

BEFORE
THE GRID

THE
1811 PLAN

BUILDING
THE GRID

19TH-CENTURY
DEVELOPMENT

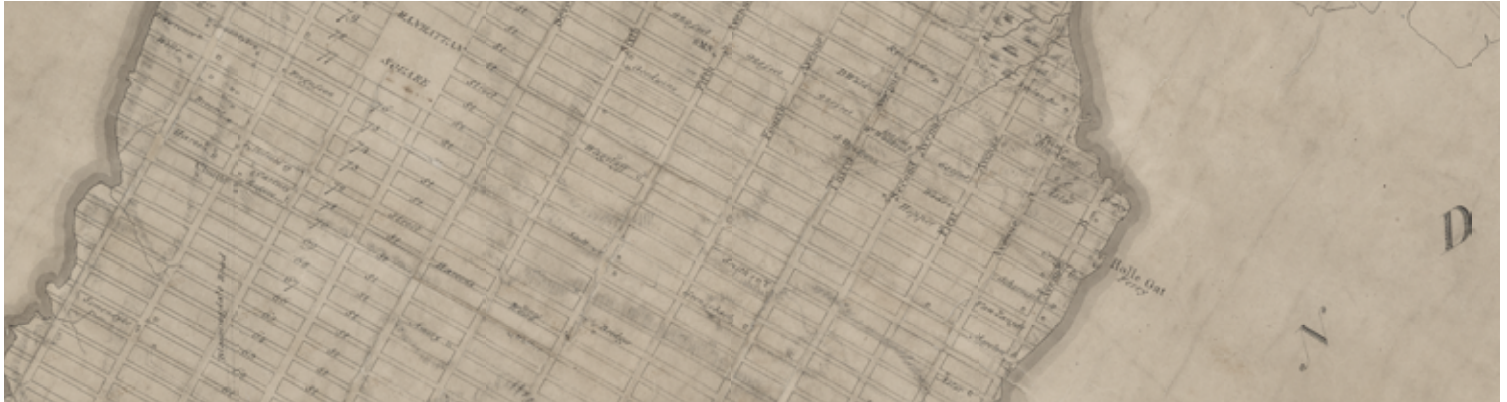
20TH CENTURY
– NOW

LIVING ON
THE GRID

OTHER
GRIDS

Lesson Plan 2

The 1811 Plan



The Commissioners' Plan of 1811 (Detail) [[Link](#)]

OVERVIEW

Students will analyze elements of the Commissioners' Plan of 1811 to understand how the street plan provided a framework and articulated the vision for the grid.

RESOURCE

The Commissioners' Plan of 1811

John Randel, Jr., *A Map of the city of New York by the commissioners appointed by an act of the legislature passed April 3rd 1807* (known as the Commissioners' Plan), 1811; [[Link](#)]

106 x 30 7/16 in.

Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

STUDENT GOALS

- Students will understand the street grid as a defining feature of New York City today.
- Students will be able to articulate the basic components of the street plan.
- Students will be able to explain how the street plan led to the city's development and growth in the 19th and 20th centuries.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

1st Grade:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.1

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

5th Grade:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2

Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

11th Grade:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

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KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY

- Commissioners
- Grid
- Plan

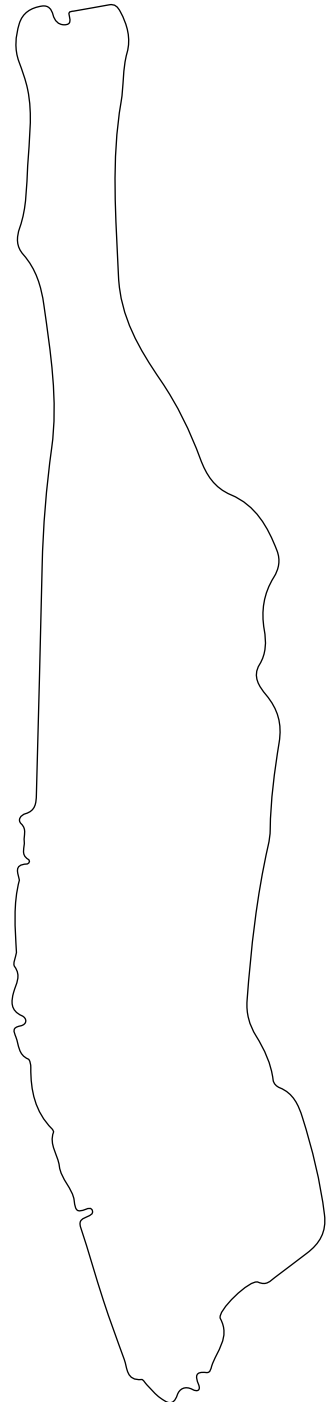
DOCUMENT BASED ACTIVITY – DRAFTING A PLAN

Before revealing the Commissioners' Plan of 1811, students will be invited to submit their own version for a 19th-century plan for consideration. Students will be given the following criteria:

- A means to move goods to and from the East and Hudson Rivers
- Streets running north and south
- Right angled buildings
- Public meeting grounds

Students will receive blank maps of Manhattan. In pairs or in small groups, students will respond to the above criteria and will create a first draft of a street plan. Students will then brainstorm what else a city needs in order to function and grow. Ideas can include places to shop, live, play, learn, get help, and work. Students can come up with examples such as apartment buildings, schools, restaurants, pharmacies, toy stores, museums, parks, etc. Students will add these to their drafts before presenting the maps, as well as a written summary, to the class. Discuss with students if laying out the streets first helped decide where to place the buildings and institutions and why or why not.

Following the presentation, the teacher will show the Commissioners' Plan of 1811 and invite students to respond to it. How does it match up to the students' plans? Any similarities? Any major differences?



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DOCUMENT BASED ACTIVITY – REVEALING THE PLAN



The Commissioners' Plan of 1811

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Using the Commissioners' Plan of 1811, invite students to point out any areas they recognize – what has stayed the same in 200 years and what has changed. Students will note, as examples, that the street plan itself is largely consistent with present-day Manhattan but Central Park was a later addition, and Broadway was included after having been left off the grid. Using the “find an address” function, students can locate present day addresses and view how specific places have changed over time.

RELATED COLLECTIONS PORTAL IMAGES



Wurts Bros.
[Fifth Avenue and 50th Street.] ca. 1940 [[Link](#)]
Museum of the City of New York. X2010.7.1.18317



Berenice Abbott
Berenice Abbott. Seventh Avenue Looking South from 35th Street. December 5, 1935. [[Link](#)]
Museum of the City of New York. 49.282.240



United States Office of War Information.
Fifth Ave. & 42nd St. intersection. 1944. [[Link](#)]
Museum of the City of New York. 90.28.23



United States Office of War Information.
Garment district at lunchtime. 1944. [[Link](#)]
Museum of the City of New York. 90.28.57.