



Curating the City: Wilshire Blvd.

Lesson 11: Los Angeles and the Automobile

What You Need to Know:

- Grade Level: Middle School 6-8, High School 9-12
- Curriculum Connections: English–Language Arts
- Kids' Guide Correlation: Use this lesson in conjunction with pages 2-3 and 23 of the Guide. As your class learns about the growth of Wilshire Boulevard, use this primary source activity to help students understand how the automobile affected the development of Los Angeles. You can modify this activity to examine how the advent of the automobile affected your own community.
- Website Correlation: Go to laconservancy.org/wilshire. Under “History of Wilshire Blvd.,” see the image gallery for a timeline, the “Life in the Fast Lane” section, and the overviews of each neighborhood along Wilshire.

Focus Questions:

- What was Los Angeles like before automobiles?
- How did the automobile change Los Angeles?

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to describe what Los Angeles was like before the automobile.
- Students will be able to identify how the automobile affected Los Angeles' growth.

Assessment:

Write an essay comparing and contrasting photographs of Wilshire Boulevard from the past and from the modern day.

Essential Vocabulary:

- Quadrant
- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- Public Transportation

Materials:

- Lesson 11 worksheet
- paper
- pencils
- primary source: photographs



Procedure

Motivation:

Distribute the Handout or display it as an overhead. Invite students to look at the chart and determine what information is being conveyed. Help students to understand that the chart shows the fifteen most traffic-congested cities as of 2012. Explain that the numbers on the chart indicate how many hours individuals in each city are delayed per year due to traffic problems. Tell students that in this lesson, they will learn about how automobiles have changed Los Angeles over the years.

Making Connections:

Distribute paper to students and ask them to estimate how much time they spend in the car each day. Ask them to write down the times of day that they're in the car, for what purpose they ride in a car, and what it's like in the areas when they drive. When is traffic at its worst? How do people in their family deal with traffic problems? Ask students to write a little bit about how they use public transportation. Ask them to write down the times of day that they're in the bus, for what purposes, and what it's like in the areas the bus travels through. What makes public transportation in Los Angeles a good choice? In what ways can public transportation be difficult?

Guided Instruction:

1. Use the historic photographs of traffic on Wilshire, which are attached to the Lesson 11 worksheet. You may choose to make copies for each student or display each photograph as an overhead projection.
 - Wilshire near Fairfax, early 1900s
 - Wilshire and Western, 1931
 - Wilshire and Westwood, 2005
2. Talk to students about strategies for looking at a historical photograph. Invite students to share their ideas about how historical photographs can provide useful information and details about life at other times in history. Tell students that they will be looking at these photographs for clues about how traffic in Los Angeles has changed over the years.
3. Make sure students know what the word quadrant means. Help them see how they can divide a photograph into four imaginary parts and look at each part closely. Distribute copies of the Lesson 11 worksheet (each student may need three copies, one for each photograph). Direct students to examine each of the three photographs closely and take notes on the worksheet.
4. Discuss student findings. Encourage them to use the clues from the photographs to make inferences about how traffic in Los Angeles has changed over the years. Invite students to share their personal responses to these photos. Were they surprised at how quickly the city has changed? What elements have remained the same?
5. Direct students to use their notes to write a detailed compare/contrast essay



about the photographs. Challenge them to draw their own conclusions about how Los Angeles traffic has changed over the years.

Assessment:

Write a detailed compare/contrast essay about the photographs, including conclusions about how Los Angeles traffic has changed over the years.

Reflection/Critical Thinking:

1. Invite students to think about how historical photographs help preservationists. For someone who works to save old buildings and neighborhoods, how can these images be useful?
2. Why is Los Angeles more dependent on cars than other cities, such as Boston or New York? Display maps of other American urban areas, and lead students to examine the density of shape of the streets of each. Lead them in discussing the years in which each city developed and the means of transportation available in each. How does the layout of Los Angeles reflect its growth in the age of the automobile?
3. Invite students to imagine what it might have been like to be a Los Angeles resident born at the start of the twentieth century. What kinds of changes would this person have witnessed over the years?

Enrichment Opportunities:

1. Extend your study of historical photographs with an emphasis on city architecture. Have students visit www.laconservancy.org/wilshire to see more buildings and learn about the development of Wilshire Boulevard. If you want students to search for buildings in their neighborhood or along another major thoroughfare, then direct them to the photo database at the Los Angeles Public Library (www.lapl.org).
2. Direct students to use the Photo Analysis Worksheet to do detailed observations of these images and use their knowledge to draw conclusions about architecture in Los Angeles.

Worksheet Answers:

Answers will vary.

California Standards:

English—Language Arts (Writing):

- 6.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions: Engage the interest of the reader and state a clear purpose.
 - a. Develop the topic with supporting details and precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives to paint a visual image in the mind of the reader.
 - b. Conclude with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of the composition.
- 6.1.3 Use a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns, including comparison and contrast; organization by categories; and arrangement by spatial order, order of importance, or climactic order.
- 6.2.2 Write expository compositions (e.g., description, explanation,



comparison and contrast, problem and solution):

- a. State the thesis or purpose.
- b. Explain the situation.
- c. Follow an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.
- d. Offer persuasive evidence to validate arguments and conclusions as needed.

6.2.3 Write research reports:

- a. Pose relevant questions with a scope narrow enough to be thoroughly covered.
- b. Support the main idea or ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations from multiple authoritative sources (e.g., speakers, periodicals, online information searches).

7.1.0 Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

7.1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

7.1.3 Use strategies of note taking, outlining, and summarizing to impose structure on composition drafts.

7.2.4 Write persuasive compositions:

- a. State a clear position or perspective in support of a proposition or proposal.
- b. Describe the points in support of the proposition, employing well-articulated evidence.
- c. Anticipate and address reader concerns and counterarguments.

8.1.0 Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

8.1.1 Create compositions that establish a controlling impression, have a coherent thesis, and end with a clear and well-supported conclusion.

8.1.2 Establish coherence within and among paragraphs through effective transitions, parallel structures, and similar writing techniques.

8.1.3 Support theses or conclusions with analogies, paraphrases, quotations,



opinions from authorities, comparisons, and similar devices.

8.1.5 Achieve an effective balance between researched information and original ideas.

8.2.4 Write persuasive compositions:

- a. Include a well-defined thesis (i.e. one that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment).
- b. Present detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning to support arguments, differentiating between facts and opinion.
- c. Provide details, reasons, and examples, arranging them effectively by anticipating and answering reader concerns and counterarguments.

9&10.1.0 Students write coherent and focused essays that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

9&10.1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

9&10.1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.

9&10.1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.

9&10.1.4 Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting evidence (e.g., scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, definitions).

9&10.1.5 Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g., almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).

9&10.2.3 Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports:

- a. Marshal evidence in support of a thesis and related claims, including information on all relevant perspectives.
- b. Convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently.



- c. Make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts, and ideas.
- 11&12.1.3 Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.
- 11&12.1.6 Develop presentations by using clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies (e.g., field studies, oral histories, interviews, experiments, electronic sources).
- 11&12.2.4 Write historical investigation reports:2.2.1 Compare and contrast basic land use in urban, suburban, and rural environments in California.
- a. Use exposition, narration, description, argumentation, or some combination of rhetorical strategies to support the main proposition.
 - b. Analyze several historical records of a single event, examining critical relationships between elements of the research topic.
 - c. Explain the perceived reason or reasons for the similarities and differences in historical records with information derived from primary and secondary sources to support or enhance the presentation.
 - d. Include information from all relevant perspectives and take into consideration the validity and reliability of sources.



Handout – Traffic Congestion in U.S. Cities, 2012

Rank	Urban area	Annual delay per person with 30 minute commute, in hours
1	Los Angeles	90
2	San Jose	84
3	San Francisco	83
-	Honolulu	83
-	Seattle	83
6	Houston	78
7	Austin	76
8	Atlanta	73
-	Washington DC	73
10	New York	71
-	Miami	71
-	Portland	71
13	Chicago	69
-	Boston	69
15	New Orleans	67

Source: 2014 TomTom Traffic Index <http://www.tomtom.com/lib/doc/pdf/2014-05-14%20TomTomTrafficIndex2013annualAme-mi.pdf>



Student Worksheet

Name _____

PHOTO ANALYSIS

1. Observation

Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities

2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might guess based on evidence from this photograph.

3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

B. Where might you find answers to them?

Source: National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo.html>



Wilshire near Fairfax, ca. 1900s
(Tom Zimmerman Collection)



Wilshire and Western, 1931
(Security Pacific Collection/Los Angeles Public Library)



Wilshire and Westwood, 2005
(Photo by Larry Underhill)