

# **Erie Canal**

## **Social Studies Lesson #1**

### **Introduction to the Erie Canal**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Objective:** Students will learn about how the Erie Canal was built. Students will understand how the Erie Canal works and why it was so important in New York.

**Materials:** Social Studies Text Book, paper, pencils, crayons, markers, chart paper.

**Standards: Standard #1-** History of the United States and New York  
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

**Procedure:**

1. As a whole class discuss what the students know about the Erie Canal. Chart down the student responses.
2. Show students pictures of the Erie Canal today and from the 1800's. Discuss with the students what the similarities and differences in the pictures. Ask students what they think changed when the Erie Canal was built. Chart down student responses.
3. Next have students read a section in their Social Studies Book, pages 166-169, with a partner. While students are reading have students take notes to answer the essential questions.  
*What is the Erie Canal?*  
*How does the Erie Canal work?*
4. When students have completed answering the essential questions and reading the designated sections students can draw a picture to show the difference between one aspect of the canal today and hundreds of years ago. This aspect could be the tools used to build the canal, the clothes worn or different types of transportation.

**Closing:**

As a whole group students will discuss their responses to the essential questions. Make sure that students understand the purpose of the Erie Canal and how it works. Ask students how they think New York changed with the addition of the Erie Canal. Chart down student responses for the following lesson that focuses on how New York changed with the completion of the Erie Canal.

## **Erie Canal Social Studies Lesson #2**

### **Impact of the Erie Canal**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Objective:** Students will learn about the different types of transportation in the early 1800's. Students will also understand the impact of the Erie Canal on the economies in New York State.

**Materials:** Social Studies Text Book, paper, pencils, worksheet, markers, chart paper.

**Standards: Standard #1-** History of the United States and New York  
Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Discuss with students the types of transportation that we have in our community today. (cars, planes, trains, boats, bikes...) Chart down student responses.
2. Discuss with students what we would do without these types of transportation. How would we get to school? How would we get food? How would we visit people?
3. Explain to students that the world would be a lot different without transportation. Also explain to students that today they are going to be reading a section of their Social Studies text book with a partner. They are going to be reading about the impact of the Erie Canal.
4. As students read pages 170-173, they are to focus on the essential questions and take notes to answer the questions.
5. These are the essential questions.  
*How did the Erie Canal change New York State?*  
*Why was the Erie Canal so important for the economy of New York State?*  
Students can also write down any questions or comments they have about the Erie Canal to use in later research.

#### **Closing:**

After students read the section about the Erie Canal, have the class as a group discuss the essential questions. Write down student comments on the chart. Then look back at student comments from the previous lesson about their predictions about the impact of the Erie Canal. Check and discuss student predictions.