Pre- and Post-Visit Activities: Come Aboard the Staten Island Ferry

Overview:

These activities, which support the Staten Island Museum’s lesson “All Aboard the Staten Island Ferry,” introduces students to maritime vocabulary, using the ferry as a major form of mass transit and the history of New York City / New York Harbor.

Three components:

1. **Background:** Information about the Staten Island Ferry to prepare yourself and your students for your trip on the Staten Island Ferry.
2. **Pre-Visit Activity:** Before your visit, share background information with students. Use the provided images to analyze, using the primary source analysis handout (below).
3. **Post-Visit Activity:** Visit the Staten Island Museum’s exhibition and complete the provided scavenger hunt.

Materials:

1. Background information for teachers.
2. Graphic organizers.
3. Images of the Staten Island Ferry.

Background Information:

“The Staten Island Ferry is more than transportation. It is a tourist attraction, a floating public space, and a great history lesson about New York City’s growth, activity, and the people who live here. Interest in the ferry—and its history—never seems to wane. Fascinated travelers and ferry buffs from all over the world are drawn to its endlessly operating gangplanks. Constantly crisscrossing between Lower Manhattan and Staten Island—to an outsider, the repetition might seem like a tedious trek, but to seasoned crew and riders, no 5.2 mile, 25-minute voyage is exactly the same.” – *Images of America, Staten Island Ferry*

The Staten Island Ferry runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from St. George (Staten Island) to Whitehall Street (Manhattan). It serves nearly 70,000 people on 109 trips daily—that’s over 22 million people who ride the ferry a year! The New York City Department of Transportation owns and operates the nine vessel fleet as well as the terminals on both sides, the City Island and Heart Island Facilities, The Battery Maritime Building and all floating dock building equipment.

Vocabulary:

- **Barge:** a large, flat-bottomed boat for carrying cargo or garbage; usually having no motor of its own. Most are moved by tugboats.
- **Bay:** an inlet of the sea or other body of water usually smaller than a gulf.
- **Board:** to get onto a boat, train, bus, etc.
- **Bow:** the front of a boat or ship.
• **Buoy**: a marker kept in one place on the water to mark a channel or dangerous spot for boats.
• **Cabin**: a room on a boat or ship.
• **Channel**: the deeper part of the waterway.
• **Deck**: the floor of a boat
• **Dock or slip**: a platform built on the shore where boats can tie up to load or unload their cargo or passengers.
• **Ferryboat**: a boat that carries people or goods back and forth across a body of water, usually on a set time schedule.
• **Galley**: the kitchen.
• **Harbor**: a body of water protected from the ocean by land. A safe place for ships to anchor and dock.
• **Head**: the restroom.
• **Helm**: the steering wheel on a boat.
• **Knot**: the measure used to tell how fast a boat is going.
• **Nautical**: things that have to do with ships and sailors.
• **Pilothouse**: the room where the steering wheel (and captain) is.
• **Port Side**: the left side of the boat when facing the front of the boat (red light, side at night).
• **Reef**: a ridge of rock or sand near the top of the water that makes a very dangerous spot for boats and ships.
• **Starboard Side**: the right side of the boat when facing the front of the boat (green light, side at night).
• **Stern**: the back of the boat
• **Terminal**: the place on each side of the ferry trip where passengers wait to board the ferry.
• **Tugboat**: a small powerful boat used for towing or pushing.

**Before Your Visit:**

Analyzing sources: Observe the images (below). Either as a whole class discussion or as independent practice, students should complete the analyzing sources sheet (below). Encourage students to analyze the images using who, what, where, when and why and to create a story for both images.

**After Your Visit:**

Either as a class or as a homework assignment, visit the Staten Island Museum’s Ferry exhibition at 75 Stuyvesant Place. Students will fill out the scavenger hunt (below).
Lanza, Anthony. “Shoe shine on the Staten Island Ferry.” ca. 1940.
Analyzing Sources

Directions: Using the provided images, analyze the sources using the prompts below.

1. What are you looking at? (Circle all that apply)
   - Photograph
   - Document
   - Painting
   - Primary Source
   - Secondary Source

2. What do you know about this source? (List all describing features and citation information, e.g., dates, names, places, etc.)

3. Describe, in detail, what you see or what you have read:

4. Is this source giving you facts, opinions or both? How can you tell?

5. List three things you learned from your source:
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

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Museum Scavenger Hunt

Directions: After visiting the Staten Island Museum’s Ferry exhibition, answer the questions below.

1. How much did the ferry cost in 1905? How much does the ferry cost today?

2. How long does it take to cross the New York Harbor?

3. Find the coin changer. Sketch it:

4. Find the ‘Diverman.’ What was this suit used for?

5. What are some landmarks you can see while on the ferry? (Hint: find the map of New York Harbor in the exhibition.)
Museum Scavenger Hunt

Directions: After visiting the Staten Island Museum’s ferry exhibition, answer the questions below.

1. How much did the ferry cost in 1905? How much does the ferry cost today?
   The ferry was 5 cents in 1905. Today the ferry is free.

2. How long does it take to cross the New York Harbor?
   It takes 22 minutes to cross the New York Harbor.

3. Find the coin changer. Sketch it:

4. Find the ‘Diverman.’ What was this suit used for?
   The suit was designed in 1915 for deep-sea activity, and was used by the armed forces until 1984. This suit is the type worn by Staten Island Ferry Department of Transportation crew when simple dockside maintenance was needed.

5. What are some landmarks you can see while on the ferry? (hint: find the map of New York Harbor in the exhibition).
   Including: Robins Reef, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Governor’s Island, etc.