**Coney Island – Unit Map**

*Over the course of the next six weeks, the class will be reading the book* Coney Island *by Professor Solomon each session, adding information to a KWL chart each week, and completing a timeline of the history of Coney Island. The unit will be taught on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday each week.*

**Week 1: Introduce Coney Island**

**Day 1** – KWL Chart – *“What do we know about Coney Island? What do we want to learn?”*

The class will create a KWL chart about Coney Island. We will also begin reading the chapter book *Coney Island* by Professor Solomon. This book is a non-fiction story, written somewhat autobiographically, and it will give the students insight into what it was like to like at Coney Island during the peak of its popularity. This book will be read aloud during the course of the unit.

**Day 2** – Map Search and Investigation – “*Where is Coney Island located?”*

Using a map of Coney Island, the students will search for key words, locations of monuments, parks, and other important places within the Coney Island area. Students will identify their present location (the school) within New York City and determine how far away from Coney Island they are living. This activity will be done in partnerships.

**Day 3** – Sensory Exploration – “*Which five senses were stimulated at Coney Island?”*

The class will participate in a sensory exploration activity, in which they will be investigating the various forms of sensory stimulation at Coney Island. This will include *touch* (sand and water from the Coney Island shoreline), *sound* (waves crashing, rollercoasters, screams, bells and whistles, etc.), *taste* (hot dogs, sweets, and other foods offered at Coney Island), *smell* (cooking food, the beach, smoke), and *sight* (amusement rides, freak shows, the beach, early 20th century fashion, etc.). Students will make observations about the various sensory experiences.

**Week 2: Music**

**Day 4** – Looking at Lyrics – *“How has Coney Island played a part in the music industry?”*

As a class, we will be listening to a couple of songs that have been written and recorded that have Coney Island as a main subject. The students will discuss what emotions were stirred while listening to the selected songs. After the listening exercise, students will work in small groups to analyze the lyrics of the songs. They will identify patterns within and amongst the songs. To prepare for tomorrow’s lesson, groups will choose a stanza from their favorite song.

**Day 5** – Tableaus of Song Lyrics – *“How do writers use ‘show not tell’ to tell stories?”*

Using the songs that were listened to and discussed in the previous lesson, the class will be studying the writing technique of “show not tell”. We will look at the ways in which writers show what they are writing about, by using sensory details and elaborate descriptions instead of simple sentences. The small groups will use the stanza chosen in the previous day’s lesson to create tableaus. This is an aspect of showing and not telling a situation or scene.

**Day 6** – Poetry/Songwriting – *“How can we use ‘show not tell’ to write poetry?”*

The songs we have been studying this past week were most likely written because the songwriter felt a certain connection to Coney Island. The students will be writing poems about a place they feel connection to and inspired by in their own lives. This place is solely up to the individual student’s discretion. The style in which they write their poems is also up to the individual student; however, they MUST use show-not-tell in their writing.

**Week 3: Freak Shows and Sideshows**

**Day 7** – Intro to Sideshows – “*What were the sideshows?”*

The class will view video(s) that discuss the history and variety of the sideshows and freak shows that were popular at Coney Island. They will explore the various acts that ran and discuss their reactions to this form of entertainment.

**Day 8** – Personal Exploration – “*Did the performers in the sideshows embrace their oddities?”*

The students will be doing some introspective work today, identifying what qualities make them unique and special. They will be asking themselves, “What role do I play? What makes me different?” This will be done through discussion and writing.

**Day 9** – The Classroom Sideshows – “*How am I similar to a sideshow performer?”*

This is a day of celebration and performance! The students will be performing the act, talent, or quality about themselves that makes them unique. This may include performances like tongue rolling or trilling, being double jointed, flexibility, etc. The classroom community will be supportive and embracing of each student’s unique talent.

**Week 4: Food and Cuisine**

**Day 10** – Introduction to Food – “*How did Nathan’s Hot Dogs come to be so renowned?”*

Today, the class will discuss what they know about Nathan’s Hot Dogs and the Fourth of July eating contest. They will be focusing on this Coney Island staple this week, looking more in depth at the establishment of Nathan’s, the science behind the eating competition’s “athletes” stomachs, and what goes into making a classic Polish hot dog.

**Day 11** – Health – “*How can the competitors fit so much food in their stomachs?”*

Students will be taking a closer look at the preparation and training the food competitors go through to ready their bodies for competition. They will learn how the athletes expand their stomachs, why/how some of the participants are thin, and what happens to their bodies immediately after the competition and into the “off-season”.

**Day 12** – Cooking Day – “*What goes into making classic Polish hot dogs?”*

After learning about the differences between certain hot dogs and sausages, students will be working in pairs to mix ingredients and make their own hot dogs. This activity will not only give the students the chance to work with their hands, it provides them with the experience of seeing exactly what goes into the food they eat. Hot dogs are so readily available to New Yorkers, yet few people are actually aware of the creation process.

**Week 5: Rides and Rollercoasters**

**Day 13 –** *Feivel’s Flying Horses* – “*How did immigrants cope with the realities of America?”*

Using the book *Feivel’s Flying Horses* by Heidi Smith Hyde as a read aloud introduction, we will be discussing the ways in which European immigrants dealt with the American dream/reality complex that was made evident upon arrival in the United States. Additionally, this book will introduce the evolution of the Coney Island amusement parks.

**Day 14** – Amusement Parks – *“How did Coney Island transform throughout the years?”*

Students will be studying the history of Coney Island’s amusement parks and roller coasters. Throughout the years, several fires decimated sections of Luna Park, Steeplechase Park, and Dreamland. These disasters caused rides to be rebuilt, and the students will be learning more about its history.

**Day 15** – Field Trip – “*Can we connect what we have been learning in the classroom to what we see in real life?”*

We will be taking a field trip to Coney Island. Students will be equipped with field trip sheets that require them to identify specified landmarks (location of amusement parks, Nathan’s Hot Dogs, sideshows), locate The Cyclone, and solve a couple of math problems that relate to the architecture of the rollercoaster. By taking this field trip, students will be given the opportunity to visualize and possibly “imagine away” Coney Island as it currently stands and how it was one hundred years ago.

**Week 6: Conclusion, Final Project, and Share**

**Day 16** – Roller Coaster Creation – “*What did it take to construct The Cyclone ride?”*

In small groups, students will be constructing miniature models of the rollercoasters they saw in the previous week’s trip to Coney Island. They will be using toothpicks, small dowels, and marshmallows to construct their models. This project will reinforce their knowledge of the appearance of the structures at Coney Island, increase their awareness of the complexities of constructing a wooden rollercoaster, and challenge them to experiment with various techniques for balance, sturdiness, and appearance.

**Day 17** – Roller Coaster Creation/Brochure Creation – “*Should Coney Island be preserved?”*

After finishing up the roller coaster models, students will develop a persuasive brochure that discusses whether or not Coney Island should be preserved. The destination’s recent history includes much turmoil and controversy. Taking what they have learned about Coney Island, their brochures should strongly reflect their stance. Students will be able to begin this project in class, using a class discussion to refresh their minds about the content covered over the previous five weeks. They will have the following two nights to complete their brochures at home. This project will be graded as the summative assessment for this unit of study.

**Day 18** – Conclusion to the Unit

Today will be a day of concluding and celebrating. The class will complete the KWL chart and timeline. The video that the teacher made of the unit process, with footage from the sideshow performance, field trip, and rollercoaster construction day, will be shown. Additionally, students who wish to perform their unique talent will be able to do so on this day. As a class, we will reflect on the last six weeks, give feedback and opinions about what was learned, and wrap-up the unit of study.