

Focused Learning Lesson
American History
Grade Level: 11
H-1B-H11

Overview:

This lesson is designed to introduce students to the many political and cultural changes that brought about the era in American history known as the “Roaring Twenties.” The lesson engages students in class discussions of several events or changes that occurred during this time period. Then, students analyze the events, which were discussed and select events or changes, which they feel, are the most important to the formation of American society in the 1920s. The assessment for this lesson has students employ both creativity and analysis skills as they incorporate their selected events into a timeline which showcases important political and cultural changes of the 1920s and their impact on American society.

Approximate Duration:

45 minutes

Benchmarks and GLEs:

H-1B-H11- Analyzing the significant changes that evolved in the U.S. between World War I and the Great Depression

GLE:

34. Identify the characteristics of the 1920s and describe the cultural changes that resulted. (e.g., Harlem Renaissance, prohibition, women’s suffrage)

Objectives:

1. The learner will analyze characteristics of the 1920s and describe political and cultural changes that occurred in America.

Teacher Preparation:

- To prepare for this lesson, the teacher will need to review the content notes provided in Attachment 1 and prepare to lead a class discussion about, “Political and Cultural Changes of the 1920s.”
- Additionally, the teacher will need to secure markers/colors and blank paper for the student activity.

Materials/Equipment/Resources:

- Teacher notes (Attachment 1)
- Student copies of an American history text
- Overhead projector and transparency of Teacher Notes (optional)
- Blank copy paper (1-2 sheets per student)
- Markers. Colors, art supplies, etc. (optional)

Lesson Procedures:**Set or Opener**

Begin the lesson by asking students to discuss how their tastes in music and clothing differ from their parents' tastes. Then, have the students suggest reasons why younger peoples' attitudes toward life differ from one generation to the next.

Body of the Lesson

Explain that the 1920s were a time of great change and occurrence, both politically and culturally.

1. Using the teacher notes provided in Attachment 1, discuss with the students some of the political and cultural changes that occurred during the 1920s.
2. Explain to the class the importance of the automobile and its emergence in the early 1920s.
3. Have students brainstorm new inventions or concepts that were necessary after the beginning of mass automobile production.
4. Using the teacher notes, list and discuss with students some of the major cultural and political events that occurred throughout the Roaring Twenties.
5. After discussing several political and cultural changes as a class, instruct students to use their notes and textbook to select what they consider to be the four most important political changes and the four most important cultural changes.
6. Using blank sheets of copy paper, have students create a timeline of these events using their notebooks and textbooks as guides.
7. Each entry on the timeline should have an approximate date, a brief description or picture of the selected event and an explanation of the event's impact on American society. See Attachment 2 for a sample of the student timeline.
8. Allow students sufficient time to complete their timelines, but depending on how elaborate and/or creative students become, the teacher may need to assign completion of this assignment for homework.

Closure

Have students share their work once everyone completes his individual timeline.

Assessment Items:

The informal assessment for this lesson consists of questions and answers during the class discussion and the formal assessment consists of the class timeline activity. While students are working individually on the timeline activity, the teacher should walk around the room and answer individual questions and informally assess student work.

Attachment 3 of this lesson provides some sample entries from a student timeline.

Reference Links and Technology Connections:

Danzer, G., J. Klor de Alva, L. Wilson, & N. Woloch. (1998). *The Americans*. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell.

Culture and Politics of the Roaring Twenties

- Political Changes
 - Americans yearned to “return to normalcy” after World War I
 - Renewed sense of isolationism in which the U.S. pulled away from involvement in foreign affairs
 - Resurgence of “nativism” or the suspicion of foreign-born people
 - Widespread fear of a communist take-over called the “Red Scare”
 - Harding won the 1920 Presidential Election on the slogan “Return to Normalcy” and vowed to bring America back to the simpler days before Progressive Era reforms.
 - Calvin Coolidge – Harding’s successor, who believed that “the chief business of America is business”
- Cultural Changes
 - Automobiles change America
 - Paved roads developed
 - Garages and carports became popular
 - Gas stations were built
 - Traffic signals were popularized
 - Airplane was established as a peace time means of transportation
 - Electrical appliances made housework easier for women
 - Businesses began selling goods on the installment plan – an arrangement in which a purchaser pays over an extended time without having to put down too much money at the time of purchase
 - Prohibition – 18th Amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale or transportation of alcoholic beverages
 - Speakeasies, or hidden saloons and night clubs, sold liquor illegally
 - Bootlegger - person who smuggled alcoholic beverages into the U.S. during prohibition
 - 18th amendment was repealed by the 21st amendment
 - Scopes Trial – Sensational court case in which a biology teacher by the name of John T. Scopes was tried for challenging a Tennessee law that outlawed the teaching of evolution.
 - Flappers – Free-thinking women who embraced new fashions and urban attitudes of the 1920s (wore dresses above knees, short hair in bob cuts, lipstick, close fitting hats, smoked cigarettes, drank in speakeasies)
 - Changes in Family
 - Birthrate dropped
 - Divorce rate doubled
 - Vast majority of women remained homemakers
 - Radio was the most popular form of communication

- Heroes and Leisure
 - Sports
 - Babe Ruth – Baseball
 - Jack Dempsey – Boxing
 - Charles Lindberg – first non stop solo flight across the Atlantic
 - Movies – Silent films and later talkies developed
 - Music – Jazz was born in New Orleans
 - Harlem Renaissance – Flowering of African American artistic creativity during the 1920s; Some artists were:
 - Countee Cullen
 - Langston Hughes
 - Bessie Smith
 - Zora Neale Hurston
 - Josephine Baker

Sampling of Student Timeline Entries

