

RESOURCE LIBRARY  
ACTIVITY : 30 MINS

## Diversity in New York Place Names

Students learn about and investigate the origins of place names in New York. Then they map place names and analyze patterns.

### GRADES

9 - 12+

### SUBJECTS

*Geography, Human Geography*

### CONTENTS

2 PDFs

## OVERVIEW

Students learn about and investigate the origins of place names in New York. Then they map place names and analyze patterns.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/diversity-in-new-york-place-names/>

## DIRECTIONS

### 1. Introduce place names in the New York City area that reveal Dutch influence.

Explain to students that, although the Dutch language is no longer spoken in the New York City area, many of the place names still reveal Dutch influence. By studying place names, you can often learn interesting stories of migration and settlement. Analyze the Bronx as a model. Explain to students that the Bronx is a borough, or a section of neighborhoods in New York City. This area of New York City was once known as Bronck's Place—named after Jonas Bronck, a Dutch settler who was originally from Sweden and settled in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam (now New York City) in 1639. Ask: *What other groups may have influenced place*

names in the New York City area? (Dutch, Swedes, Norwegians, French Walloons, and Native Americans)

## 2. Distribute the worksheet **Origins of New York Place Names**.

Distribute the worksheet and have students complete it independently. Provide support, as needed.

## 3. Have a whole-class discussion about what can be learned from the finished maps.

Ask:

- *What does the completed map tell you about diversity in New Netherland? (There were many Native Americans, and the Dutch settlers included Swedes, Norwegians, and Walloons.)*
- *Why do you think the Dutch named many places for cities in their homeland? (They hoped to create communities in New Netherland similar to the communities they left. They wanted reminders of their homeland.)*
- *What do the names tell you about the land itself? (The ecosystems were diverse, and the area included marshes, swamps, woods, and grasslands. Some of the animals included rabbits and beaver.)*

# Informal Assessment

Use the provided Origins of New York Place Names Answer Key to check students' worksheets for completeness and accuracy.

# Extending the Learning

"Wall Street" is a well-known term that refers to the location in New York of the financial industries that are involved with the stocks and trade in the United States. The name Wall Street dates back to the 17th century when the Dutch built a barricade wall around their settlement on Manhattan Island to protect themselves from invading forces. Have students use library resources to research the origins of this place name, learn more about Dutch history in New York City, and present the information they find to the class.

## OBJECTIVES

# Subjects & Disciplines

## Geography

- Human Geography

# Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify the different groups that influenced place names in the New York City area
- analyze linguistic information on a map of New York City
- describe patterns of diversity and land characteristics in New Netherland

# Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

# Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning

# Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Analyzing
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information
  - Analyzing Geographic Information

# National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM  
STANDARDS

- **Theme 3:**

People, Places, and Environments

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- **Standard 1:**

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

- **Standard 9:**

The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface

## NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY

- **U.S. History Era 1 (5-12) Standard 2:**

How early European exploration and colonization resulted in cultural and ecological interactions among previously unconnected peoples

### Preparation

### What You'll Need

### MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Colored pencils
- Highlighters
- Pencils
- Pens

### REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector
- Plug-Ins: Flash

### PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

### GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

## BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

# Background Information

Studying place names in New York City today can reveal information about the diverse origins of this city, including the influence of the Dutch who settled New York City as New Amsterdam in 1609.

## Prior Knowledge

### []

## Recommended Prior Activities

- [Mapping Diversity in Old and New Netherland](#)
- [The Dutch Influence in New Netherland](#)

## Vocabulary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Part of Speech</b>	<b>Definition</b>
colony	<i>noun</i>	people and land separated by distance or culture from the government that controls them.
diversity	<i>noun</i>	difference.
ecosystem	<i>noun</i>	community and interactions of living and nonliving things in an area.
homeland	<i>noun</i>	a person's native country or region.
migration	<i>noun</i>	movement of a group of people or animals from one place to another.
New Amsterdam	<i>noun</i>	(1626-1664) Dutch settlement on Manhattan Island, renamed New York by the British.
settlement	<i>noun</i>	community or village.
settler	<i>noun</i>	person who migrates and establishes a residence in a largely unpopulated area.

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## For Further Exploration

### Interactives

- [The Hudson: The River That Defined America](#)

## PARTNER



## FUNDER



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