THE MIDWAY & GAMES

GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES

GAMES, RIDES, AND FUN!

THE NEXT BIG THING

STATE FAIR OF TEXAS®

TEACHER

The Midway & Games

GRADE: Eight

SOCIAL STUDIES

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In this lesson students will:

- ★ Analyze patterns of continuity and change in the American way of life.
- ★ Investigate economic trends during selected times in U.S. history.
- ★ Determine how technological innovations have influenced daily life in the United States.
- ★ Organize and interpret information from timelines.
- ★ Create a visual presentation showing how Midway games and rides have changed, over time.
- ★ Design a futuristic thrill ride or innovative game for the next generation of American children.

Starting in 1886, the State Fair of Texas has been drawing visitors with exhibits, games and amusement for the entire family. The carnival atmosphere represents both continuity and change in the American way of life. Today, the Midway is a major focal point of amusement at the State Fair. What is your favorite part of the Midway? How do you think the Midway has changed during the last 129 years? What technological innovations would you like to see in the future? Here's your chance to design the Next Big Thing.

Standards

- ★ Social Studies TEKS: 8.12(C), 8.26(B), 8.28(A), 8.29(C), 8.30(C)
- ★ ELAR TEKS: 8.11(B), 8.1(C), 8.6(H)
- ★ Art TEKS: 8.1(A), 8.2(A), 8.2(C), 8.4(A)

Suggestion: The STEM lesson ("A Ride Through Newton's Laws") asks students to complete a similar task, but with a slightly different spin; teaming up with Math & Science teachers and co-teaching a larger project could be fun!)

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Plan Your Route.

- ★ Make your way into the Fair and head over to the Midway.
- ★ As you walk along the Midway, observe the various rides, games, and prizes.

Optional Materials to Bring

- ★ Smart Phone or Tablet
- ★ Pencil & Notepad
- ★ Sketchbook for Arts Connection

Before You Go

- ★ Invite the students to interview an elderly family member or neighbor about childhood experiences related to amusement parks, carnival rides, or State Fair visits.
  - * Discuss their interview notes in class.
- ★ Share the *Mental Floss* article, "The Origin of 15 Delightful Carnival Rides", noting the year in which each ride was invented.
  - * Encourage the students to share personal connections to rides they've experienced, and lead a discussion about how the carnival atmosphere has enthralled and entertained multiple generations of American children.
- ★ With a partner, review the timeline of the Texas State Fair.
  - * Keep track of new attractions added during selected times in U.S. history.
  - * Think about how the rides changed throughout the decades.
- ★ Explain that the students will assume the roles of both historians and futurists while visiting the Texas State Fair. They will look back, in order to look forward!

While You're There

The objective of your visit is to gather information about a carnival atmosphere by playing games and experiencing the thrill of amusement park rides.

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EXPERIENCING THE MIDWAY

- As you walk through the Midway, observe the various rides and games.
- Collect information about historic, traditional, and modern rides offered to fairgoers of various ages.
- Assess the popularity of particular rides.
- Note which lines are the longest and the shortest.
- Take a spin on several different rides.
- How did you decide which rides to experience?
- Did history play a part in your decision?
- Consider how you could replicate, improve, or innovate these rides to appeal to the next generation of fairgoers.
- Jot down a few notes about your experiences.
- Make a list of the rides you rode and games you played.
- Take photographs of traditional and modern rides and games.

BREAKING DOWN YOUR EXPERIENCE

★ Find a place to sit where you can ponder the following questions as you continue to observe.

- Which rides and games have remained consistently popular over time? Why?
- What is the appeal of games and thrill rides? Why are Americans drawn to the carnival atmosphere?
- How has technology changed the Midway? How will it continue to evolve?
- Will there always be a place for more traditional rides like Ferris wheels, bumper cars, and carousels?
- As the American way of life continues to change, how will the Texas State Fair change with it?

ARTS CONNECTION

Take a good look at the rides.

- What colors do you see?
- Is there sound on the rides?
- How big are they?
- What are they made of?
- Make some notes, or better yet, sketch a drawing of a couple of them.

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After the Fair

When you return to class following your State Fair visit, you will:

- ★ Use images found online and photos from your Fair visit to create a brief visual presentation describing how the Midway has changed throughout the last century.
- ★ Your final slide in the presentation should include a design for a futuristic thrill ride or innovative game (see Arts Connection, below).
- ★ Write a script for a "TED Talk" type performance in which you explain the power of continuity and change in the American way of life.

Arts Connection:
The Next Big Thing!

Time to design your own game or attraction.

- ★ Refer back to your notes/sketches for ideas or inspiration.
- ★ Also, think about the additional Midway rides and games that you researched online.
- ★ What kind of game or ride would you design?
- ★ As you create your preliminary sketches, think about the following questions:
  - * What colors will I choose?
  - * Will there be sound?
  - * How big will it be?
  - * What will it be made of?
  - * How will I attract visitors to it?
  - * What will set my design apart from others at the Midway?