

# Upstairs, Downstairs, Lyndhurst Trip 2

## Unit: From Barter to Big Business

### Destination(s)

Lyndhurst

(914) 631-4481  
635 South Broadway

Tarrytown, NY 10591  
<http://lyndhurst.org/>

### County

Westchester

### Grades

4th Grade

### Author

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### Summary

It is difficult for students to understand just what life was like for people of a different time than their own. During this visit to Lyndhurst students are divided into boy and girl groups. These groups are further divided into wealthy and servant groups. Each child experiences the life of wealthy and servant children in a 19th century manor.

### Question

- How did a family's wealth (class) affect children's lives in the 19th century?
- How do you think these differences might have made children feel?
- Do you think these differences were fair or just?

### Content Understanding(s)

Concrete differences in how various groups lived -- education, food, responsibilities, habits, etc.  
-- in the 19th century

### Concept Understanding(s)

The causes, nature, and fairness of the differences observed

### Vocabulary

- Elocution
- Posture
- Governess
- Corset
- Newsboy

### Suggested Time Frame(s)

One day trip to Lyndhurst as well as time in class for pre- and post-visit activities.

### Narrative

**Pre-visit:** If necessary, review materials discussed before the first visit and what you learned during that trip. It is best if students are surprised by the planned activity, but you may let them know they will learn more about life at Lyndhurst.

**Site experience:** Girls and boys are each divided into two groups. Wealthy boys go to the gallery for their lessons. They are given stiff collars to wear and instructed in the deportment of upper class boys. They are given lessons in manners (especially how to treat girls and adults), posture, elocution, and math.

Wealthy girls are taken by the governess for lessons. An elastic bandage is wrapped around the waist to simulate a corset. The girls are instructed in manners, posture, social customs of the day, how to treat and manage servants, and sewing.

Servant boys are given newsboy hats and head outside to clean carriages, rake gravel, clean horse blankets, and take care of the carriage house. Servant girls go to the kitchen where they put on aprons to begin their duties. They learn their place in the household, how to clean the carpets, count the fireplaces they would clean, cook a remedy for "hysterical" wealthy girls, and iron clothes.

The students trade places after about 45 minutes. Now the "upstairs" wealthy students become the "downstairs" servants and vice-versa.

**Post-visit activities:** This activity evokes animated discussion so be sure to allow enough time. As a class, make a chart (see attachments for a sample) where students share what they did in each role and their feelings about it. Using a graphic organizer can help students analyze the experience and share their opinions in a thoughtful way.

After generating the chart, ask students to write about their experiences. Possible prompts include the essential questions listed above as well as questions such as , What activity was your favorite and why? What activity was your least favorite and why? What did you learn about life during this period? What differences are there between your life and that of a wealthy boy or girl? ...you an a 19th century chamber maid or servant boy? If you could choose to be a person during this period, who would it be?

### **What Should Students Know At The End of This Lesson**

See content and concept understandings above.

### **How do you assess student learning?**

- Quality of discussion and participation in the classroom and during the trip
- Quality of writing

### **Site Tips**

Talk with site staff in advance to be sure your goals will be met by the activities. The phone number is 914-631-4481, ext. 109.

Lyndhurst begins scheduling for the school year in September and fills up quickly, so reserve early if possible.

Lunch can be eaten outdoors or in the carriage house.

### **Chaperone Information**

Four chaperones per class are ideal. Chaperones and students should dress for the weather since the program is both indoors and out.