

Big Dig tunnels open

2003 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

transport — move people or goods from one place to another

change — become different

engineer — a person who designs and tests structures or systems

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

Major Big Dig roadways opened in Boston. Cars moved through new tunnels. Removing the elevated highway changed the city above. Construction and other project work continued afterward.

The project's major openings in 2003 were not its final completion, commonly dated 2007. Cost, safety, traffic, and public space all belong in the story. Compare plans with actual results.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: Marriage equality in Massachusetts

May 17, 2004

Massachusetts became the first U.S. state where same-sex couples could legally marry. Families celebrated having their relationships recognized. The change followed a state court decision.

Goodridge v. Department of Public Health was decided in 2003; marriages began in 2004. Distinguish a ruling from implementation. Discuss equal treatment respectfully, including classmates from many family structures.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Major Big Dig roadways opened in Boston. Cars moved through new tunnels. Removing the elevated highway changed the city above. Construction and other project work continued afterward. The project's major openings in 2003 were not its final completion, commonly dated 2007. Cost, safety, traffic, and public space all belong in the story. Compare plans with actual results.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.