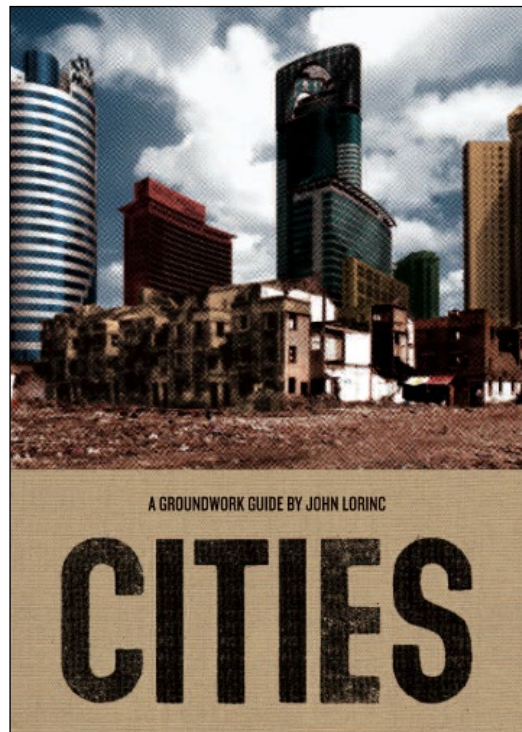




# GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

## Cities A Groundwork Guide

*Written by John Lorinc*



A thought-provoking look at the demands and expectations we place on our growing cities in the twenty-first century. An excellent introduction to the subject for young adults.

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

Ages 14 to 17 / Grades 9 to 12

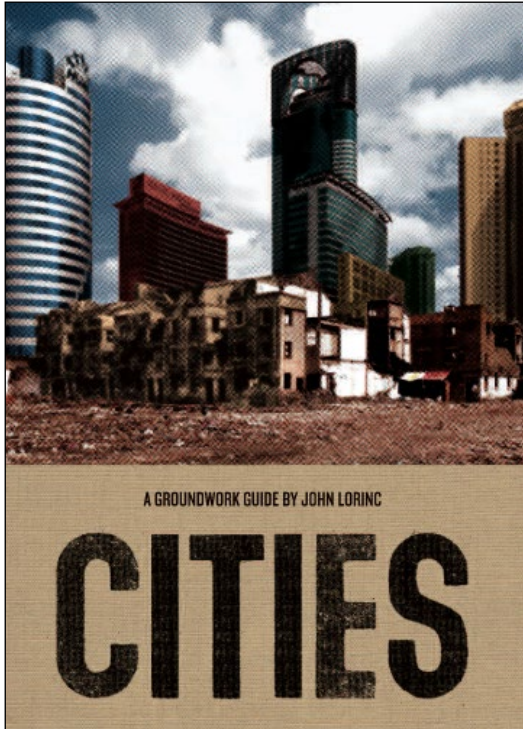
YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION / Social Science / Sociology

7.13 x 5.13 / 144 pages

Trade paperback / \$11.00 CDN / \$10.00 US / 978-0-88899-819-4 /

ebook 978-1-55498-009-3

[groundwoodbooks.com](http://groundwoodbooks.com)



## BOOK DESCRIPTION

This book explores the demands and expectations placed on cities in the twenty-first century.

The book covers the following topics:

- the urbanization of populations through the lens of urban history
- the history of how and why cities were established and the growth of global cities today
- urban sprawl
- climate change and the sustainability of cities
- transportation systems
- urban poverty
- urban safety issues: crime, epidemics and terrorism

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Social Studies (Civics, Geography, History, World Studies)
- English Language Arts
- Business Studies (Economics)
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Arts (Visual Arts, Theater Arts)
- Information and Communications Technology
- Mathematics

## IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

Introduce the book and your goals for studying it, and briefly outline the issues the book explores. Tell students that issues-based study raises varied opinions, and that, as a class, you will set some ground rules for maintaining a respectful and safe classroom atmosphere for discussing personal views. Ask the class to collaborate to create a list of expectations, such as “We’ll respect one another’s privacy”; “We’ll listen to one another”; and “We won’t insult one another.” Post the list and revisit it periodically to allow students to make observations and air problems.

Have students complete the quiz/questionnaire called Getting Started (in this Teachers’ Guide). Have groups of students share and discuss their responses. You can monitor the responses and discussion as a way to assess students’ knowledge levels and areas of interest. After their study of the book, students can review their initial responses and reflect on their learning.

### *Quiz Answers*

1. Over 5 million
2. 6.6 billion
3. True
4. Population figures vary, but the following are some of the world’s largest cities: Tokyo, Japan – 28,025,000; Mexico City, Mexico – 18,131,000; Mumbai, India – 18,042,000; São Paulo, Brazil – 17,711,000; New York City, USA – 16,626,000; Shanghai, China – 14,173,000; Lagos, Nigeria – 13,488,000; Los Angeles, USA – 13,129,000; Calcutta, India – 12,900,000; Buenos Aires, Argentina – 12,431,000

Divide the class into thirds and have students draw quick, rough sketches of maps that show their perceptions of the following: one group sketches a map of a city; another sketches a map of a suburb; and the third sketches a map of a small town. The maps can be labeled but do not have to be detailed. Form small groups of students representing the three types of maps and have students share and compare their maps and ideas.

## TEACHING/LEARNING APPROACHES

Read the book as a class, with group or class discussions at the end of each chapter, and a culminating activity at the end. You could use a combination of teacher read-aloud, guided reading and independent reading.

Have students read the book independently and create their own independent study project.

Assign groups of students one chapter each and have them read it and present it to the rest of the class.

Have students read the book in groups and then either collaborate on a culminating activity or complete it independently.

Ask students to keep an Issues Journal (in writing or on audio or video) in which they comment on what they have read and/or discussed. Encourage frequent updates throughout the study of *Cities*. Let students know from the outset whether the journal is for personal use only, or if it's meant to be part of their assessment.

## IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the history of your city, or a city near you? Why did it start?

Would you prefer to live in a city or a rural area? Do you think you will always feel that way? What might make you change your mind?

What are the major problems that cities are facing, according to the author? What do you think the main problems are in [your city; a city near you; your capital city]?

What are the problems faced by the urban poor?

What is urban sprawl, and what measures are some cities taking to avoid it?

What are some answers to the problem of the lack of affordable housing for cities' poor residents?

What are some of the ways that some cities are becoming greener?

What threats to urban safety does the author outline? How is your city, or a city near you, responding to threats like these? Do you know what safeguards are in place?

## IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Students research further into “new urbanism” and report their findings in an essay, news article or oral presentation.

**Subjects: Civics, World Studies, Geography, Humanities and Social Sciences, Economics, English Language Arts**

Students organize and role-play an international meeting of city mayors. As a class, students decide on the agenda and issues to be discussed at the meeting. Then each student chooses a city to represent and does some research in preparation for discussing those issues. The meeting could be conducted in smaller groups or as a class.

**Subjects: English Language Arts, Theater Arts, World Studies, Civics, Humanities and Social Sciences**

Students create an ideal city. On a grid map, they illustrate and describe the features that help meet the residents' needs and that address issues in *Cities*, such as transportation systems that alleviate congestion, initiatives that help make the city green, affordable housing, safeguards against crime and plans for avoiding urban sprawl.

**Subjects: Civics, Geography, Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts**

In a comparative essay, a series of monologues, or a role-played interview, students compare the problems facing cities in developed nations with those of megacities in developing nations.

**Subjects: Civics, World Studies, Geography, Humanities and Social Sciences, Economics, English Language Arts, Theater Arts**

Students choose an ancient city to research. They present their findings about the city by creating a comic book or graphic novel in which a modern-day city-dweller lands in the ancient city through time travel. Students should explore both differences and similarities in the cities' infrastructures, services and problems.

**Subjects: History, Civics, World Studies, Geography, Humanities and Social Sciences, Economics, English Language Arts**

Students research the work of another figure in urban studies, such as Jane Jacobs, Lewis Mumford or Witold Rybczynski, or read a book listed in For Further Information (pp. 139–40). They write a report about the work of the person they research or a report or comparative essay on the book they read.

**Subjects: Civics, History, Geography, World Studies, Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts**

Students curate an art exhibit on cities. They choose a theme based on their reading of *Cities*, or on a concern they have about cities, and select a collection of artwork (photos of art from the Internet, photos from magazines and newspapers, postcards, calendar photos) that express their theme. They can “mount” the exhibit, with explanatory notes, or publish a catalogue/brochure for it.

**Subjects: Visual Arts, Civics, Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts, Information and Communications Technology**

Students construct a model or diagram that shows what happens in the infrastructure below city streets, such as tunnels, water mains, sewers, subways, steam pipes, telecommunication cables, gas lines. They could build a tear-away model or pop-up book or create a computer image using tear-away software, or create a detailed, labeled diagram.

**Subjects: Visual Arts, Civics, Geography, Information and Communications Technology**

Students create a board game based on urban issues. It could be based on existing board games, such as Monopoly or The Game of Life, but should be adapted to a particular city and to urban issues.

**Subjects: Visual Arts, Civics, Humanities and Social Sciences, Geography, Information and Communications Technology, English Language Arts**

Students choose a sacred city, such as Jerusalem, Mecca, Varanasi, Bodhgaya or Vatican City, to research. They share their report in the form of a travelogue, photo essay or Power-Point presentation.

**Subjects: History, Geography, Civics, English Language Arts, Information and Communications Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences**

City-dwelling students create a video documentary or photo essay of their city. Ensure parental approval before students begin, and/or accompany the students on the video/photography outing. They should decide on a theme, based on ideas gained from reading *Cities*, and plan the shoot to support their theme.

**Subjects: Visual Arts, Information and Communications Technology, Civics, Geography, English Language Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**

Students design an *Amazing Race*-like contest by providing a series of clues for fellow students that guides them to cities around the world, on a world map or in a simulated outdoor event. Students can include famous landmarks and buildings, but should also try to include features, both good and bad, that relate to issues raised in *Cities*. For example, students could include points such as: a famous street or city square that was created by a city planner; a city's facilities that are using alternative energies; a slum area in a city; a city with severe smog. At each checkpoint, the contestants answer a question or come up with an idea to address an urban issue.

**Subjects: Geography, History, Civics, English Language Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**

Review with students some of the tables and graphs in *Cities* and discuss how they support the points the author makes. Students then choose a cities-based theme and conduct research to collect data for the theme. They create and display a variety of tables and graphs, along with an explanation of their theme and research.

**Subjects: Mathematics, Civics, Geography, Economics, English Language Arts, Information and Communications Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences**

## CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER GROUNDWORK GUIDES

See *The Betrayal of Africa* for a study of crises in urban Africa.

See *Climate Change* for themes of urbanization's effect on the environment and overcrowding of cities.

See *Hip Hop World* for themes of poverty, racism and youth unrest in urban areas.

Have students select other books in the series for independent study.



## GETTING STARTED: QUICK QUIZ

1. What is the average population of the world's 100 largest cities? (circle your answer)

850,000

1 million

over 5 million

2. The world population is (circle your answer):

4 billion

5.8 billion

6.6 billion

11 billion

3. More than half of the world's inhabitants live in cities rather than rural areas. (True or False)

4. What do you think are some of the largest cities in the world? Name three or four.

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### Your Thoughts

1. The book *Cities* is by a writer who specializes in cities and urban affairs. What topics do you think you will read about in the book?

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2. What I would like to learn about in my study of cities is ...

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# PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE TASK RUBRIC

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

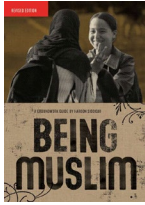
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<b>UNDERSTANDING of the issue/topic</b>	product/ performance demonstrates a deep understanding of the issue/topic	product/ performance demonstrates a solid understanding of the issue/topic	product/ performance demonstrates some understanding of the issue/topic	product/ performance demonstrates a limited understanding of the issue/topic
<b>RESEARCH</b>	product/ performance shows thorough, highly skilled research and the use of a wide variety of resources	product/ performance shows proficient research and the use of a good variety of resources	product/ performance shows some degree of research and the use of a fair range of resources	product/ performance shows limited research and the use of only a few resources
<b>EFFECTIVENESS and quality of the product/ performance</b>	product/ performance shows high degree of planning  product/ performance is highly effective and of very high quality	product/ performance shows considerable degree of planning  product/ performance is effective and of high quality	product/ performance shows some degree of planning  product/ performance is somewhat effective and of fair quality	product/ performance shows little evidence of planning  product/ performance is of limited effectiveness and quality

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**John Lorinc** is a journalist who specializes in urban/municipal issues, business, politics and culture. Over the past twenty years, he has written for many publications, including the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Life*. He is the author of *Opportunity Knocks: The Truth About Canada's Franchise Industry* (Prentice Hall, 1995) and *The New City: How the Crisis in Canada's Large Urban Centres is Re-shaping the Nation* (Penguin, 2006). He has won numerous National Magazine awards for his coverage of urban affairs. Lorinc is a former national affairs chair of PEN Canada and a founding member of the Canadian Coalition for School Libraries. He lives in Toronto, Ontario.

## GROUNDWORK GUIDES



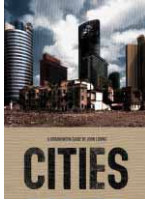
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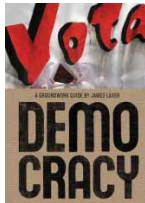
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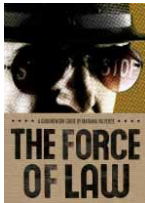
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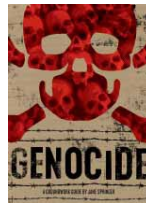
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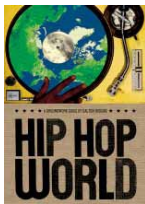
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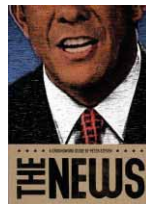
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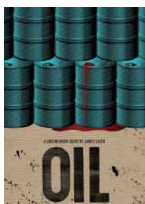
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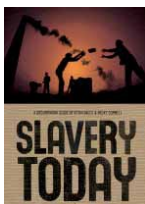
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