

## APUSH Picturing America Lesson Plan by Deborah Whitehair

### Images:

Brooklyn Bridge photograph (13 A, p. 64) by Walker Evans

Brooklyn Bridge painting (14 B, p. 64) by Joseph Stella

Concept: Urban Development from 1877-1920

Objective: Comparing and contrasting these two images, students will discern the intellectual vitality of both the sciences and art in growing cities in the late 1900s.

### Larger historical period:

In the late nineteenth century, rapid industrialization was focused in the urban centers of the United States. Cities combined the variety of resources necessary for factories including factories, transportation, and a growing labor force due to the influx of rural Americans and immigrants drawn to cities by new jobs.

Guiding question: What do the photograph and the painting Brooklyn Bridge reveal about the perception of urban development by Americans?

### Background information for teacher:

The Brooklyn Bridge, which was completed in 1883, was emblematic of improved transportation between urban areas since it connected Brooklyn and Manhattan. The new design of a steel cable suspension bridge by Engineers John Roebling and Wilhelm Hildenbrand was first used in the Brooklyn Bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge was almost one mile long and was the longest bridge of its time. A testimony to its construction is its continued use today.

New technologies of the Second Industrial Revolution transformed both the applied sciences and the arts of the period. The Bessemer process of steel production developed in the second half of the nineteenth made steel cheaper and more available paving the way in the period for the Second Industrial Revolution. With the advent of photography and its accurate documentation of subjects, paintings began to reflect the artist's interpretation of subjects and become less realistic as seen in Stella's painting. Photography gradually also began to be appreciated as an art form as seen in Evans's photograph.

### Vocabulary:

Futurism was an artistic movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which rejected tradition and emphasized originality. Futurist paintings often feature urban settings and try to capture the dynamism of cities with diagonals and bright colors.

### Analysis Activity:

Ask students what the subjects of these two images are.  
Have the students compare and contrast the two images.  
Ask them which image they prefer and why.

**Ask them what is the mood of each image.**

**Discuss new developments in both technology such as steel construction which enabled the growth of urban areas and the shift to more abstract art forms as the use of photography displaced art in creating realistic copies of landscapes.**

**Assessment:**

**Multiple choice test question:**

**The applied sciences and art in the United States in the period from after Reconstruction and through World War I was characterized by**

- A. lack of originality.**
- B. new designs due to new technology.**
- C. highly functional purposes.**
- D. attempts to recreate hand craftsmanship with modern manufacturing methods.**