

VULCAN PARK & MUSEUM PRESENTS

BIRMINGHAM'S HISTORY AT HOME

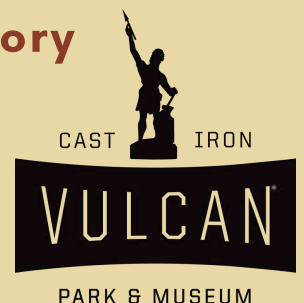
Where all the magic began!



Learn about the city's mining and industrial history

These activities are perfect for children studying local history or the Industrial Revolution!

Recommended grades 3rd - 6th





Iron Ore



Limestone

ACTIVITY 1: WHY BIRMINGHAM EXISTS: NATURAL RESOURCES

Recommended grades 3rd - 6th

Supplies needed: Paper, pen or pencil **Optional:** Camera

Intro: A natural resource is something that comes from the earth, that humans collect and use to create other useful things with. For example, we cut down trees and use the wood to build houses, toys, and furniture. We also collect rain that falls from the sky and use it to drink, cook with, and even to make electricity! Birmingham was founded because the area is home to an abundance of natural resources, including iron ore, coal, and limestone, the three ingredients used to make iron. This is the only area in the whole world (that we know of) where you can find all three of those minerals within just a few miles of each other! That means that we can make iron and steel cheaper and quicker than other places. Because of this advantage, Birmingham became known as the iron and steel capitol of the South!

1. Find natural resources around you! Go outside and look around your yard or neighborhood. Make a list or draw pictures of the natural resources around you and write down how those resources could be used. Optional: take a camera with you and take pictures of each of the natural resources you discover.

Keep a special eye out for iron ore and limestone. Both are plentiful in the area and limestone is often used as gravel in driveways.

2. Walk around your house and see if you can find any items made out of iron. Is there an iron skillet in your kitchen? Do you have any decorations around made of iron? Ask an adult to help you identify things.



Company Town

ACTIVITY 2: THE MAGIC CITY

Supplies needed: large piece of paper and pen/pencil/marker (or sidewalk chalk and driveway if preferred), small figurines or items to represent factories, houses, stores, schools, etc. and people. This could be Legos, toys, or anything you would like!

Intro: We know that Birmingham was founded because it was home to the minerals used to create iron, but how exactly did that equal a big city?

1. **First, create the beginnings of a map of Birmingham by drawing two intersecting lines (either on your paper or driveway).** These lines represent the two railroads that met in the Birmingham area. Parent: as you tell your student(s) the story below, instruct them to place an item on the map as you say it (suggestions are in bold). For example, when you say “houses” the child should place an item representing a house on their map.

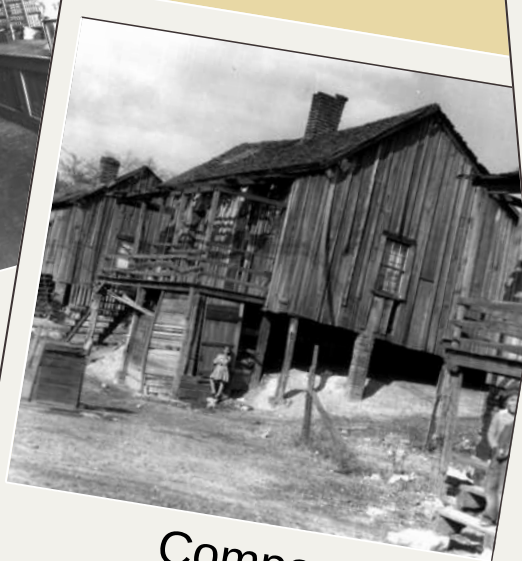
2. **To make iron, we need lots of workers.** We needed people working in **mines**, in iron **factories**, and running the **trains** that transported minerals from mines to factories. Birmingham has SO MUCH iron ore, limestone, and coal, that we needed LOTS of people to help turn it into iron and useful products. Business owners started advertising that there were lots of jobs available in this new city, and very quickly people started moving to Birmingham from all over the country. We had so many jobs to fill, that people even immigrated here from other countries, just to work in the iron industry. Many of those people brought their families with them, and all of the sudden we needed lots of **houses** for our workers and their families, we needed schools for the kids, **stores** to buy food and supplies, **churches, doctors offices, parks**, and more!

What are some other buildings that you can think of that would be needed or wanted in a new city? Place them on your map!

a. Do you see how quickly our map went from being almost blank with just a few railroad tracks, to being full of people and buildings? That’s exactly what happened in the city! Birmingham went from being a rural (country) area with just a bunch of trees, to a big, bustling city very quickly. It happened so quickly, that some people started to say it was like magic – and that is how Birmingham became known as the Magic City!



Company
Store



Company
Town



Iron Factory

ACTIVITY 3: ANALYZING PHOTOS TO LEARN ABOUT INDUSTRY IN BIRMINGHAM

Supplies Needed: Any photo within this packet, primary source analysis tool(appendix A), pen/pencil

1. **Parents, with your students(s) look at the attached photos related to the iron industry in the Birmingham area.** Choose to focus on either mining, factories, or company towns. Using the “primary source analysis tool” sheet, make notes about each photo that you look at.

Observe closely and write what you see in the “observe” column, then write how the photo makes you feel in the “reflect” column, and finally, write a question that you have about what you see or one that you would like to ask a person in the photo in the “question” column.

Perhaps choose a different aspect to focus on for different days until you’ve analyzed each set of photos over several days.



Mining

ACTIVITY 4: PERSPECTIVE WRITING - IF I WAS A WORKER IN THE IRON INDUSTRY

Supplies Needed: storyboard (Appendix B) and crayons/pencils/markers

1. On a day after completing photo analysis, watch [this video](#) by How Stuff Works on the iron/steel making process. Although this video is modern, the process is almost identical to how iron was made 100+ years ago. Then, hand out the attached 6 panel storyboard and instruct your child to draw and caption a story about someone who lives in a company town and works in an iron/steel factory. Use information gathered from the photos you looked at previously, and the video.

As a bonus activity, have your child act out their story.

SHARE YOUR STORYBOARD OR POST YOUR VIDEO - #LEARNINGWITHVULCAN



ACTIVITY 5: ALL ABOUT VULCAN

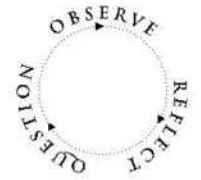
Supplies needed: paper, pen or pencil, and clay or Playdoh

See [allrecipes.com's instructions for making salt dough](https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/245483/salt-dough/)

Intro: Now that we know why Birmingham exists and how the city grew, why did we decide to build a giant iron statue?

Intro: Vulcan has been the symbol of Birmingham for over 100 years, and we are proud to have him watching over us and reminding us to always look forward. Vulcan is a monument, which is a building or structure that is of historical importance or interest. Monuments are made to represent a specific person, group, or place. Vulcan was made to represent Birmingham.

1. Watch [this](#) video about Vulcan.
2. Now, think of something that is important to you. Is it your family? Your home? Your neighborhood or community? If you could create a monument to represent something important to you, what would it be? Be creative! Take out your paper and pencil, and draw or describe what your monument would be and why you chose the figure or structure you did. Take as much time as you need.
3. Next, (this can be later the same day, or a different day) create your monument! Get out your clay (or make your own!) or playdoh and sculpt your monument. Take a photo and post it online and tag #LearningWithVulcan



PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

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QUESTION

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FURTHER INVESTIGATION

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Title _____

