- After all of the sources have been placed on the timeline, collectively go through and annotate the timeline to identify: issues, people/groups, actions, and strategies. Remember that these actions and strategies may either move an action forward, block an action, or be an action of resistance.
- Conclude the activity by asking learners to identify the key components of social change that they see documented in the historic sources.

# Lesson Plan 2: Understanding Social Change Today

## Materials and Resources Required

- Guest speaker or information about the same or similar issue of social change that shares a contemporary perspective
- Resources from a contemporary social action agency related to the topic
- Chart paper/whiteboard for a comparison chart
- Art supplies: whiteboards, whiteboard markers
- Optional Art Supplies: LED lights with batteries attached to better simulate 'remixing' ideas using a creative media. These LED lights can be easily constructed using LED bulbs and lithium batteries. For a full set of instructions, visit: <http://www.instructables.com/id/LED-Throwies/>

## Introduction:

- Review the results from the first activity and make a written list of the important change strategies learners saw documented in the historic sources (legislative or policy change, campaigns to change behaviors, attempts at changing business practice, raising public awareness, etc.).
- Ask learners to consider if this issue is still something people are concerned with today, and if so, how do they think the contemporary issue is being handled today?

## Activity:

- Provide a briefing on the contemporary issue, which may include relevant speakers, videos, scientific research, news articles, etc.
- After being presented with the contemporary issue information, ask learners to identify the strategies for change that they see represented. List the current change strategies in a column beside the historic change strategies and ask learners to compare and contrast strategies (i.e. in the past there may have been a reliance on print media or radio broadcasts to influence public opinions and today there is an emphasis on social media).
- Describe a contemporary issue scenario and ask small groups to brainstorm what strategies they might use to see change happen. The example from the Green City Remix project was highlighting the work of the Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP) and a current project they are working on to enforce school buses using clean fuel sources (<http://gasp-pgh.org/2015/12/15/school-buses-should-be-clean-and-safe/>) and groups were asked to create a list of potential strategies that could help GASP succeed.

- **Art Activity:** This project will culminate in the participants creating a reflective art installation, and the second half of this activity asks learners to practice transforming their ideas into concepts/statements rather than narratives.
  - The goal of the art activity is for learners to think about how they might visualize an issue using a medium primarily other than words.
  - For the Green City Remix project, students were asked to visualize the invisible impacts of air pollution on the Pittsburgh skyline. Participants were provided with magnetic dry erase boards, dry erase markers, and LED lights that were powered by lithium batteries with magnets attached. They used the colored lights against a vinyl silhouette of the city skyline to create an artistic representation of air quality issues today. Example images of the activity are included below:

# Lesson Plan 3: Building Empathy

## Materials and Resources Required

- Instructors should identify 5-10 historic images that relate to the topic of the project that document the social issue.
- Resource Appendix: Observing and Describing the Past
- Social Change Timeline from Activity 1
- Rapid Prototype Supplies – these can vary based on supplies available and can include sheets of aluminum foil, popsicle sticks, yarn, felt, scissors, glue sticks, etc.

## Introduction

- The purpose of this activity is for learners to think about the past and social change in a more affective way, building empathy around the social change issue. Begin by sharing a historic image that is evidence of the problem. In the case of the Green City Remix project, which focused on air quality issues, a ‘night scene’ image was used that shows the city at what appears to be nighttime, but was in fact a darkened mid-day scene that was the result of air pollution.
- Instead of completing an analysis of the source, ask learners: how does this image make you feel? If you were standing in this image, what words would you use to describe your emotions at that moment?

## Activity

- Using the set of historic images, ask them to observe and describe the past using the descriptive framework. This exercise has learners explore the environmental setting, the people, and the interactions they see in the image. Have learners title the image and writing a descriptive paragraph about the experience represented in the image.
- As learners share out their descriptions, record the words that are used to describe the past. How do the immersive descriptions of the past help us build empathy for the social issue?
- When the participants begin planning their remix installation it will be important that they consider how the installation will make the viewer feel, using emotions to connect the audience with the issue. Using the list of descriptive words from the first part of the activity, form students into small groups and ask them to represent the feelings around the social issue using rapid prototyping supplies.
- Each group should select one event, person, action, or strategy from the Social Change Timeline and create a prototype installation that reflects their chosen timeline item.

- Give groups 20 minutes to create their mini-installation that will accompany the timeline. This exercise will also give participants an opportunity to think about how they might use supplies and approaches in their installation.
- Each group should share out their prototype. Before the group describes what they were trying to achieve with their installation, ask other participants what they think the installation represents and how it makes them feel as a viewer.



# Lesson Plan 4: Remixing the Past and Connecting the Present

## Materials and Resources Required

- Copies of all primary sources used in both Activity 1 and 3
- Social Change Timeline from Activity 1
- Art Supplies and Prototype Supplies that have been available throughout the project
- Participant Issue Interest Word Cloud from Activity 1

## Introduction

- Review the Social Change Timeline, which showcases the issue and historic sources in a chronological order.
- Explain that the purpose of the art installation is to find creative ways to re-interpret these sources in a way that does not rely on traditional narrative.

## Activity

- Provide small groups with a set of 4-6 sources and ask them to 'remix' the sources in a way that does not rely on chronology. *What are other ways that we can group or interpret historic sources? How might you think about different forms of media or mediums to interpret the sources to talk about social change?*
- Allow groups 20 minutes to create an idea for a remix installation (they do not have to actually prototype the installation at this point) with a focus on deciding two elements:
  - The social change strategy the group would like to highlight
  - The medium or format for remixing, which could range from an image collage to music or video.
- Have each group share their ideas and receive feedback from other participants.
- As a large group, return to the Word Cloud of issues that participants are interested in from the first activity. *How do these issues relate to the social change strategies that groups just highlighted in their remix installation brainstorming?*
- Return to small groups and ask participants to create a rapid prototype that connects the historic interpretation they focused on earlier in the activity with at least one modern issue or social change strategy that they are concerned about.
- Share out the installation prototypes and ask learners to reflect on how they might use the installation to connect social change in the past with social change today.

# Lesson Plan 5: Installation Design

## Materials and Resources Required

- Copies of all primary sources used in both Activity 1 and 3
- Social Change Timeline from Activity 1
- Art Supplies and Prototype Supplies that have been available throughout the project
- Participant Issue Interest Word Cloud from Activity 1
- Resource Appendix: Installation Design Plan (edit to meet the needs of your specific site)

## Introduction:

- Share an art installation that features historic maps as way to “question our ideas of progress, the future, and nostalgia for the past.”
- Examine the artist’s statement on the web page that features the project and ask participants how they see these artistic goals represented in the art installation.

## Activity

- At this point in the project, participants should be broken into working groups for the installation. These groups can be formed in a range of ways: similar interests for the contemporary issue featured, a common interest in the medium/format being used, ensuring a range of participant skills are grouped (writing, design, installation, etc.).
- Walk groups through the installation proposal process with an initial focus on the thesis statement and key idea. Each section of the proposal can be treated as its own session depending on the amount of time you have for the project.
- The design and installation process will be iterative and will require several sessions to refine the ideas and move the ideas into production.

# Knowledge, Skills, and Understandings

## Understandings

*Students will:*

- understand that strategies for social change are similar across time and issues
- understand how they might apply lessons learned from a historic case study to an issue or challenge important to them today

## Knowledge

*Students will:*

- recognize the relevant knowledge that can be gained from historical analysis and the ways in which such knowledge can empower social change
- articulate how change was implemented in the past based on analysis of primary sources
- identify and analyze strategies and practices used in the past that advanced the cause or stalled it
- document how knowledge of the strategies and practices identified during their historical analysis influences their understanding of change
- apply this understanding to a current movement related to social change and articulate what is similar and different about the two initiatives

## Skills

*Students will be able to:*

- demonstrate an ability to make claim-evidence connections between primary and secondary sources and their interpretations
- map the relationship between different elements involved in social change, including policy, leadership, socio-cultural factors, and citizen activism
- balance different perspectives of those involved in social change by critically examining diverse pieces of archival evidence

# Analyzing a Photograph

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Carefully look at the photograph by breaking the image into four quadrants and record what you see in each section of the image.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>People:</b></p> <p><b>Objects:</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> | <p><b>People:</b></p> <p><b>Objects:</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> |
| <p><b>People:</b></p> <p><b>Objects:</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> | <p><b>People:</b></p> <p><b>Objects:</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> |

Based on your observations above, what are three things you can infer about the photograph and how it can be used to document a social change issue?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Social Change Document Analysis

| First: Scan   | Second: Connect to Issue   | Third: Place in Context   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>What type of document is it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Newspaper</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Letter</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Memorandum</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Map</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Telegram</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Press Release</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Report</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Advertisement</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Government record</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other: _____</li> </ul> <p><b>Does it have any distinguishing physical characteristics?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Interesting letterhead</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Handwritten</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Typed</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Seals</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Notation</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Stamps</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other: _____</li> </ul> <p>Date(s):</p><br><p>Author/creator:</p><br><p><b>For what audience was the document written?</b></p> | <p>How does this document help us identify:</p> <p><b>Participants?</b><br/>People/organizations involved in the issue</p><br><p><b>Events?</b><br/>Strategies, actions taken or legislation passed</p><br><p><b>Activating Force?</b><br/>The reason or motivation behind this document</p><br><p><b>Tone?</b><br/>Confrontational, tentative, \$-focused, etc. What emotions are evoked?</p> | <p><b>What connections can you make?</b><br/>Think about the document you are looking at in relation your prior knowledge and the big concepts of social change.</p><br><p>How does this connect to the other documents or information already placed on the timeline?</p><br><p>What else was happening in the time period that might have affected this?</p><br><p><b>What questions do you have?</b></p> |

# Observing and Describing the Past

Historic photographs and paintings provide rich and unique details about the past. Examine these sources and write a depiction that clearly describes the event, situation, or environment seen in the image.

## OBSERVE

| Space   | People  | Interactions  |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Buildings or landscapes</li><li>•Layout of the environment</li><li>•Objects or physical elements</li><li>•Senses (what would you hear, smell, see, touch?)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Clothing</li><li>•Actions</li><li>•Emotions</li><li>•What might they be saying or hearing?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Between the people</li><li>•Between the people and the space</li><li>•Between people who may be outside of the image</li></ul> |

## Observation Notes

| Space | People | Interactions |
|-------|--------|--------------|
|       |        |              |

*Write Your Description on the Next Page*

## DESCRIBE

Write your description using specific details based on your observation. You want your reader to feel like they have been transported back to the time of the historic source. Begin by building your DESCRIPTIVE WORD BANK:



Space Descriptors



People Descriptors



Interaction Descriptors

## DESCRIPTION

***Title:*** \_\_\_\_\_

# Remix Installation Design Plan

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Use the questions on this proposal framework to think through the elements of your installation.

**Project Team (names and responsibilities of all team members):**

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## **INSTALLATION TAKE-AWAY IDEAS**

**Thesis** (describe the statement you want to make to the audience, connecting social change in the past with the present):

**Key Ideas** (list the main ideas you hope visitors will take from viewing the installation):

**Describe how the audience will feel:**



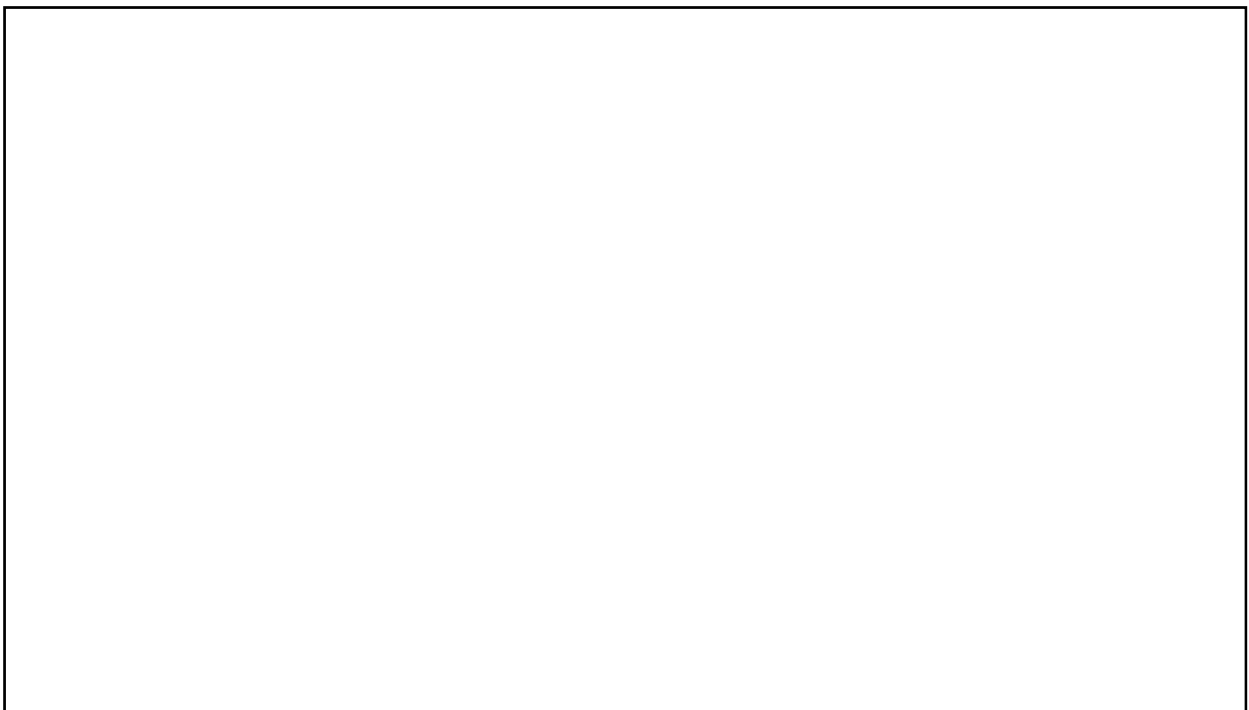
## PRIMARY SOURCES

List the **primary sources** you plan to use in the installation (this can include ones already explored in the project as well as new sources the team might feel are useful):

How do you plan to **remix** the primary source(s)? Select the category most appropriate and describe how the source will be used.

- Visual (altering the image, collaging, etc.):
  
- Physical (altering the physical form of the source so that it is no longer a flat piece of paper):
  
- Sensory (adding new sounds, textures, etc. to the source):
  
- Interactive (the source triggers an interactive experience):

## DESIGN SKETCH

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a design sketch. It occupies the lower half of the page.

## DESIGN COMPONENTS AND MATERIALS

**Design Elements** (describe the physical pieces of the installation that will need to be constructed and how it will be constructed. If you are unsure of the construction, use a “?” in the table below.)

| Design Component   | Construction  |
|--|---|
| <i>Examples: Mural, soundscape, physical structure, lighting</i> | <i>Examples: hand sculpture, 3D printing, vinyl cutting, painted, using Garage Band</i> |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |

**Materials** (list the materials you anticipate using):

### Challenges

List any challenges you are think your team might encounter during the design and production phase.