

## TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

### *Dogtown and Z-Boys: adapting to the environment in 1970s CA*

Grade - Six

Length of class period – 90 minutes

Purpose of lesson

This is a lesson designed to train students to identify the natural and human environmental resources and how people utilize these elements to meet their interests and needs.

Inquiry

How did the natural and human geographical features of Venice, CA affect the lives of young people during the early 1970s?

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to see how people observe and use the natural and man made environments to meet their interests and needs.

Materials

Documentary: Dogtown and Z-Boys <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0275309/plotsummary>

Sub-titled "The Birth of Extreme", this documentary takes a look at the transformation of skateboarding from its former image as a land-bound pastime for surfers to its status today as an extreme and acrobatic sport in its own right. Starting from the California surf community of Dogtown, the film follows the evolution of modern skateboarding through it's 70's heyday, its decline during the 80's, and its eventual (and highly lucrative) return in the 90's. Summary written by [Jean-Marc Rocher {rocher@fiberbit.net}](mailto:rocher@fiberbit.net)

Activities

Brainstorm what students know about fads that were popular the past.

Have students watch clips of the documentary Dogtown and Z-Boys. Be careful because there are a few inappropriate sections. Use specific clips to show why Venice, CA was a natural location for surfing and skateboarding, and how the human features in the area created the perfect environment for innovative skateboarding techniques. The film also highlights the economic conditions of the area at the time.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

Students will complete an exit ticket answering the following questions: How did the culture of surfing create the sport of skateboarding and what resources contributed to that change?

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards

Content Standard 12 *Human and Environment Interaction*:

- Describe human and natural characteristics of places and how they shape or place identity.
- Demonstrate and explain ways that humans depend on, adapt to and alter the physical environment.