Unit One addressed the big picture of labor market realities—which industries are growing, which are shrinking, and technology’s impact on the market. They learned about a wide range of direct service careers in Hospitality, Recreation and the Arts and considered indirect service provider careers that exist in the industry. They learned about the various kinds of career families and employer types available to employees in the Hospitality, Recreation and the Arts sector.

Unit Two addressed the inner workings of the job-seeker. What are her interests and passions? What kind of work environment will she enjoy? What careers should she consider based on what she knows about herself and what factors might influence someone making a career change? Students also learned to navigate career database websites, assess their own interests and conduct a group research project about careers in the Hospitality, Recreation and the Arts sector.

In Unit Three, students learned what it takes to prepare for a career in Hospitality, Recreation and the Arts. They learned about common career pathways and considered how career movement happens in this sector. What kinds of training are required and what kinds of educational opportunities are available for someone interested in working in these fields?

In Unit Four students heard from Hospitality, Recreation and the Arts workers themselves, through firsthand accounts and interviews in text and video, and discussed what they learned. After learning about particular careers as a class, they conducted further research on Hospitality, Recreation and the Arts careers of their choice.

In Unit Five, students explored the job search process, including how to leverage their existing and potential networks, analyzing help wanted ads, learning about workplace expectations and engaging with a panel of industry professionals. Students also learned about how to become entrepreneurs by reading narratives of workers who have started their own business and by practicing using online resources available to New Yorkers looking to become self-employed.
Unit Six explores how Recreation and the Arts are used to enhance personal and community well-being. What roles can local governments and communities play in increasing well-being? What strategies are they using to support the well-being of the individuals that live in them? How can community members influence local governments to provide more resources for Recreation and the Arts? Are there cultural resources near my home that I don’t already know about?

1. **SERIES: RECREATION AND THE ARTS IN MY LIFE**

In this three-part series, students first reflect in writing on their own experiences with Recreation and the Arts. Then, they conduct internet research to identify Arts and Recreation resources in their own communities, creating a cultural listings guide. And finally, using their local information, they write a letter to their councilperson requesting increased funding for Recreation and the Arts in their community.

1.1 • **Writing About Personal Experiences with Recreation and the Arts**

Students draw on their own and their peers’ experiences to articulate the benefits of Recreation and Arts activities to themselves and their communities. They write about one particularly impactful experience with Recreation and the Arts.

1.2 • **Local Research: Recreation and the Arts in My Backyard**

Grouped by neighborhood, students conduct internet research to identify recreational and cultural offerings in their communities. They paraphrase their findings in writing, then form larger borough-wide groups to create a cultural listings guide for their borough or area.

1.3 • **Persuasive Writing: Requesting Funding in Recreation and the Arts**

Students analyze a letter from a community member to her councilperson about increasing funding in the Arts, then identify their own councilperson, and write a persuasive letter, urging their councilperson to support one particular Arts or Recreation project in their own community, providing evidence for their argument.
Unit 6 • Summary

2. **CITING EVIDENCE: STRONG COMMUNITIES NEED RECREATION AND THE ARTS**

In a jig-saw reading, students read one of four research studies on the role of Recreation and the Arts in individual and community well-being, then pool their information to answer questions about all articles.

3. **GROUNDSWELL NYC: PUBLIC ART AND COMMUNITY IMPACT SERIES**

By interpreting articles, artwork and videos, students learn about Groundswell, an organization that uses community interviews and local arts participants to create neighborhood murals with a social impact. Students consider different kinds of opportunities available at such organizations, and lastly, they identify what is required for communities to be healthy and happy.

3.1 • Visual Literacy: An Introduction to Groundswell NYC

Students interpret an image of a Groundswell public art mural to build vocabulary and observation skills, critical thinking and question development. Then they watch and discuss a video about Groundswell’s artists, participants and community-centered process.

3.2 • Groundswell Career Brainstorm

Students watch a video about Groundswell, taking note of the opportunities and careers that might be available at such organizations, and the skills necessary for each of these jobs.

3.3 • Developing Interview Questions: Community Art Engagement

Students identify what all communities need to be healthy and happy. Then students develop sample interview questions and practice interviewing a classmate using these questions.

4. **RESEARCHING LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Students explore the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation website to learn about their local parks and about a fitness initiative, Shape Up NYC. They read about two parks in their borough and practice paraphrasing.

5. **RESEARCHING LOCAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**

In groups, students research one borough-based arts organization and paraphrase information from the website.

5.1 • Presenting a Local Arts Organization

Students make presentations on the services and goals of the arts organization they researched.

*RAENs will provide regional adaptations.*
### Series: Recreation and the Arts in My Life

In this three-part series, students first reflect in writing on their own experiences with Recreation and the Arts. Then, they conduct internet research to identify Arts and Recreation resources in their own communities, creating a cultural listings guide. And finally, using their local information, they write a letter to their councilperson requesting increased funding for Recreation and the Arts in their community. These activities are best done together as a series, though modifications can be made to do each as a stand-alone activity.

**Activities in This Series**

1.1 • Writing About Personal Experiences with Recreation and the Arts

1.2 • Local Research: Recreation and the Arts in My Backyard

1.3 • Presenting a Written Argument: Requesting Funding in Recreation and the Arts
Writing About Personal Experiences with Recreation and the Arts

Students draw on their own and their peers’ experiences to describe the benefits of recreation and art activities. They consider their own experiences with these activities, and write about one that was particularly impactful to them. They practice active listening by taking notes on a classmate’s story of meaningful recreation and art activities.

PREP

- Prepare to discuss 3-4 personal experiences in recreation and the arts that had a meaningful impact on you.

MATERIALS

- Recreation and the Arts: I Remember When... handout
- The Benefits of Recreation and the Arts handout

EXPLAIN

1. We’ve been exploring jobs in the Hospitality, Recreation and the Arts Sector. Now we’re going to think about the value of Arts and Recreation in our own experiences and to our communities. Let’s get started by thinking, as a class, of as many arts and recreation activities as we can.

2. Divide the board into two columns. Label one Recreation and the other Arts. Ask for examples from the class and write them on the board. It’s ok if some activities fall into both categories.

   If students have difficulty identifying a diverse range of activities, you might ask questions such as “What other kinds of arts are there besides music? Have you taken your child to a recreation activity? Where did it take place? What other forms of recreation are there besides exercising? What activities do you do outside of your home for enjoyment in your free time?”

3. You’re going to think about your own personal experiences in Recreation and the Arts, ones that had a big impact on you, and may have even changed the course of your life.
Before students talk in pairs about their experiences, the teacher shares her own experiences, drawing from the stories developed in the prep for this activity. She briefly describes 3 or 4 experiences from her own life. She then explains what made her choose these experiences in particular to discuss.

4. On a piece of paper, list three experiences you have had in Recreation and the Arts that have had a big impact on you.

5. In pairs, share your stories with your partner, describing the experiences and why they are important to you.

6. Now choose one that you are going to write about in detail.

7. Distribute the *Recreation and the Arts: I Remember When...* handout and ask students to free-write in response to the prompt.

8. When students have written for 15 minutes or so, ask them to reread their free-writes and add anything they may have left out or quickly clarify any part that might be confusing.

9. Distribute a copy of *The Benefits of Recreation and the Arts* to each student. Students should tell their partners about the experience that they wrote about. They should then complete *The Benefits of Recreation and the Arts* handout based on the story they heard.

10. **Ask:** What are some of the benefits of engaging in Recreation and the Arts activities?

   Write responses on the board. As a class, read over the list together, and categorize it into the kinds of benefits each Recreation and the Arts activity provides, such as social/emotional (for example, the benefit of seeing art in a museum, on the street or in a performance space), health (for example, the benefit of walking, biking, jogging or doing other physical activities in a park) and educational (for example, learning about local history through neighborhood murals).
Recreation and the Arts: I Remember When...

Write about a Recreation or Arts experience that positively impacted you. Describe the activity and your role. Be as specific as possible as you describe its effects.

- What were you doing?
- Why were you doing it?
- What did it feel like to do this activity?
- How has doing this activity affected you?
- Who else was there?
- What changes did you notice in yourself, either while doing it, immediately after, or upon reflection?
- What kind of guidance, if any, did you have?
- Where were you doing it?
The Benefits of Recreation and the Arts

Answer the questions below based on the Recreation and Arts experience your partner described.

1. What was the activity?

2. What was the person’s role in the activity?

3. Who was the activity designed for?

4. Identify ALL the benefits this activity provided and explain the importance of these benefits:

5. How could this activity benefit not only your classmate, but others in the community as well?
Local Research: Recreation and the Arts in My Backyard

Students use the internet to conduct group research on cultural resources. They also learn about IDNYC and the cultural benefits available to card-holders. After identifying local resources, students paraphrase their findings and create a borough-wide resource list, then share those listings with the class.

PREP

- Study the map below to learn about the relationship of NYC neighborhoods to one another. If you know the neighborhoods your students live in, focus especially on those neighborhoods and boroughs.

• Write the following URLs on the board:

www.nycgovparks.org/
www.greenthumbnyc.org/
www1.nyc.gov/site/idnyc/benefits/museums-and-cultural-institutions.page
www.nyc-arts.org/organizations

MATERIALS
• Recreation and the Arts in My Backyard handout
• This activity requires computer use
• Index cards or 1/8 sheet pieces of paper
• Newsprint and markers

EXPLAIN

1 New York City is considered one of the cultural capitals of the world. Unfortunately, our cultural institutions are not evenly distributed across all neighborhoods, but New York is always changing and new opportunities to get outdoor exercise, use New York’s waterways, be in nature, and enjoy art are cropping up more than ever before. The trick is to know where to find them! Today you will be a cultural ambassador. You are going to research the cultural offerings and as a class we are going to compile a list.

2 Divide the class into five groups. Each group will research one of New York City’s five boroughs.

3 Distribute Recreation and the Arts in My Backyard. Groups should discuss the questions and respond based on their own knowledge. Then, they should use the websites written on the board to add more responses.

4 Groups share their findings with the class.

Discuss:
• Are there any cultural resources you didn’t previously know about?
• Are there any you might take advantage of?
• Did you find any websites you might return to?
**EXTENSION ACTIVITY:**

- Students create an arts and recreation resource list for their assigned borough.

- Distribute 3-5 sheets of newsprint and markers to each group.

- Draw the chart below on board and tell students to make a 5-column chart, containing the name of the organization, location (address or neighborhood), website address (URL), services offered, and one free or low-cost upcoming event they want to highlight, including the cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
<th>SERVICES</th>
<th>UPCOMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica Center for the Arts &amp; Learning</td>
<td>161-04 Jamaica Avenue, Jamaica, Queens</td>
<td>Jcal.org</td>
<td>Music, dance and theater performances, school workshops, visual art exhibitions, rehearsal and performance space rental.</td>
<td>First Friday series – FREE. Performing artists show works in progress, helping them to develop their work, and audiences can see new performances for free while learning about the artistic process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As time allows, groups can present their cultural listings to the class. You may want to keep these listings posted for students to refer to in the weeks to come or even plan or assign a trip.
Recreation and the Arts in My Backyard

Answer the questions below based on your group’s knowledge and internet research.

Borough: ______________________________

1. Identify two public parks in the borough and describe their locations.

2. Describe any facilities they offer, such as playgrounds, walking trails, dog parks, concert venues, barbecue grills and picnic tables, etc.

3. Describe any recreation or cultural programming they offer, such as classes or performances.

4. Identify one community garden in the borough. Describe its location and any important information for users or visitors.
5. Describe three arts organizations in the borough. Include their location and offerings, and any other relevant information.

6. Describe one important resource for children in the borough. Why is this an important resource for families?

7. Identify three cultural events that take place in the borough. They could include performances, workshops, parades, etc. Describe when and where they will take place, what they offer, and how people can find out further information.

8. What is IDNYC and how does it help New Yorkers take advantage of cultural opportunities inside of and outside of their neighborhoods?
### Persuasive Writing: Requesting Funding in Recreation and the Arts

Students analyze a letter from a community member to her councilperson urging him to support increased funding to the arts. Then they identify their own councilperson, and write their own letter requesting funds for an art or recreation activity in their own community. This can be done as a follow-up to the previous activity, in which they researched arts and recreational institutions in their neighborhood.

**PREP**

- Read all materials
- Become familiar with searching by address for a councilperson at council.nyc.gov

**MATERIALS**

- *Letter to Councilperson Koo* handout
- *Analysis of Letter to Councilperson Koo* handout
- *Completed Sample Prewrite Planner* handout
- *Teresa Chin’s Pre-write Planner*
- *Prewrite Planner for a Letter to My Councilperson*
- *Letter Writing Guide* handout
- This lesson requires internet access, whether through computers or phones.

**EXPLAIN**

1. Recreation and Arts activities are fundamental to healthy individuals and communities, but they aren’t always well funded and available to the public. Today you are going to write a letter to a councilperson requesting funding for an arts or recreation activity in your own community.

   **Note**: If students did the previous activity, they can use one of the local arts and recreation institutions they identified in that activity as the focal point of the letter.

2. Before you write your own letter, you’re going to read a letter written by a community member to her own councilperson about the need for increased arts funding in her neighborhood.
Distribute the *Letter to Councilperson Koo* and the *Analysis of Letter to Councilperson Koo* handouts and ask students to read the letter twice silently, then respond to the analysis questions in pairs.

3. Discuss the reading and analysis questions as a class. Ask students to provide evidence for their choices in labeling each underlined sentence as they did. Clarify confusions as needed.

4. Distribute *Teresa Chin’s Prewrite Planner*. Ask students to read it silently.

   **Ask:**
   
   Why do you think Teresa made this planner?
   
   In which column did Teresa describe her experiences with Recreation and the Arts?
   
   ▶ *In the second column.*
   
   Why didn’t she write in full sentences?
   
   ▶ *She’s taking notes to get her ideas down on paper; thinking about which details are most important to include in the letter. Abbreviating, either by shortening words or writing phrases from sentences, is useful when you’re not writing the actual draft, as long as you know what the shortened words and phrases mean.*

   Did she include all of the details she mentions in parentheses in Column 3?
   
   ▶ *No.*

   Why do you think she left some out?
   
   ▶ *She decided to include only the details that she thought could help her make a strong argument without going on for too long. She balanced telling a good story with keeping the attention of a busy public official. She had to make decisions about which details were most memorable and most connected to her argument.*

   What is the difference between the information in Column 3 and the information in Column 4?
   
   ▶ *Column 3 asks for benefits that the writer experienced first-hand. Column 4 asks the writer to explain why these experiences are important to others.*

5. You’re going to write a letter to your own councilperson about an arts or recreation organization or project in your community that you think should get funded by the city council. Do you know who your councilperson is?
If you don’t:

- Go to council.nyc.gov
- Click on Find Your District/Member
- Enter your address, including the borough or county, and find out who your councilperson is.

Students can use classroom computers, if available, or their phones.

6 Think of an art or recreation resource in your community that you have had a positive experience with. It could be a park, a community arts organization, a concert series, a landmark or other institution that needs maintenance, or others. If it received funding from the city council, how could it become even better, serve more people or expand its offerings? How would this funding contribute to the well-being of your community? You’re going to describe your experience with this community resource and urge your councilperson to provide funding for it.

7 Distribute the Prewrite Planner for a Letter to My Councilperson and ask students to complete it based on a positive experience they had with an arts or recreation resource in their community. Circulate and provide support as necessary.

8 Distribute the Letter Writing Guide. Review it with students and give students 30-45 minutes to write their letters. You may also want students to focus on certain writing features you have been working on in class, for example, topic sentences or providing details to back up an argument.

9 Collect the letters and provide feedback to students.
Letter to Councilperson Koo

Dear Councilperson Koo,

I am a resident of Flushing, Queens. I am writing to ask you to vote “yes” on the proposal this week to budget more money for children’s concerts in Flushing Meadows Park. I would like to tell you about the benefits my family and I have gotten from attending the children’s concert series. I hope my experiences will provide evidence that convinces you to vote in favor of the proposal.

I have a daughter and a son who are in primary school. This summer, we attended three children’s concerts that were held at Flushing Meadow Park in Queens, where I live. Each of the concerts presented a different kind of music. The first was Latin, the second was jazz and the third was folk. The music at each show was different, but all of the performers found ways to bring the audience into the music and help us understand the meanings of the songs. Through their jokes and stories they had us laughing and realizing that we shared many experiences in common.

I loved the way kids were learning some concepts from the different songs, too. There was one song that got the kids to show that they knew the difference between hopping, skipping and running in place. Another song taught them about chemistry symbols. The tunes were great and being outside allowed our children to enjoy nature at the same time that they got involved in the arts.

All of the artists involved the kids (and the adults) in movement, whether it was clapping our hands, forming shapes with our bodies or doing dance steps that they taught us. As we clapped and moved together, the kids made new friends and the adults, people who didn’t know each other, began to talk to each other. I came home feeling relaxed and in a great mood. And now, when I see some of those folks in my neighborhood, we stop and talk to each other. We know each other’s names, and the names of one another’s kids.

I will remember those concerts for a long time because of the way they taught my kids new things and built the audience into a community. The performers were some of New York City’s top musicians, and to be able to see them for free is an incredible opportunity.

I am requesting that you consider the proposal to provide more money for children’s programming in the park because of all the benefits I’ve talked about in this letter. These concerts give kids an opportunity to move around in open spaces, learn about different kinds of music and traditions, and connect with other kids in the community. I think that bringing more children’s concerts to the community will help our children develop a love of learning, and will help us adults develop stronger ties in the community. Please vote in support of the proposal.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Very truly yours,

Teresa Chin
Analysis of Letter to Councilperson Koo

Using the Letter to Councilperson Koo, complete the tasks below with a partner.

1. Reread the letter and identify the purpose(s) of each of the underlined sentences.

2. Determine which of the intentions below describes the purpose of each underlined sentence, by marking the letter of the intention below next to the underlined sentence in the letter.

   A. Introduces the reason for the letter
   B. Provides concrete details about the art/recreation experience
   C. Describes some of the benefits that the experience provided
   D. Explains why these benefits are important

3. What are two reasons why this writer thinks children’s concerts should be funded?
**Teresa Chin’s Pre-Write Planner**

Below is the process Teresa used when planning her letter to Councilperson Koo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What recreation or art-based activity are you asking to be funded?</th>
<th>What experience have you had with this activity?</th>
<th>What are the benefits of this activity?</th>
<th>Why are these benefits important (to individuals and communities)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids’ concerts in the Flushing Meadow Park</td>
<td>Took my two kids to 3 concerts this summer -</td>
<td>The kids learned about different cultures, different kinds of music and also something about chemistry. (maybe describe one of the stories a singer told?)</td>
<td>Teaches kids that learning can be fun -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each band played different kinds of music -</td>
<td>The kids - and I - moved around a lot - got much-needed physical exercise. (write about the different kinds of movements they made)</td>
<td>Helps neighbors get to know each other - this can result in safer communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin, jazz, folk - the singers were funny!</td>
<td>We were outdoors in a beautiful space - (maybe describe setting?)</td>
<td>Encourages kids and adults to participate in healthy, physical activity ... this can result in more exercise-conscious neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My kids sang along - they played with a lot of other kids - they danced - they ran around a lot at each concert -</td>
<td>They made new friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The place in the park where the concerts were held was very pretty -</td>
<td>I got to know some people in my community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We got home in a good mood -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-WRITE Planner for a Letter to My Councilperson

In planning to write a letter to your councilperson requesting funding for an activity that you have found to be beneficial, make notes in response to each question below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What recreation or art-based activity are you asking to be funded?</th>
<th>What experience have you had with this activity?</th>
<th>What are the benefits of this activity?</th>
<th>Why are these benefits important (to individuals and communities)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Letter Writing Guide**

Write a letter to your councilperson requesting money to fund a recreation or art activity that you know provides benefits. It can be an activity you have participated in, or one you know about but have not experienced yet. Use your *Prewrite Planner* and the *Letter to Councilperson Koo* to help you include the following:

- A paragraph that introduces yourself and explains the reason for your letter.
- A paragraph that describes your recreation or arts experience and how it benefited you and/or your family and/or neighborhood.
- A paragraph that discusses why you think these benefits are important for individuals and communities.
- A paragraph that closes the letter courteously and highlights the benefits you’ve discussed.
Citing Evidence: Strong Communities Need Recreation and the Arts

Students read and take notes on studies that examine the benefits of Recreation and the Arts to individuals and communities. They do a jigsaw reading, presenting the study they read about in small groups, then pooling their information to answer questions about all the readings.

PREP

- Read all of the articles and handouts
- Be prepared to discuss the terms: anecdotal evidence, scientific evidence, scientific method
- Write on the board:

  - Purpose
  - Process
  - Findings
  - Questions

MATERIALS

- Being a Musician is Good For Your Brain article
- New Study Shows How Arts and Culture Improve Health, Safety and Well-Being in New York City's Less Prosperous Neighborhoods article
- New Study Says Making Art Reduces Stress, Even if You’re Not Very Good At It article
- Research Suggests Parks and Green Spaces Can Reduce Crime article
- Recreation and the Arts Research Findings handout
- Recreation and the Arts Research Notes handout (three per student)
- Benefits of Recreation and the Arts on Individuals and Communities handout
EXPLAIN

1. There are so many ways that arts and recreation activities can benefit individuals and communities. Name some that you have seen from your personal experience.

2. This kind of evidence, your own personal experiences, or stories from people you know, is called anecdotal evidence. You can use anecdotal evidence to debate with friends about what’s right, or a course of action that should be taken, but because your findings are based on individual experiences, it does not carry the same weight as another kind of evidence, called scientific evidence. Scientific evidence, unlike personal experience, is based on systematic observation or experimentation, collecting information (data), and recording results in a process known as the scientific method. When you’re making an argument in a public or academic setting, your argument is strengthened if you rely on research that uses the scientific method.

3. Today we’re going to read scientific research about the benefits of Recreation and the Arts. You’re going to take notes on the research you and your peers read, and then practice summarizing the research before presenting it to others.

   Divide the class into groups of four. Assign and distribute one reading to each group. As students read the article, they should mark sections of the article that:

   - Describe the purpose of the study (what the researchers wanted to find out)
   - Describe what the researchers did (their process)
   - Describe the study’s findings (what the researchers learned)
   - Are confusing and write a question about the confusion.

4. Now discuss your annotations with your group:
   What is the purpose of the study? What did the researchers do to learn about their topic? What did the research find? What questions do you have?

5. Distribute the Recreation and the Arts Research Findings handout and review it with students. Answer the questions with the help of your group.

6. In a minute, you will present this research to students who have not read this article. In pairs take turns presenting information from the handout, so that you will be prepared to express the main ideas of the article to people who have not read it.

7. Divide each group into new groups, composed of at least one member of the previous group, so that all four articles are represented in each group.
8 Distribute *Recreation and the Arts Research Notes* handouts to each student. Each student should receive three handouts, so they can take notes on the three articles that they themselves did not read.

Students should read through each question to make sure they understand them all. Then each student takes turns teaching their article to the group. As one student presents, the others are taking notes.

9 Distribute *Benefits of Recreation and the Arts on Individuals and Communities*. Groups should pool their expertise to answer all questions completely.

10 As a class, discuss the responses to the *Benefits of Recreation and the Arts on Individuals and Communities*.

11 Discuss the process of the jig-saw reading. You may ask questions such as:

- What skills did you practice during this activity?
  - Reading for understanding; annotation; note-taking; listening for understanding; providing evidence for an idea; collaboration with peers.

- Which part of this activity was most difficult for you?

- What did you learn about Recreation and the Arts?

- What kind of Recreation and the Arts do you currently engage in? Are there other kinds you would like to engage in?

- What did you learn about the scientific method?
Being A Musician Is Good For Your Brain

By Carolyn Gregoire

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/playing-music-brain-benefits-aging_us_58765d35e4b03c8a02d4713b7

Playing music keeps your brain sharp. Science has shown that musical training can change brain structure and function for the better, improve long-term memory and lead to better brain development for those who start in childhood. Musicians may also be more mentally alert, according to new research. A University of Montreal study, slated to appear in the February issue of the journal, Brain and Cognition, shows that musicians have significantly faster reaction times than non-musicians.

The findings suggest that learning to play a musical instrument could keep your brain sharp as you age, and may help prevent certain aspects of cognitive decline in older adults. “As people get older, for example, we know their reaction times get slower,” Simon Landry, the study’s lead author and a Ph.D. student in Biomedical Ethics, said in a statement. “So if we know that playing a musical instrument increases reaction times, then maybe playing an instrument will be helpful for them.”

For the small study, the researchers compared the reaction times of 19 non-musician students and 16 student musicians who had been recruited from the university’s music program and had been playing an instrument for at least seven
years. The participants included violinists, percussionists, a viola player and a harpist. “We’re only now starting to better understand the benefits of musical training and they seem to range beyond simply playing music,” said Simon Landry, Ph.D. student at the University of Montreal.

Each participant was seated in a quiet room and asked to keep one hand on a computer mouse and the other on a small box that occasionally vibrated silently. The participants were instructed to click on the mouse when the box vibrated, when they heard a sound from the speakers in front of them or when both things happened at once. The stimulations were done 180 times each.

As hypothesized, the musicians had significantly faster reaction times to non-musical auditory (sound), tactile (touch) and multisensory stimuli (sensations) than the non-musicians. Landry says this is likely because playing music involves multiple senses. With touch, for instance, a violin player has to feel the string on her finger, but she also needs to listen for the right sound to be produced when she’s pressing on the string.

“This long-term training of the senses in the context of producing exactly what is desired musically leads to a strengthening of sensory neural pathways,” Landry told The Huffington Post. “Additionally, using the senses together for long periods of time—musicians practice for years—enhances how they work together. All this would lead to the faster multisensory reaction time. Playing a musical instrument has an effect on abilities beyond music,” Landry concluded.
New Study Shows How Arts and Culture Improve Health, Safety and Well-being in New York City’s Less Prosperous Neighborhoods


(MARCH 9, 2017, NEW YORK, NY) Low- and moderate-income residents in New York City neighborhoods with many cultural resources are healthier, better educated, and safer overall than those in similar communities with fewer creative resources. This is according to a groundbreaking study by the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.

The study examined New York’s “neighborhood cultural ecosystem.” This means they looked at all of the cultural resources that were available to people in different neighborhoods across New York City. The kinds of resources that the researchers counted included local organizations that offered cultural activities such as art, acting and dance classes, places that offered live performances, bookstores, museums and other galleries where art could be experienced. The number of arts and entertainment resources in New York City make it the cultural capital of the world. But this study looked closely at where those resources are located and who uses them. While many studies have looked at the economic impact of the arts to the city, this research documented how they improve the quality of life for New Yorkers who aren’t necessarily wealthy.

Research Highlights
Cultural resources, like everything else, are distributed unequally around the city. The most affluent (wealthy) neighborhoods in Manhattan and western Brooklyn

The Point is an award-winning art-based community organization in the Bronx, NY, offering arts classes, performances, civic and community events since 1994.

Photo: https://thepoint.org/arts-and-culture/theatre/
have extremely high concentrations of nonprofits, for-profits, artists, etc., while vast areas of the other boroughs have very few cultural resources.

The good news is that in lower-income neighborhoods, cultural resources are significantly linked to better health, schooling, and security. The research found the presence of cultural resources is associated with:

- A 14% decrease in cases of child abuse and neglect
- A 5% decrease in obesity
- An 18% increase in kids scoring in the top stratum on English and math exams
- An 18% decrease in the serious crime rate

“Going to a museum won’t cause you to lose weight or reduce your chances of being mugged, but communities with cultural resources do better,” said Mark Stern, lead researcher of the project and professor of social welfare and history. “Our research clearly demonstrated that sections of the city are doing well on a number of dimensions of well-being, in spite of significant economic challenges.”

The report provides data on cultural resources for hundreds of neighborhoods and takes a closer look at East Harlem (Manhattan) and Fort Greene/Clinton Hill (Brooklyn). The New York Community Trust is currently supporting Brooklyn Arts Council’s efforts to coordinate cultural coalitions in Brownsville, Bushwick, and East New York, and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation’s work to build cultural coalitions in Jamaica, South Bronx, east Brooklyn, and upper Manhattan. Other funders are also inspired by the report’s findings.

“The findings of this study prove what we’ve witnessed anecdotally for decades: the arts improve lives. It draws upon our most fundamentally human qualities such as creativity, discovery, and community. This remarkable research makes it clearer than ever: Access to culture is a defining feature of a healthy community.”
Study Says Making Art Reduces Stress, Even If You’re Not Very Good At It

By Priscilla Frank

Adapted from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/study-says-making-art-reduces-stress_us_576183ece4b09c926cfddcac

The next time you experience that familiar, overwhelming sensation of stress—when your anxieties turn from passing sensations in the brain to rude house guests overstaying their welcome—I highly recommend breaking out your construction paper, model clay, glitter glue, feathers and pipe cleaners.

“I’m not an artist!” you might protest, but honestly, it does not matter. Science says so.

Girija Kaimal, Assistant Professor of Creative Arts Therapies at Drexel University, recently led a study examining the effects of making art on stress-related hormones in your body. The results, published in Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, titled “Reduction of Cortisol Levels and Participants’ Responses Following Art Making,” found that 45 minutes of creative activity significantly lessens stress in the body, regardless of artistic experience or talent.

“It was surprising, and it also wasn’t,” Kaimal explained. “It wasn’t surprising because that’s the core idea in art therapy: Everyone is creative and can be expressive in the visual arts when working in a supportive setting. That said, I did expect that perhaps the effects would be stronger for those with prior experience.”

The study, co-authored by Kendra Ray, a doctoral student under Kaimal, and Juan Muniz, an Assistant Teaching Professor in the department of Nutrition Sciences, invited 39 adults, ranging from 18 to 59 years old, to participate. Markers, paper, clay and collage materials were among the tools offered up to
the participants, who were instructed to create whatever they pleased over the course of 45 minutes, with no further directives. An Art Therapist was on site in case the participants had any questions or concerns.

Before they began, researchers recorded the cortisol levels of the study participants. Cortisol is a hormone in the body that can be used to measure stress—the higher the cortisol level, the more stressed out you probably are. The participants also described their artistic experience prior to the study. Just under half described their art background as “limited.”

After the art activities, researchers again tested the participants’ cortisol levels. Approximately 75 percent of the participants displayed lower levels of cortisol, indicating lower stress levels.

There was a consistent correlation between younger participants and lowered cortisol levels, indicating that young people in particular could benefit greatly from the de-stressing powers of art. “I think one reason might be that younger people are developmentally still figuring out ways to deal with stress and challenges, while older individuals—just from having lived life and being older—might have more strategies to problem-solve and manage stress more effectively,” Kaimal hypothesized.

In the future, Kaimal hopes to repeat the admittedly small study and test for additional biological chemicals such as alpha amylase and oxytocin to get a fuller picture of the participants’ inner states before and after therapeutic art-making.

In the meantime, though, Kaimal’s results confirm what art makers around the world know very well: Making art is actually, factually, good for the body, mind and soul. Even if the art produced may not be of interest to others.
Research Suggests Parks and Green Spaces Can Reduce Crime

By Michael Staton, College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences

http://newsstand.clemson.edu/clemson-research-suggests-parks-and-green-spaces-can-reduce-crime/

A new study published in *Environment and Behavior* from Clemson and North Carolina State University researchers suggests that parks and greenways could play a role in reducing crime. The study’s lead author, Brandon Harris, chose to center the research on his native Chicago and its 2.7-mile Bloomingdale Trail, also known as The 606.

The new Bloomingdale Trail is an elevated greenway, a park built on an abandoned railway line northwest of downtown. The park is a green walking path that connects several neighborhoods. The research team’s study examined crime rates in neighborhoods along the Bloomingdale Trail between 2011 and 2015. It used census data to find other Chicago neighborhoods that weren’t situated along the greenway, but that shared similar socioeconomic characteristics with the neighborhoods located near the Bloomingdale Trail. The study compared neighborhoods along the greenway with the other neighborhoods it identified. During the four years of the study, crime of all types decreased at a faster rate in Bloomingdale Trail neighborhoods than it did in similar neighborhoods that did not have nearby green spaces.

Using City of Chicago crime statistics, researchers compared crime rates for June-November 2011, before the greenway opened, with rates for the same period in 2015, the trail’s first year of operation. Several factors could have contributed to a greater drop in crime along The Bloomingdale Trail over the four-year period, said co-author Lincoln Larson, an NC State faculty member who has previously studied greenway use in urban Atlanta and suburban San Antonio. “Rates of violent, property and disorderly crime all fell at a faster rate in neighborhoods along The Bloomingdale Trail than in similar neighborhoods nearby,” said Harris. “The decrease was largest in lower-income neighborhoods along the western part of the trail. We know that having a well-designed greenway can increase residential and commercial activity, bringing in more foot traffic that pushes out crime in the neighborhood,” Larson said. “People along the trail may also be having more positive interactions and feeling a greater sense of community, which prompts them to take ownership in the trail.”

After looking at crime patterns in the entire city, researchers zoomed in on crime rates within walking distance—a half-mile—of The Bloomingdale Trail. Their analysis showed that property crime decreased at a faster rate in neighborhoods closest to the trail, said co-author Scott Ogletree, a Clemson graduate student. There were no significant differences in rates of violent or disorderly crimes.

Ogletree noted that the city invested in lighting, installed security cameras, increased police presence and added access points along the trail, which tourism officials promoted as a “must-see” destination for visitors.

Larson said a growing body of evidence suggests that investments in park-based urban revitalization could be part of a long-term solution. He said keeping the trail in good condition is vital to prevent crime, just as design and programming for parks is also critical. Harris said one example of quality neighborhood programming is The 606 Moves (named after the first part of Chicago zip codes), a dance workshop offered in small parks along the Bloomingdale Trail with support from the city. It’s a step in the right direction, but he said officials must also consider how revitalization and increased development affect residents. Harris is currently doing follow-up research on those issues.
Recreation and the Arts Research Findings

Complete the questions below about the article you read.

Write the name of the article you read:

____________________________________________________________________

Write the name of study and when it was conducted (if it's mentioned in the article):

____________________________________________________________________

Write the name of the organization or institution that conducted the study:

____________________________________________________________________

Discuss the questions below. After discussing in your groups, paraphrase information from the article to answer the questions in writing.

1. What did the researchers want to find out?

2. What did they do to answer their research question?
3. What did the research show?

4. What, if any, questions or concerns do they still have?

5. Does this finding suggest that arts and recreation support well being? Explain your answer.
Recreation and the Arts Research Notes

As your peer discusses the article s/he read, take notes in the appropriate section below. Ask questions if you’re not clear on any of the information your classmate discusses. If he or she needs to reread a section of the article to the group in order to answer your question, that’s fine.

1. Name of the organization that conducted the study:

2. The purpose of the study:

3. What the researchers did:

4. What the researchers found:
Benefits of Recreation and the Arts on Individuals and Communities

Answer the following questions as a group.

1. Answer TRUE or FALSE and provide an explanation for your response: TRUE / FALSE
   Studies have shown that making art can only relieve stress for people who are experienced artists.

2. What is the Bloomingdale Greenway and what effect has it had on the city of Chicago?

3. Answer TRUE or FALSE and provide an explanation for your response: TRUE / FALSE
   Art and cultural experiences, such as performances, museums, galleries and parks, can have a positive impact on individuals, but cannot impact entire communities.

4. Explain the connection between practicing music and physical reaction times. How did researchers learn about this connection?
Groundswell NYC: Public Art and Community Impact Series

Students learn in-depth about the impact one arts organization has had on the New York City communities it serves. Through thinking critically about both image and text, students explore the public mural projects created by Groundswell staff and participants, how communities have been affected by the mural projects and what careers are part of the organization. Finally, students develop a survey similar to the one Arts organizations like Groundswell use to engage community members in their project development.

ACTIVITIES IN THIS SERIES

3.1 • Visual Literacy: An Introduction to Groundswell NYC
3.2 • Groundswell Career Brainstorm
3.3 • Developing Interview Questions: Community Art Engagement
Visual Literacy: An Introduction to Groundswell NYC

Students interpret an image of a Groundswell public art mural. Then they watch and discuss a video about Groundswell’s artists, participants and community-centered process.

PREP

- Watch and prepared to talk about Groundswell video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyCI7SdkMRw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyCI7SdkMRw)

MATERIALS

- What Do You See in This Image? handout
- Responding to Art with Questions graphic organizer
- This activity requires a computer with projector

EXPLAIN

1. Distribute What Do You See in This Image? handout and ask students to discuss the picture with a partner using the four questions at the bottom of the handout.

2. When students are finished discussing the mural, ask volunteers to share their responses. Allow students to share a wide range of answers without judgement. The goal is for students to freely engage with the painting and be able to talk about their responses to it.

3. **Say:** Looking at art can be a great way to build vocabulary and observation skills, as well as critical thinking and question development skills. Now you’re going to work with your partner to write questions about this piece of art.

   Distribute Responding to Art with Questions graphic organizer and ask students to complete it in pairs.
When pairs are finished, ask students to share some of their questions and ask other students to respond to the questions. Then, if it hasn't already come up, ask: Can art have other purposes in addition to being something pleasant or interesting to look at? If so, what? What do you think were the reasons for making this mural?

5 Play the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vq-zBsqRVMQ&list=PL374870A07978D76A&index=19

6 When the video is finished, ask volunteers to share their reactions to the video.
   - Who created this mural? Why do you think they created it?
   - Were you able to answer any of the questions you wrote? Do you think differently about the painting now than before? Why or why not?
   - What else did you notice in the video?
   - What do you wonder?

7 **Say:** We're going to learn more about the work Groundswell does by watching a longer video. We're going to watch the video twice. The first time, just listen for the main ideas. The second time we'll take notes and then discuss what we learned.

8 Play the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyCI7SdkMRw

9 When the video is finished, ask students: **What was the main idea of the video? What stuck out for you?**

10 Let's watch the video again. This time, watch with the purpose of answering the following questions (write them on the board):
   - Who are the different people in the video who have been impacted by Groundswell?
   - How are they impacted/affected?
   As you watch, take notes on anything from the video that seems important in trying to answer these questions.

11 When the video is finished, facilitate a class discussion in which students discuss their responses to the video and ultimately come to an understanding of the process Groundswell artists, staff, and participants go through to create a mural (brainstorm their own thoughts/feelings, interview community members, research chosen content area, learn artistic concepts and skills, create a design, get feedback on the design, fabricate the mural, celebrate),
as well as the impact the process and the product has on the various people involved, including community partners and the neighborhood in which the mural is created and even the average passerby. Sample questions for discussion might include:

- Describe the multi-step process that Groundswell uses to create community murals.
- What makes this process unique?
- What topics, issues or ideas did you see in the various murals in the video?
- Why do you think Groundswell participants engage community members in their design and decision-making process? What is the benefit of doing this?
- Describe one person who experienced some kind of personal change because of Groundswell. What change did they experience?
- Why do you think the Groundswell murals have had such a powerful effect on people?
- Why do you think elected officials wanted to comment on Groundswell murals?
- Have you ever had an experience of making or seeing art that affected you or helped you change in some way? What was it? How did it affect you?
- How is seeing or making public art different than seeing or making art displayed in a museum or art gallery?
- What are ways that the Arts have been used or can be used for social change?
What Do You See in This Image?

Take a few moments to look at the images below. Then close your eyes and open them and look at it again. What do you see? What else do you see? Talk about it with a partner. Use the four questions below the picture to help guide your discussion.

1. What do you see in this image?
   
   This mural uses a triptych format—it contains three panels. Make sure you discuss all three panels of the mural.

2. What is happening in this image?

3. What in the image makes you say that?

4. What messages do you think this image is trying to express? What makes you say that?
### Responding to Art with Questions

Write questions about the images using the six major question starters – Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why. With a partner, write two questions for each of the question words. The questions should prompt someone to think deeply about what they see in the mural. The first question is given as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Who are the large figures in blue in the center panel?</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>How</th>
<th>Why</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
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</table>
Groundswell Career Brainstorm

Students watch the same video from the previous lesson one more time, focusing on the opportunities and careers that might be available at Groundswell and other Arts organizations like it. They also consider the skills necessary for each of these jobs.

PREP

- Review the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyCI7SdkMRw
- Write the following questions on the board

1. What are some of the issues Groundswell participants and communities face that are shown in the murals or talked about in the videos?
2. List as many jobs at Groundswell that you can think of. Include employees shown here as well as employees that aren’t mentioned but are needed to plan and create a mural.
3. What are some of the skills and knowledge you think employees of Groundswell should have?
4. If you wanted to work with this organization, what are some questions you would ask?
5. Would you want to work at Groundswell? Why or why not?

MATERIALS

- This activity requires a computer with projector

EXPLAIN

1. We are going to watch the Groundswell video one more time and this time think about what kinds of jobs and careers might be available at Groundswell.
2. Read the questions on the board.
3. In order to answer the questions on the board, what aspects of the video should you pay close attention to?
   - People’s names and titles when they are being interviewed, the tasks being done, the Groundswell mural project and consider what staffing is necessary to complete all the tasks.

4. Play the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyCI7SdkMRw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyCI7SdkMRw)

5. When students are finished, ask them to answer the questions on the board in writing.

6. When students are finished, discuss their answers as a class.
Developing Interview Questions: Community Art Engagement

After brainstorming and discussing what all communities need to be healthy and happy, students imagine they are part of a Groundswell mural project and develop questions they would use to engage community members in the mural-making process. Finally, students practice using their interview questions with a classmate.

**PREP**

- Label 5 pieces of chart paper with the following categories: Infants–5 years, Children ages 6–12, Teens ages 13–20, Adults ages 21–65, Senior Citizens ages 65+. Put them up around the classroom where students will be able to write on them.

**MATERIALS**

- Conducting a Community Engagement Interview worksheet
- Chart paper and markers
EXPLAIN

1. As part of the research and design phase of any mural project, Groundswell engages community members in the process. How and why do you think they do this?

   - *They interview members of the community about the mural project and sometimes have them take a survey. Groundswell participants learn about the issues, needs and ideas of the community in order to reflect their concerns in the mural. Because community members will be seeing the mural all the time, Groundswell wants to ensure that the mural’s contents speak directly to the neighborhood it is located in. Through this process, Groundswell hopes to make a powerful impact on the community.*

2. Why do you think this process is important?

   - *It shows the community that Groundswell and their participants care about what they want. It shows respect. It makes the community feel involved in making things better.*

3. What skills or qualities do you think are required of the muralists in order to be successful in this part of the process?

   - *Good communication, respect, patience, sensitivity to people who are or seem different from you, good listening, ability to ask follow-up questions, to be able to summarize, synthesize and incorporate a lot of people’s ideas into an overall idea for the mural.*

4. We are going to imagine that we are Groundswell muralists and develop questions that we would use to interview community members on a new mural project. In order to think of questions we would want to ask community members, let’s think first about what kinds of things communities need to be happy and healthy. We can think about our own experiences in communities we live in or have lived in previously, as well as communities we have visited.

5. One way to organize community needs is to think about what people of different age groups in a community might need. For example, we can think about all the things babies and very young children in a community need to be happy and healthy. Then we can think about what adolescents need, what adults need, and what senior citizens need. Some things everyone needs, so they can go in all of the categories. You’re going to do a gallery walk—walk around the room stopping at each age group list, and add some community needs to the list based on what you think that age group needs to be healthy and happy.
Look around the room at the age groups posted on the walls. Think of one thing that people of each age group need. Write 1-2 student responses in each category on the appropriate list. Remember that some needs might fit into more than one category, like for example, streets with adequate night lighting or affordable healthy food.

Assign a group of students to stand in front of each list. Now you will do a gallery walk with markers, adding as many ideas as you can to each list, rotating through them all. Give students 2 minutes at each list, announcing when they should move to the next list. As they arrive to each new list, they should read the contributions already listed there, to be sure not to repeat.

When each group has contributed to each list, ask 1-2 representatives from each group to read aloud the list in front of them.

Once all lists have been read, ask students what they noticed about the ideas on the lists and what they wonder about them.

Distribute *Conducting a Community Engagement Interview* worksheet and ask students to complete it in pairs. To help come up with questions, ask students to think about the murals they saw in the videos and to review their brainstorm of what makes a community happy and healthy.

When pairs are finished, they can share some of their questions with the class and/or conduct optional interviews as per instructions below.

**OPTIONAL: CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS**

Ask students to switch partners with another pair and interview their new partners using the questions they developed. Students can either answer their interviewer’s questions with true-to-life answers from their own experience or pretend to be a fictional community member. The interviewer should take notes about what they learn from the person they interviewed and be able to summarize the most important ideas. Then they should switch roles. Each student should interview and be interviewed. The goal is to practice interview skills such as attentive listening, asking follow-up questions, note-taking, and summarizing. Teacher may want to review these skills before students conduct their interviews.
## Conducting a Community Engagement Interview

Imagine you are participating in the making of a Groundswell community mural. In preparation for the mural, you need to engage the members of the community where the mural will be created so that it reflects the community’s needs and concerns. Your goal is to get as much input from the community as possible to help you understand what topics the mural should address and what it should look like. Use the words below to write the questions you’d want to ask members of the community.

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<th>What</th>
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<td>Where</td>
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<td>How</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often</td>
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<td>How much</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td></td>
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<td>When</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
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Researching Local Parks and Recreation Facilities

Students explore the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation website to learn about their local parks and about a fitness initiative, *Shape Up NYC*. They read about two parks in their borough and practice paraphrasing.

**PREP**

- Go to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation website, [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org) and explore the Parks and Programs sections of the website. Navigate as described in Explain, below.

**MATERIALS**

- *Neighborhood Parks* handout (2 per student)
- This lesson requires use of a computer lab. One with an overhead projector is preferable.

**EXPLAIN**

1. **Do you know of any Recreation and Arts resources in your borough? What are some?**

2. To get started, let’s think about parks. *Did you know that New York City beaches are part of the Parks and Recreation Department?* Did you know that New York City has recreation centers that have swimming pools and exercise classes in every borough? What are the names of some parks in your community or borough? What types of recreation do these parks offer? List on the board.

   > *Students might name parks with walking or nature trails, ponds or lakes, exercise equipment, tennis courts, running tracks, swimming pools or the ocean!*

3. **Write the website [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org) on the board, and ask students to navigate there. Make sure all students are on the website before continuing.**

4. We’re going to look at a few sections of the website that describe the types of facilities and services specific parks offer. We’ll also look at where New Yorkers can find free exercise programs offered through the Parks and Recreation Department.
Click on the **Programs** tab at the top of the page. Read through the programs offered by the Parks Department, then click on **Shape Up NYC**. Read the description of the program.

As a class, discuss what you consider to be the most important features of the program. Then ask: **What are the main features of this program?**

- *It provides exercise classes. They are free. They are “drop-in,” so you don't have to go to every one. There are different kinds of classes.*

Scroll down the page to where the classes are listed by borough. **What kinds of classes are offered in your borough? Which classes are closest to you and what times are these classes offered?**

Scroll back up the page and, along with the students, click on the maple leaf icon of NYC Parks to navigate back to the home page. Then click on the **Parks** tab. Under **Find a Park**, enter Bronx in the Borough search bar. Click on **St. Mary’s Park**.

Read the description of the park. **What recreational resources does St. Mary’s park provide?**

- *A running track, lawns, grills, playgrounds, tennis courts, baseball fields, a pool.*

Now read the rest of this page.
If you wanted to figure out how to get to St. Mary’s Park from your house, which part of this page can help you figure that out?

➢ The area that says: Directions to St. Mary’s Park.

10 Distribute two copies of the Neighborhood Parks handout to each student. Now you’re going to use the Parks Department website to learn about two parks near your home.

NOTE: Quickly review what it means to paraphrase and why it is important to paraphrase information.

11 In pairs, students complete the worksheet based on the information they find on the website about two parks in their borough. Make sure that all responses are paraphrased. Circulate and support students as needed.

12 Bring the class together and discuss what they learned about parks in their area: What was something new you found out about? What was most surprising?
Neighborhood Parks

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the Park Overview. Consider how you will paraphrase information on the website to answer the questions below.

Name of Park

1. Write a short summary of the park, including its location and main features.

2. What is one thing you learned about the park’s history that makes it unique?

3. What are two facilities this park offers that you are interested in using? Explain why.

4. Explain how you would get to this park from your home (include train or bus numbers, if applicable).
Researching Local Arts Organizations*

In groups, students research one borough-based arts organization and paraphrase information from the website.

PREP

- Visit the arts organizations websites for your borough of choice listed in the Arts Organization handout. Read about each organization’s mission and services, and then complete the Researching a Community Arts Organization handout.
- Make groups of 3-4 students. Decide which group will research which organization from your borough of choice.
- On the board, write the name of each organization and its web address with the names of the students you’ve assigned to research it underneath it.

MATERIALS

- Arts Organizations handout
- Researching a Community Arts Organization handout
- This lesson requires use of a computer lab.

EXPLAIN

1. There are hundreds of arts organizations in New York. Today we’re going to research one local arts organization to learn about the resources and services they provide to the community. Then you will present this organization to the class.

2. Divide the class into groups based on the assignments you’ve posted on the board. Distribute the Researching a Community Arts Organization handout. Ask students to read the handout and answer any questions students have about the assignment.

3. Navigate to the website of the organization you’ve been assigned to research. Once you’ve found the website, you will explore its services and resources. You do not have to read every part of the description. Read the parts you think will be most helpful in completing the handout.

4. Paraphrase what you read to answer the questions on the handout. As a group, make sure that you are paraphrasing and not copying from the website. Ultimately, you will present this organization to the class.
Arts Organizations

BRONX

Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance
http://www.baadbronx.org/

The Point
https://thepoint.org/

Bronx River Art Center
www.bronxriverart.org

Bronx Arts Ensemble
www.bronxartsensemble.org

Mind Builders Creative Arts Center
www.mind-builders.org

DreamYard Project
www.dreamyard.com

Bronx Art Space
www.bronxartspace.com

BROOKLYN

Restoration Art
http://restorationart.org/

ARTS East NY
www.artseastny.org

The Billie Holiday Theater
http://thebillieholiday.org/

Museum of Contemporary African Diaspora Arts
http://mocada.org/

Brooklyn Waterfront Artists’ Coalition
Bwac.org

MANHATTAN

Julia de Burgos Performance and Arts Space
http://www.jdbpacnyc.org/

Museum of Chinese in America
http://www.mocanyc.org/

Free Arts NYC
www.freeartsnyc.org

Fourth Arts Block
www.fabnyc.org

Manhattan Neighborhood Network
www.mnn.org

QUEENS

Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning
https://www.jcal.org

Queens Museum
http://www.queensmuseum.org/

Thalia Theater
Thaliatheater.org

Topaz Arts
www.topazarts.org

Museum of Modern Art – PS 1
http://www.momaps1.org/

Terraza 7
Terraza7.com

STATEN ISLAND

Staten Island Arts
www.statenislandarts.org

Center for the Arts – College of Staten Island
http://www.cfashows.com/

Staten Island Museum
Statenislandmuseum.org

Universal Temple of the Arts
www.utasi.org

Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden
www.snug-harbor.org
Researching a Community Arts Organization

Name of Arts Organization: ____________________________

Web Address: ____________________________

Answer each of the questions below by paraphrasing information from the website.

1. What is the purpose or mission of this organization?

2. Describe any classes or educational programs offered.

3. What else does it offer? To whom? Why?

4. If the organization sponsors performances or arts exhibitions, who is giving the performances or creating the art? How do these performances and exhibitions relate to the mission of the organization?

5. Note the cost of the services. Do you consider them affordable to people in your community? Why or why not?

6. In what ways does this organization help the community?
Presenting a Local Arts Organization

Once students have a solid understanding of goals and services provided by the arts organization they researched, they will clarify and organize the information, then make their presentations.

PREP

Write the following questions on the board to help guide students’ organization of their findings:

- What makes an effective presentation?
  > It’s well organized, with clear logic from one point to the next, clear loud speaking, personal connection to audience.
- In what order will you present the information?
- How will you introduce the topic?
- What questions do you anticipate? Can you answer those questions, or do you need to research the answers?
- Is all of your information paraphrased?

Also include:

- What personal characteristics are a good match for someone who wants to enter this field?

EXPLAIN

1. You’re going to present your arts organizations to the class. Before you do that, we’re going to discuss what makes an effective presentation.

2. Ask students to respond to the questions on the board.

3. Students work in groups to prepare their presentations. Let them know that their presentations should be 5 minutes long and will be followed by a 5-minute Q&A with their classmates.

4. Students make their 5-minute presentations while their peers listen and take notes on questions to ask during the Question and Answer period.

5. Audience members ask questions and presenters respond during a Question and Answer period.

DISCUSS

- What did you learn about arts organizations in our borough?
- Do you think you will use any of the arts organizations you learned about?
- What further questions do you have about local arts organizations?