



City on the Make: Impact of the Stockyards and Meatpacking Industries

Gallery Video Learning Guide

Recommended for students in grades 7-12

About This Video

We hope you will use this video as a virtual field trip to the Chicago History Museum or, when possible, in conjunction with a visit to the Museum. This series of short videos explores stories featured in our *Chicago: Crossroads of America* exhibition. The gallery examines Chicago’s changing economy, challenging crises, diverse neighborhoods, and groundbreaking innovations. This video, “City on the Make: Impact of the Stockyards and Meatpacking Industries,” examines the city’s stockyards and meatpacking through the lens of industry and considers the role of people in making industrial achievements possible.

By watching this video, students will:

- ◆ Increase their content knowledge of the stockyards and meatpacking industries in Chicago and consider how they contributed to the growth of the city.
- ◆ Think critically about how industry benefits and harms a city.
- ◆ Analyze and interpret primary source materials from the Chicago History Museum’s collection.

How to Use This Video

- ◆ Critical thinking prompts and questions are embedded throughout the video. Included in this guide is a list of questions and time stamps. Questions are formatted into a student response sheet at the end of this packet. You can stop the video at each question to give students time to respond verbally or in writing to the questions.
- ◆ PDF transcripts of the video script are available to download in Spanish and English.
<https://www.chicagohistory.org/education/field-trips/virtual-field-trips/>
- ◆ A PDF of selected images and close looking prompts is available for additional study.
<https://www.chicagohistory.org/education/field-trips/virtual-field-trips/>
- ◆ The running time of “City on the Make: Impact of the Stockyards & Meatpacking Industries” is 9 min. 27 sec.
- ◆ This video is recommended for students in grades 7-12.
- ◆ To access the video, you will be asked to complete a short survey. This will help us understand how you intend to use the video, improve future videos, and learn what topics you would like to see added to the series.

The video and learning guide align to these learning standards:

Illinois Social Science Standards:
<https://www.isbe.net/socialsciences>

6-8 Standards

- ◆ SS.6-8.IS.1MdC; SS.6-8.IS.3MC
- ◆ SS.6-8.CV.3MC
- ◆ SS.6-8.H.1MC; SS.6-8.H.4MC

9-12 Standards

- ◆ SS.9-12.IS.4; SS.9-12.IS.7
- ◆ SS.9-12.CV.2
- ◆ SS.9-12.H.1; SS.9-12.H.5; SS.9-12.H.7; SS.9-12.H.11

Common Core, Anchor Standards:
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/>

- ◆ Reading: 1 and 7
- ◆ Writing: 3 and 7

National Council for the Social Studies, College, Career, and Civic Life (C3):
<https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3>

- ◆ D1.1.6-8; D1.3.6-8
- ◆ D2.His.3.6-8; D2.His.12.6-8; D2.His.14.6-8
- ◆ D3.3.6-8
- ◆ D4.1.6-8
- ◆ D1.1.9-12; D1.3.9-12
- ◆ D2.His.3.9-12; D2.His.12.9-12; D2.His.14.9-12
- ◆ D3.3.9-12
- ◆ D4.1.9-12

This learning guide includes:

- ◆ Vocabulary
- ◆ Critical Thinking Prompts and Questions
- ◆ Pre-Viewing Activities
- ◆ Post-Viewing Activities
- ◆ Additional Resources



Vocabulary

Industry: a group of businesses that provide a particular product or service, or the process of making products by using machinery and factories

Stockyard: an enclosed area where farm animals are kept so they can be slaughtered, sold, or shipped

Meatpacking: the business of killing animals for meat and getting meat ready to be sold

Manufacturing: the process of making products especially with machines in factories

Transportation: the act or process of moving people or things from one place to another

Union: an organization of workers formed to protect the rights and interests of its members

Assembly Line: arrangement of machines, equipment, and workers in which work passes from one operation to the next in a direct line until the product is finished

Disassembly: to take apart

Sanitary: of or relating to good health or protection from dirt, infection, or disease

Unsanitary: dirty and likely to cause disease, not sanitary

Definitions from Merriam-Webster Dictionary online at merriam-webster.com/dictionary

Critical Thinking Prompts and Questions+

Questions are formatted into a student response sheet at the end of this packet.

- ◆ Time: 00:30
Question: What is industry? What do you think of when you hear that word?
- ◆ Time: 02:00
Question: Why is transportation important to industry, especially meat packing and the stockyards?
- ◆ Time: 03:36
Question: What jobs did people have in the meat packing plants?
- ◆ Time: 05:50
Question: What do you think are the benefits to joining a union? What are the risks?
- ◆ Time: 06:57
Question: Where did the stockyards employees live?
- ◆ Time: 07:33
Question: How have industries changed over time?



Pre-Viewing Activities

Choose any one or a combination of activities that work best for your students.

Vocabulary: In small groups, or individually, invite students to write their own definitions for the following words: industry, stockyard, meatpacking, and assembly line OR choose your own words. Then have students switch definitions with another group. They can then read and add to the existing definition. Repeat this process until students have seen all of the words. Then create a class vocabulary sheet.

Discussion:

- ◆ Talk about how our food – meat, specifically – get from farms to our tables.
- ◆ How does your hamburger get to you?
- ◆ Where do the parts (bun, meat, condiments, veggies, cheese) come from?
- ◆ What steps does it take to get to your home?

Post-Viewing Activities

Choose any one or a combination of activities that work best for your students.

Discussion:

- ◆ Use the discussion questions embedded within the video to consider how industries and the people they employ have shaped Chicago.
- ◆ What are some challenges of working in the stockyards/meatpacking industry?

Further Inquiry Topics and Contemporary Comparisons:

- ◆ Invite students to research other industries in Chicago past and present to see how they shaped the city. Also consider skills, people needed, and connections to other industries. Examples include railroads and transportation, steel mills, hospitals, banking, hospitality/tourism, and food production.
- ◆ Ask students to consider the role of unions in industry. How have they helped shape our country? For additional information on unions, visit the [Facing Freedom in America](https://facingfreedom.org/) (https://facingfreedom.org/) website and look at the [Workers' Rights section](https://facingfreedom.org/workers-rights) (https://facingfreedom.org/workers-rights).
- ◆ How did/do immigrants and migrants contribute to the United States, past and present?
- ◆ The stockyards and meatpacking plants had a disastrous effect on the surrounding landscape due to pollution, especially to the Chicago River which at the time flowed into Lake Michigan. Have students analyze the environmental effects of industries past and present.
- ◆ Current events have triggered new conversations about meatpacking and the food processing industry due to concerns over COVID-19 and other animal welfare issues. Students could research the conditions for workers and even animals past and present to see similarities and differences.
- ◆ Research other Chicago neighborhoods. Consider who has lived there, industries/businesses, and how those neighborhoods have shaped Chicago.

Additional Resources

Books

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair

This 1906 novel follows Jurgis Rudkus and his family through their lives in and around Chicago's Union Stockyards. It was written to promote socialist ideals, but through the descriptions of living and working in the area, it made Americans aware of the unsanitary and unsafe practices within meatpacking centers.

Slaughterhouse: Chicago's Union Stock Yard and the World it Made by Dominic Pacyga

Slaughterhouse tells the story of the Union Stockyard, chronicling the rise and fall of an industrial district that, for better or worse, served as the public face of Chicago for decades.

Online Resources

[Chicago Stories: The Union Stockyards](https://interactive.wttw.com/a/chicago-stories-union-stockyards) WTTW

This website features informational text and resources about the stockyards and their development. (https://interactive.wttw.com/a/chicago-stories-union-stockyards)



Lessons from the Great Chicago Fire Questions in the Video

1. What is industry? What do you think of when you hear that word?
2. Why is transportation important to industry, especially meat packing and the stockyards?
3. What jobs did people have in the meat packing plants?
4. What do you think are the benefits to joining a union? What are the risks?
5. Where did the stockyards employees live?
6. How have industries changed over time?