



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1992 Volume III: Reading and Writing the City

New Haven—Our Home and Our Learning Lab

Guide for Curriculum Unit 92.03.01
by Margaret B. Clancy

“New Haven—Our Home and Our Learning Lab” intends to help the students of New Haven appreciate their city while providing lessons in reading comprehension, writing, map reading, vocabulary building, listening comprehension and observation. It is hoped that the study of this unit will also increase the students’ sense of self-importance and self-confidence because the subject matter will show them what has been done, is being done, and can be done by people—New Haveners just like themselves.

This curriculum unit will be taught to seventh and eighth graders but can be used with some modification for any age students in the New Haven schools. The important factor is that students live in New Haven because they can identify with and have an interest in the subject matter, and that will sustain their enthusiasm. The unit is divided into seven weeks with three class periods a week. The first week students are introduced to New Haven today. Location, educational opportunities, industries, services, etc. will be studied, and for many students this will all be new information. Next the unit will look at New Haven’s past—colonial New Haven. Information on the founding of New Haven, the Nine Square plan, the Green, and life in those times will be studied. The unit will then look at how Eli Whitney’s ideas for mass production and the growth of the railroad affected New Haven and affected immigration and migration to New Haven either directly or indirectly in the 1800s.

For weeks four and five the unit focuses on two ethnic groups, the Italians and African Americans, who made large contributions to the growth of New Haven. Students, it is hoped, will become more aware of the opportunities New Haven provided these people and all people regardless of race or class. They will better understand that we live in a pluralistic society, a society based on hard work, honesty and ability, and that contributions to New Haven by Afro-Americans and Italians stand right along side those of the Puritans, the Irish, the Germans, etc.

Following a look at New Haven’s future, the unit concludes with a representative from the mayor’s office speaking on when and how students become voters, how to become involved in city-sponsored activities, and how important each student is to New Haven. They will be New Haven’s future.

(Recommended for English and Social Studies, grades 7-8; with some modifications this unit can be used for all levels)

Key Words

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