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# The 1904 World's Fair



Japanese Pavilion and Garden at the 1904 World's Fair (Image courtesy of the Missouri History Museum)

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**Estimated Time:** 1 -2 Hours

## **Show-Me Standards:**

- Communication Arts:
  - 3. Reading and evaluating nonfiction works and material (such as biographies, newspapers, technical manuals)
  - 6. Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas
- Social Studies:
  - 2. Continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world
  - 6. Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

## **Lesson Objectives:**

1. To educate students in the history of St. Louis and Missouri.
2. To improve student's comprehensive reading abilities.
3. To improve student's understanding of relationships of countries and people.

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### Important Points:

- The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase, although it opened a year late.
- The 1904 World's Fair was the largest yet, celebrating world cultures and the latest technologies.
- The Fair covered over 1,200 acres of land.
- The Summer Olympics were also held in St. Louis during the Fair.
- Neighborhoods were designed around countries such as France, Russia, China, Japan, and Spain.
- Many of America's states were represented as well; the Texas exhibit was shaped like a star.
- Over 3,000 Grand Prize awards were given at the World's Fair.
- Julia Field was a judge on the panel overseeing the fine arts.
- The Fair opened April 30, 1904 and closed on December 30, 1904.
- Worldwide, the World's Fair is known as the World Expo.

### Vocabulary Words:

- **World's Fair:** A large exhibition featuring national and international exhibits designed to showcase the many achievements of nations and states.
- **Centennial:** The 100th anniversary of something.
- **Louisiana Purchase Exposition:** The World's Fair that was hosted in St. Louis in 1904, another name for it is the 1904 World's Fair.
- **Entrant:** A person entering a competition.
- **Grand Prize:** The award for the best of something.
- **Globalization:** The process in which businesses or other organizations have influence around the world.
- **Industrialization:** The development of industry within a country or region.

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## 1904 World's Fair

The first **World's Fair** was hosted in London, England in 1851 and was called The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations. As **globalization** and **industrialization** was on the rise, the Great Exhibition brought nations together to showcase advancement in industry and culture. In 1876, the United States hosted their first World's Fair, the **Centennial** Exposition, that celebrated the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

In 1903, St. Louis was set to host the **Louisiana Purchase Exposition** to celebrate the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase. Forest Park was chosen as the site for the fair but plans quickly outgrew the space and more land was needed. The organizers of the St. Louis World's Fair petitioned Congress to allow them to postpone the opening until 1904. The petition was approved, and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition opened on April 30, 1904. The postponement was fitting as the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 was not official in St. Louis until 1804 due winter travel being difficult.

The 1904 World's Fair stretched over 1,200 acres and showcased advancements in technology, world culture, and enormous recreations of buildings and events. Some of the new inventions to debut at the World's Fair included the x-ray machine, baby incubators, and the electrical outlet and plug. The Fair's neighborhoods were designed to mimic the architecture of places such as France, Japan, China, and Spain; the medieval Irish village even had a replica of Blarney Castle. Some of the biggest attractions were the reenactments of events including the Galveston Flood and Anglo-Boer War Concession.

Many of the exhibits were in competition with each other, not only for visitors, but for a **Grand Prize**. Over 3,000 Grand Prize medals were given out by judges in the categories of art, toys, mechanics, technology, education, and more. Julia Field, wife of the late Eugene Field, was a judge for the category of Original Objects of Art Workmanship. Female judges were chosen by the Board of Lady Managers only when a female **entrant** was part of a category.

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## **The 1904 World's Fair**

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition closed on December 30, 1904. It is well remembered by those in St. Louis and many families still have flash ruby glassware, a favorite souvenir. Although it is typically called a World's Fair in the United States, internationally they are referred to as World Expos. Today, the Expos focus on technology and climate innovations and are hosted every five years, lasting between three and six months, much shorter than the eight months of the 1904 World's Fair.

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## 1904 World's Fair: Questions

When was the first World's Fair? Where was it?

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How long was the 1904 World's Fair open? What day did it open and what day did it close?

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Where was the Fair located in St. Louis? What attractions are in this area now?

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## 1904 World's Fair: Questions

What was the official name of the 1904 World's Fair? What did the Fair celebrate?

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## **1904 World's Fair: Critical Thinking**

Using outside sources, list which buildings/sites still remain standing of the 1904 World's Fair. If you could visit one of these sites, which would you choose and why?

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## 1904 World's Fair: Activity

With your classmates, host your own World's Fair. Each student will be tasked with creating a display representing a country or state. Use the template below to keep track of your notes.

**County or State:**

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**Date of Formation:**

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**Language Spoken:**

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**Type of Government:**

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**Major Religions:**

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**National or State Holidays:**

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## 1904 World's Fair: Activity

### Natural Resources:

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### Economic Production:

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### Famous People:

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