

"L" STANDS FOR ELEVATED

Grade Level: 3 to 5

IN THIS LESSON

Students will play a Chicago "L" trivia game to learn about the history of our city's public transportation system. They will also create their own construction paper "L" car and write advertising slogans for Chicago's elevated trains.

OBJECTIVES

- To learn important facts about Chicago's elevated train system
- To recognize the importance of transportation in the city's history
- To develop interpretive and artistic skills and encourage creativity

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information.

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States, and other nations.

SUGGESTED ARTIFACTS

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY (CTA) ARTIFACTS

- Photographs of "L" Car Number 1 (at end of lesson)
- System maps (vintage and modern)
- Fare card
- Tokens (available on eBay)
- Newspaper articles about CTA history (vintage and modern)
- Recordings of CTA sounds (if possible)
- Photographs of signs and advertisements on CTA trains

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- Chicago "L" trivia cards (instructions at end of lesson)
- Blank index cards in two colors
- Chart paper, poster board, or 8½ x 11" white paper
- Drawing supplies (colored pencils, markers, or crayons)
- Green construction paper
- Gold paint pen or marker
- Artifact Analysis worksheets (<http://www.greatchicagostories.com/classroom/artifact.php>)

This lesson is part of the History Connections & Artifact Collections project, made possible by a generous grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation.

This lesson was developed and written by Esther Honson.

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ACTIVITY

DAY 1

1. Before the class session, create Chicago “L” trivia cards by following the directions on the teacher supplement at the end of this lesson. The cards are divided into questions and answers.
2. Distribute the cards at random until every student has one. Depending on the size of your class, you may have to use a few duplicate questions and answers. Once everyone has a card, the object is for students to find the person whose card matches with theirs.
3. Give the class a few minutes to talk to each other and find their partners. Once it seems like everyone has a match, ask each pair to read their questions and answers out loud. Keep a master copy of all the questions and answers with you so you will know if their answers are correct. Help to straighten out any mix-ups until each person is matched up with the correct partner.
4. Have students work in their pairs to write and illustrate the “L” Car trivia from their index cards. Display their illustrations around the room.

DAY 2

1. Distribute copies of the “L” Car No. 1 image. Have each student make his or her own version using construction paper and glue. Gold paint pens can be used to make the lettering and decorate the sides of the car. Encourage students to add their own embellishments.
2. Have students write brief advertising slogans for the windows of the train. Encourage them to use the trivia they learned during the game on Day 1 to inspire their ads. For example, “Ride in style above all the traffic!” or “Take the quickest route to the World’s Fair: Chicago’s New “L”!”
3. Display the artwork around the room, either separated or connected as one long “L” train.

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DAY 3

1. Present the CTA artifact kit to students. You might want to put the artifacts in a travel bag or backpack.
2. Let students pick the artifact they find most interesting or pull items out of the bag without looking.
3. Distribute Artifact Analysis worksheets. Model the process of “reading” an artifact with students. Lead students in the practice of using good descriptive adjectives.
4. Have students complete their worksheets. When they are finished, have them share their findings with the class.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Read *The Best of the Fair*, one of the Chicago History Museum’s Great Chicago Stories. It is a fictional narrative that describes the first “L” car that carried people to the 1893 World’s Fair. <http://www.greatchicagostories.com/worldsfair/index.php>

Conduct a field trip to the Chicago History Museum to see “L” Car No. 1.

Take students on a field trip to ride a modern “L” car and experience its sights and sounds.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org>

Borzo, Greg. *The Chicago “L.”*

Mahoney, Olivia. *Chicago: Crossroads of America* (exhibition catalog)

Moffat, Bruce G. *The “L”: The Development of Chicago’s Rapid Transit System, 1888–1932*

CHICAGO "L" TRIVIA GAME CARD INSTRUCTIONS

You will need to make two sets of index cards, one a set of questions and the other of matching answers. Make each set of index cards a different color, so they are easy to tell apart. You can use the questions below or write your own using information from the additional resources listed at the end of the lesson.

Sample Questions and Answers

Q: How many pounds does "L" Car No. 1 weigh?

A: 42,500 pounds

Q: How many years was "L" Car No. 1 in use?

A: 50 years

Q: In what year did "L" Car No. 1 carry passengers to the World's Columbian Exposition?

A: 1893

Q: How much did a ride on the "L" cost when it first began running?

A: 5 cents

Q: How many seats does "L" Car No. 1 have?

A: 48 seats

Q: How tall is "L" Car No. 1?

A: 13 feet

Q: How long is "L" Car No. 1?

A: 46 feet

Q: How fast did "L" Car No. 1 travel?

A: 15 miles per hour

"L" CAR NO. 1, OUTSIDE VIEW



This "L" car was built in 1892 to take visitors to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Look very closely at the photograph. How is it similar to Chicago's "L" today? How is it different?

"L" CAR NO. 1, INSIDE VIEW



This "L" car was built in 1892 to take visitors to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Look very closely at the photograph. How is it similar to Chicago's "L" today? How is it different?