

THE HISTORY CHANNEL CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDES

Modern Marvels

Shipyards

Shipyards are waterside construction sites where the extraordinary takes shape and where some of the largest tools built by humans help create the biggest machines on earth. But shipyards and ships of today bear little resemblance to those of antiquity. From ancient days to the 18th-century Industrial Revolution to the epic effort performed at Pearl Harbor, we examine the shipyard, and look to its future. Will the craftsmanship and practical knowledge of how to build ships disappear in the 21st century? *Shipyards* is appropriate for middle school and high school students.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Shipyards would be useful for classes on World History, American History, American Culture, and Science and Technology.

OBJECTIVES

Students will learn about the history and the impact of the technology of shipbuilding. They will explore its role in the maritime history of the United States as well as other areas of the world.

NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

Shipyards fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5-12: chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical research, and historical issue-analysis capabilities for United States History Eras 6,7, 8, 9, and 10.

- [Antiquity](#)
- [Arduous](#)
- [Burgeoning](#)
- [Foundry](#)
- [Industrialize](#)
- [Mammoth](#)
- [Molten](#)
- [Retrofit](#)
- [Traverse](#)

Discussion Questions

1. Shipyards are a mainstay of most countries' histories. What are the purposes of shipyards?
2. Discuss the role of shipyards in the history of the United States. How did shipyards influence or shape U.S. history?
3. Shipyards can be enormous. Discuss how shipyards can function like an independent city.
4. Modern shipyards are composed of many different types of individual shops. What are some of these shops? Discuss their role in the process of shipbuilding.
5. Shipyards are unique unto themselves. What sets shipyards apart from other types of manufacturing plants?
6. What is dry dock?
7. Discuss the process by which ships are built.
8. Pre-assemblies have increased the speed of shipbuilding by tremendous rates. What are pre-assemblies? How have they made shipbuilding faster and more efficient?

9. Shipbuilders use different types of cranes. Compare and contrast gantry and boom cranes.
10. Discuss how shipbuilding is both a skill and an art.
11. Discuss the historical evolution of shipbuilding.
12. Discuss the role of trade in shipbuilding history.
13. Maine was the site of many of America's earliest shipyards. Why were so many U.S. ships built in Maine?
14. As energy forms changed, so did shipbuilding. How did steam power change shipbuilding?
15. What is the role of war in modern shipbuilding?

Extended Activities

1. Newport News is one of America's greatest shipyards. Research Newport News Shipyard on the Internet and use your data, and the medium of your choice, to construct a visual historical narrative of the shipyard.
2. Create a poster illustrating the process of modern day shipbuilding.