This week we are learning all about New York and Manhattan:
LO: To understand how social geography can describe the history of a location

Watch this clip of New York: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtCMtC50gwY

We are going to learn about one borough of New York, Manhattan and the different sections of it:

Each of the characters below has given you clues about where they live, work or play. Using the information text under each character, decide which neighbourhood they are describing. Justify your answer with information from the guide.
DOWNTOWN

1. Steven McMann
“I work for one of the world’s largest banks. My office building is on Wall Street and has great views out across the river to Ellis Island.”

2. Von Charlie
“I live west of Broadway, not far from the Hudson River. I’m a poet and came here to follow in the footsteps of other great writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain. Sadly lots of us writers are being pushed out by all these celebrities moving here and pushing up the house prices.”

3. James Liu
“I’m lucky to live and work in one of the few areas of Manhattan that doesn’t suffer from gridlock traffic. I work for my parents, who own the Chinese restaurant we live above. Our restaurant is in an area of the city that used to be called Little Italy.”

DOWNTOWN

The Financial District

Best for: Museums, historic sites (like the September 11 Memorial and Museum), architecture, and access to Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, and the Brooklyn Bridge

What you won’t find: Great dining, much evening entertainment

Parameters of the neighbourhood: Everything south of Chambers Street

This is where New York City—the then New Amsterdam—was born. It was on Wall Street that George Washington took the oath of office as America’s first president. It was here, at Fraunces Tavern, that the Sons of Liberty gathered to plot the overthrow of the British. It was at Castle Clinton and then Ellis Island that millions of immigrants flooded the city in the 19th and 20th centuries to get their first glimpse of a “promised land”. The great financial movers and shakers also stalked the area (and continue to do so today), and a visit to these “canyons of greed” at the beginning of the day or at 5pm, when those men and women in suits and trader’s smocks pour onto the streets, is an exciting sight. It is home to all of the world’s major banks and is one of the most important financial and banking areas in the world.

Chinatown (& Little Italy)

Best for: Affordable dining and shopping

What you won’t find: Top museums, streets without gridlock

Parameters of the neighbourhood: Chinatown is roughly bordered by Broome Street to the north, Allen Street to the east, Worth to the south, and Lafayette Street to the west.

At points, Chinatown takes on the aspects of Shanghai or Beijing: the dense crowds on the streets, the awnings with Chinese characters, the pinging sound of Chinese conversation everywhere. It’s a fun, truly transporting area to visit and one that’s been voraciously swallowing up other neighbourhoods—Little Italy, the Jewish Lower East Side—for the past few decades. In fact, except for two blocks of Mulberry Street (from Canal to Broome), strung with coloured lights, Little Italy has ceased to exist and is really only a tourist-trapping shadow of its former self. There are a handful of worthwhile places to shop for Italian food, eat gelato or get Italian coffee, but no noteworthy restaurants and very few real Italian-Americans around anymore. For great, cheap eats (and shopping) stick with Asian restaurants and marts, for the most part.

Greenwich Village

Best for: Strolling, dining, historic sites, lovely architecture, specialty food shops, theater, live music clubs, star sightings

What you won’t find: Museums, many hotels

Parameters of the neighbourhood: From Broadway west to the Hudson River, bordered by Houston Street to the south and 14th Street to the north

Greenwich Village has always been where the city’s outsiders and oddballs have found a haven. In Dutch Colonial times, it was farmland set outside the walls of the city, and a number of slaves were given conditional freedom in return for providing the burghers with food (and fighting off the Native Americans). At the turn of the 20th century, the area became known as a bohemian enclave, where artists of all sorts (Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, Henry James, Winslow Homer, to name a few) could find cheap lodging and companionship. Today, the high real estate prices have dulled the Village’s edge, and you’re more likely to see moms with strollers than long-haired poets walking these streets. Many celebs now call the tree-shaded brownstones of the Village home sweet home. But the charms of the area are still intact, as is the illusion that you’ve entered another city altogether. Very few buildings in the neighbourhood reach to 10-stories (most are lower than that) and small shops elbow out chain stores. It’s a wonderful place to simply come and get lost in it.
4. Fiona Cullum

“I work as an architect in one of the many bland glass skyscrapers that appeared in this part of the city in the 1950s. It’s a shame the skyscrapers are so bland as the old architecture in this part of the city is sublime. My favourite by far is Grand Central Station and the United Nations Building.”

5. Bob Munkton

“I work in the busiest part of New York. It’s where all the tourists go so I work as a hot dog seller with my little cart. I can always hear the tourists saying, "Well, it's a nice place to visit, but I couldn't ever live there," when they walk around this part of New York. And think that this bustling neighbourhood is all that the city has to offer. I like this part of the city as it has the Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller Center and Macy’s that makes it very popular with tourists and New Yorkers alike.”

MIDTOWN

Times Square & Midtown West
Best for: Theatre and entertainment of all sorts, the Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller Center, Macy's
What you won’t find: Serenity
Parameters of the neighbourhood: From 34th Street to 59th Street west of Fifth Avenue to the Hudson River
Midtown West, a vast area, encompasses several famous names: Madison Square Garden, the Garment District, Rockefeller Center, the Theatre District, and Times Square. It’s the area people think of when they think of New York and the reason why so many visitors say with a smirk “Well, it’s a nice place to visit, but I couldn’t ever live there.” And because they’re basing their judgments on crowded, loud, pushy midtown, they’re absolutely right: It’s unliveable . . . which is why so few New Yorkers actually live in this area. In certain parts of Midtown there’s no residential housing whatsoever, and it’s only the tourists who attempt to get a good night’s sleep in this bustling neighbourhood.

Midtown East & Murray Hill
Best for: Great architecture, shopping (and window-shopping), historic sites, the United Nations, the Empire State Building
What you won’t find: Museums, nightlife (again, with some exceptions)
Parameters of the neighbourhood: East from Fifth Avenue to Third Avenue, north from 42nd Street to 57th Street
In the 1950s, Madison, Park, and Lexington Avenues started to sprout with skyscrapers and soon were rivalling the Wall Street area for office space. That’s primarily what you’ll find here: people in suits, looming glass towers, and lots of traffic. Among all that are some spectacular architectural sights like Grand Central Station, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the Chrysler Building and the Seagram’s Building. Go closer to the East River and the area becomes largely residential with little to recommend it to visitors beyond Bloomingdales and the United Nations.

A tremendously popular stretch of Midtown East is Fifth Avenue as it runs from 57th Street down to the Empire State Building at 34th Street. Stroll it for some of the best window-shopping on the planet.
UPTOWN

6. Lady Gillian Clarence-Jones
“One lives in the 10021 Zip Code darling, the richest code in the world don’t you know. My address is also referred to as “The Gold Coast” as there are so many wealthy people living here. We spend our time making huge business deals but then continuing with the tradition of philanthropy and donating large sums of money to the local museums, such as the Met or Guggenheim.”

7. Luke Cage
“I live in a Brownstone in an up and coming part of the Manhattan. Sure it sued to be pretty rough here but it’s a lot safer now. Sadly this means that the mainly African-American population that has lived here since the 1920’s is being pushed out as gentrification causes house prices to rocket. Sure, there are still the Caribbean food joints and the gospel churches but how long will they last as money leads to the place being ‘improved’ with yet another Starbucks?”

UPTOWN

Upper East Side
Best for: Museums, architecture, window-shopping, Central Park
What you won’t find: Fine dining (although I list some exceptions to that), theatre, music clubs
Parameters of the neighbourhood: Starts at 59th Street and encompasses the area east of Central Park
10021 is the richest zip code in the world, and it belongs to the Upper East Side, in particular the swank swatch of pavement that runs from 61st to 80th streets. Also known as “The Gold Coast” and “Millionaires Mile”, this is the stomping grounds for New York’s high society: the Prada-clad women and old money men who sit on the boards of the neighbourhood museums, go to a lot of cocktail parties, and pay for scholarships for kicks. Their mansions and marble-face townhouses make for nifty sightseeing for those interested in architecture; and the shops along Madison Avenue offer a peek into the extravagant fashions adopted by the ultra-rich and the top designers who serve them.
Museums also play a key role on the Upper East Side, and there’s a greater concentration of top-flight museums here than anywhere else in the country, with the exception of the Mall in Washington, D.C. You’ll want to spend at least 1 day exploring Museum Mile—the Metropolitan, Guggenheim, The Frick, Cooper-Hewitt, and more are all in the area

Harlem
Best for: Dining, bars, clubs, historic sites.
What you won’t find: Theatre, shopping, museums (except for the Studio Museum and the Museo del Barrio)
Parameters of the neighbourhood: Harlem proper stretches from river to river, beginning at 125th Street on the West Side, 96th Street on the East Side, and 110th Street north of Central Park. East of Fifth Avenue, Spanish Harlem (El Barrio) runs between East 100th and East 125th streets.
Perhaps the most rapidly transforming neighbourhood in the city, Harlem is safer and cleaner than it’s been in decades... but may be losing some of its intrinsic character. A largely African-American neighbourhood since the 1920s—and home to some of the greatest black writers, politicians, and artists of the 20th century—the neighbourhood is now drawing an increasing number of Caucasian residents, lured here by lower real-estate prices and the beauty of a brownstone-lined community. My recommendation: Visit here soon before the authentic soul and Caribbean joints disappear, the gospel churches lose their swing, and the rhythm of the streets changes its beat.