

THE HISTORY CHANNEL CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDES

Modern Marvels

City Parks

They are the green oases in the concrete landscapes of the city. Lush, green lawns, tranquil ponds and lakes, and play areas provide urban residents with a respite from the steel, asphalt, and concrete of city. But they also provide something else—a truly democratic meeting place and playground where all residents are free to enjoy the parks' wonders and rejuvenating effects. This episode of *Modern Marvels* explores three of the most celebrated city parks: New York's Central Park, Los Angeles' Griffith Park and San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. *City Parks* would be useful for classes on American History, Urban History, American Culture, Horticulture, Landscaping, and Architecture. It is appropriate for middle school and high school.

OBJECTIVES

Students will learn the role of parks in urban history. They will explore themes of progress and technology, as well as democracy and democratic uses of natural resources.

NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

City Parks fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5-12: Chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities, historical issues-analysis and decision-making for eras 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

- [condescending](#)
- [impede](#)
- [metaphor](#)
- [metropolis](#)
- [oasis](#)
- [pompous](#)
- [resonate](#)
- [sanitation](#)
- [suffice](#)
- [topography](#)
- [urbanization](#)
- [vagrant](#)
- [vigilante](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the most beloved city parks? Why are these parks so special?
2. Discuss how city parks are almost living organisms. What makes them so animated?
3. How are they a reflection of the city in which they reside?
4. Discuss how city parks are the embodiment of democratic principles.
5. What were some of the obstacles city park planners faced?
6. Discuss the background and history of public parks.
7. Why did people picnic in cemeteries? Why are cemeteries usually park-like?
8. How did the invention of the Otis Elevator thwart Frederick Olmstead's vision for New York's Central Park?
9. Why did Colonel Griffith J. Griffith donate Griffith Park to Los Angeles?
10. What was the Works Progress Administration (WPA)? How did this agency use Griffith Park?

11. Discuss the improbability of building Golden Gate Park.
12. How did World War II affect Golden Gate Park and the Hagiwara family?

Extended Activities

1. Design a city park for your city or the closest city to where you live.
2. Research the public parks in your area and create a diagram or flow chart illustrating the creation of one of the parks.