

# A History of Cities

When people immigrated to America, they gathered together to live in small communities or neighborhoods. They had to clear land; plant crops; build homes, farms and roads; and establish businesses. More and more people followed, and the communities grew.

The immigrants faced many dangers, obstacles and challenges. Without protection, the people were vulnerable to wild animals, disease, enemy attack and crop failure, to name just a few.

As more people arrived, more development was needed. They needed more housing, roads and protection. As a result of this, communities grew into towns and cities where people came together and chose to govern themselves through a democratically established municipal government. Citizens created these governing units to be in charge of overseeing the city's activities, services and development.

The first European settlements in Florida and the United States were Pensacola and St. Augustine. They became cities in territorial Florida in 1822.

## Student Activities

### 2nd Grade

- 📖 Through study of their personal heritages and culture, students can research the communities, towns or cities from which their families came.
- 📖 Students can research how their particular city is laid out and develop maps for important landmarks, government buildings and businesses in relation to their home and school.
- 📖 Students can research how their city got its name. If they live outside a city, they can select a nearby city.



### 3rd Grade

- 📖 Students can research the development of cities through history. For example, they can look at how and why cities were developed in Europe during the Middle Ages.

### 4th Grade

- 📖 Students can research the development of cities during the Colonial times. For example, they can look at the needs of the people, laws, government, agriculture, transportation and communication.
- 📖 Students can hold a town meeting to draft the charter (constitution) to establish a new city. Discussion can include the geographical boundaries, services to be provided, how many elected officials will govern the city, setting an election date, and selection of a city name.

### 5th Grade

- 📖 Students can research the development of cities in the State of Florida. What might have caused development to occur as it did (i.e., train routes).
- 📖 Students can focus on the history of their city (or nearby city) and its government. Have resource people who have been long-time residents tell what it was like in the “old days.” Other resource people should include city government officials.
- 📖 Students can write and perform a play about the founding of their city, or they can prepare a video about the history of their city.
- 📖 Students can write a paper on the history of their city.
- 📖 Students can research any festivals/celebrations held locally and the historical significance to the development of their city.

### Student Questions:

1. Why is it important to know the history of your city?
2. How were sites for cities selected?
3. What were some of the factors responsible for the growth of your city?
4. Where would you go to find information about the history of your city?
5. What ethnic groups were instrumental in the formation and growth of your city?
6. Why did some cities thrive while others failed?
7. What are some similarities and differences of the development of cities in Europe and America?