Congo Square Sound Maps

NEW ORLEANS CULTURAL STUDIO | LESSON 60 | GRADES 3–5 | CULTURE & SOURCES

Context before technique

Congo Square is a gathering place central to the history of African cultural expression in New Orleans.

Whose story is being told?

Teach this lesson through identified New Orleans institutions and, where possible, community-authored testimony. Name the people, places, and historical context in your examples. Explain what remains unknown or contested.

Responsible artistic engagement

Do not reenact enslavement or invent specific African ceremonies; use scholar-led resources.

Visual permissions

Do not download photographs or artwork from source websites for public display unless permission or a valid license is confirmed. A live research link is not a license. The included lesson illustration is original conceptual artwork and not historical evidence.

Starter research sources

HNOC: Congo Square history

https://hnoc.org/presentations/congo-square

New Orleans Jazz Museum: Educator resources

https://nolajazzmuseum.org/educator-resources

Louisiana Visual Arts Benchmarks

Louisiana Department of Education arts standards (official PDF)

Discussion prompts

- Who created or maintains this tradition, space, or object?
- What do outsiders often overlook?
- Which images would require permission, and whose voices are missing?

Teaching note

These starter sources support inquiry, not a complete ethnography. Prioritize up-to-date local perspectives and appropriately compensated cultural partnerships when possible.