



Unit: 1920s

Lesson Title: The Sound and Feel of the 1920s

Lesson Focus: Art reflects the times in which it was created.

Grade Level/Course: US History (11<sup>th</sup> grade)

Time allotment: 1 period

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### Lesson Summary:

Students often have difficulty identifying eras and, therefore, placing events in time and place. This lesson uses the art of the time to help students understand the 1920s and, when used as the introductory lesson for understanding the 1920s, sets a multi-media background or “soundtrack” for their study of the significant individuals, events, and issues of the 1920s (including immigration, the Red Scare, Prohibition, and the changing role of women).

### Materials Needed

- Computer with Internet access
- Materials from the Americans Encounter the Modern section of the HRC Teaching the American Twenties website <http://dev.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/teachingthetwenties/modern.php>
- Music and images of the 1920s
- Drawing paper

### Documents Used

- Images from Americans Encounter the Modern section of the HRC website
- King of Jazz video clip (1930)  
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7756859618482849158&q=king+of+jazz&hl=en>
- 1920s music: <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/1920m.html>  
<http://www.tedstaunton.com/labels/1920-1929.index.html>

### Strategies Used

- Placard Stations
- Matrix
- Timeline

**Objective:**

Students will analyze examples of art from the 1920s to build an understanding of the times.

**Enduring Understandings:**

Art reflects the times in which it was created.

Cultural contributions of people and the art they create express various beliefs and traditions.

**Essential Questions:**

- Does art reflect or transcend the time in which it was created? Does art respond to or impact issues and events?
- What common elements do you find in the art of the 1920s? What themes do you find?
- What were the 1920s like? What evidence do you find in the art?
- How were the 1920s different from the times preceding them? What contributed to this change?
- How did the art of the 1920s exemplify ways Americans were responding to the challenges of modern life?

**Concepts:**

Absolute and  
relative chronology

Perspective  
Social change

**Vocabulary**

Transcend  
Reflect

Theme  
Precede

**TEKS/SEs (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills/Student Expectations)**

(1) **History.** The student understands traditional historical points of reference in U.S. history from 1877 to the present. The student is expected to:

(A) identify the major eras in U.S. history from 1877 to the present and describe their defining characteristics;

(B) apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods; and

(5) **History.** The student understands significant individuals, events, and issues of the 1920s.

(20) **Culture.** The student understands the relationship between the arts and the times during which they were created. The student is expected to:

(A) describe how the characteristics and issues of various eras in U.S. history have been reflected in works of art, music, and literature such as the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe, rock and roll, and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*;

(B) describe the impact of significant examples of cultural movements in art, music, and literature on American society, including the Harlem Renaissance;

(C) identify examples of American art, music, and literature that transcend American culture and convey universal themes;

(D) analyze the relationship between culture and the economy and identify examples such as the impact of the entertainment industry on the U.S. economy; and

(E) identify the impact of popular American culture on the rest of the world.

(24) **Social studies skills.** The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) locate and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about the United States;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;

(C) explain and apply different methods that historians use to interpret the past, including the use of primary and secondary sources, points of view, frames of reference, and historical context;

(D) use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple sources of evidence;

(25) **Social studies skills.** The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

(C) transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate; and

(D) create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

**Procedure – can be done in computer lab or classroom**

**A. Anticipatory Set (Hook)**

Choose a section of wall on which to display a blank timeline showing 1920-1929.

Play a popular current song as students arrive. Ask students to think about songs that are popular today. Ask them to write a few words and draw a quick sketch of the society that the song represents. Hold a quick discussion of how the music reflects the time in which it was created. (What issues are reflected in the song? Political? Economic? Social? What attitudes are portrayed? What words are used that are typical of today?)

Play music from the 1920s. (Several websites have audio clips that can be played, including: <http://www.tedstaunton.com/labels/1920-1929.index.html>, <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/1920m.html> ) and have students write a few words and then sketch visuals that the music reminds them of. Ask what they think the society of that time was like. Today's purpose is to develop a better understanding of the 1920s by looking at the art of the times.

Point to the timeline on the wall and quickly review the significant issues, events and individuals that were studied as part of the previous era (WWI) and post them to the left of the timeline. Ask if students know any issues, events and individuals that took place during the 1920s and post them appropriately on the timeline (a quick way to access existing knowledge).

## B. Information gathering (Line)

Create stations with an image from the HRC website and the caption information for that image (perhaps 10-12 stations to keep numbers at any one station low. A station could consist of a folder on a desk with the information, a computer set to the HRC website image, or placards on the wall)

Hand out a matrix form to each student (or have them draw the matrix in their student notebooks). Students will move from station to station, in any order, visiting at least \_\_\_ (teacher decides) stations during the period and filling out their matrix as they go. Try to ensure that students vary the groups they are at stations with rather than traveling in set groups, perhaps by drawing slips of paper with different sets of stations on them.

**Station 1:** Computer playing video clip from The Jazz King

(<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7756859618482849158&q=king+of+jazz&hl=en> )

**Stations 2-\_\_:** Computer set to one image of the HRC website or folder with printed version of Image and accompanying information. (Choose images showing representative art, architecture, people, music, etc.)

Allow a limited amount of time at each station. When time is up, have students return to one of the stations they visited to form groups of 3-4 (number depends on class size, etc.) to discuss and agree upon what information to present to the class.

Remind students of the goal and purpose: to get a feeling for and an understanding of the 1920s by analyzing examples of the era's art.

As students briefly present their information, others in the class add to their matrix.

## C. Processing Activity (Sinkers)

1. After the presentations, student pairs discuss how the artwork they saw provided support for the statement that “art reflects the times in which it was created.” (Think-Pair-Share is one way to give students an opportunity to share their ideas and impressions of art in the 1920s.)
2. As music from the 1920s plays in the background, students sketch their impressions of the 1920s that were gained in today's activity.
3. Teacher posts the sketches around the timeline to become the “background” for what will become a collage about the 1920s. As study of the 1920s continues, visuals and other information is added that pertains to the causes and effects of significant issues such as immigration, the Red Scare, Prohibition, and the changing role of women; as well as the impact of significant individuals such as Clarence Darrow, William Jennings Bryan, Henry Ford, and Charles A. Lindbergh.
4. Revisit the collage at the end of the study of the 1920s to draw conclusions about how the art of the 1920s reflected the times. (Perhaps use the Critical Analysis Organizer from the Region XIII social studies website.)

## Differentiation and Accommodation

***Gifted/Talented Learners:*** Differentiate content by requiring G/T students to visit specific stations. Differentiate process by using different organizers (i.e., Critical Analysis Organizer) instead of the matrix.

***English Language Learners:*** Limiting the amount of writing, allowing small group discussions, and using visuals are good strategies for use with ELLs. Differentiate content by requiring ELL students to visit specific stations.

***Special Needs Students:*** Limiting the amount of writing, allowing small group discussions, and using visuals are good strategies for use with below-grade-level readers. Allow one student at the station to read aloud the supplemental information from the website. Differentiate content by requiring students to visit specific stations. Differentiate process by using different organizers (i.e., Critical Analysis Organizer) instead of the matrix.

*Document Analysis Matrix*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*As you visit the stations, read the introductory material and analyze the primary source documents. Write your notes on this matrix, making sure to note the Station Number.*

*Your goal during this activity is to gain an understanding of the 1920s by looking at examples of the art of the times. Make sure you will be able to support your ideas with evidence from the documents.*

<i>Station #</i>	<i>What is it?</i>	<i>Notes on details</i>	<i>Reaction comments</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Round 1:</i>  <i>Station ____</i>				
<i>Round 2:</i>  <i>Station ____</i>				
<i>Round 3:</i>  <i>Station ____</i>				
<i>Round 4:</i>  <i>Station ____</i>				
<i>Round 5:</i>  <i>Station ____</i>				

# Significant People of the Twenties-Research Notes

*Area of Interest:*

<b>People of Differing Views</b>		
<b>Personal Background Source</b>		
<b>Issues/Ideas Source</b>		
<b>Point of View Source</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
<b>How successful were they at getting their ideas or points of view across?</b>		

# Significant People of the Twenties

## Dialogue Notes

Area of Interest	People - Point of View	Similarities	Difference	Impact they had on American Society
Feminism	Emily Post  Margaret Sanger			
Leadership	W.E.B. DuBois  Marcus Garvey			
Literature	T.S. Eliot  Langston Hughes			



Business	Henry Ford  Eugene V. Debs			
Religion & Science	William Jennings Bryan  Clarence Darrow			
Politics	J. Edgar Hoover  Sacco and Vanzetti			
Heroes	Charles Lindberg  Al Capone			

## Significant People of the Twenties-Research Notes

Person Researched: _____		Topic: _____	
<b>Personal Background Source</b>			
<b>Issues/Ideas Source</b>			
<b>Point of View Source</b>			
<b>Significance</b>			
<b>How successful was this person at getting his/her ideas or points of view across?</b>			

Wrote *Etiquette*

Emily Post

Advocate of family planning

Margaret Sanger

NAACP, “Talented Tenth”

W.E.B. DuBois

Advocated return to Africa  
movement

Marcus Garvey

Model T assembly line,  
fought unions

Henry Ford

Supported unionization and labor  
reforms, 1920 Socialist party  
candidate

Eugene V. Debs

Supported racial equality,  
defended John T. Scopes

Clarence Darrow

Supported literal interpretation of  
the Bible, Prosecutor in Scopes  
trial

William Jennings Bryan

Director of FBI

J. Edgar Hoover

Defendants in controversial  
murder case, Executed by  
electrocution

Sacco and Vanzetti

Wrote "The Wasteland"

T.S. Eliot (1922)

Wrote "The Enormous Room"

E.E. Cummings (1920)

First Female Senator

Rebecca Ann Latimer (1922)

Wrote *The Great Gatsby*

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925)

First Solo Flight Across the  
Atlantic

Charles Lindbergh (1927)

Invented "Quick-Freeze"  
Machine

Clarence Birdseye (1925)

Discovered Penicillin

Alexander Fleming (1928)

First Instrument-Only Flight

Jimmy Doolittle

"The Negro Speaks of  
Rivers"

Langston Hughes

Inventor of Lead Gasoline

Thomas Midgeley, Jr.

President who Reinstated  
High Tariff

William G. Harding

President Associated With  
the 20s Economic Boom

Calvin Coolidge

President During "Black  
Tuesday"

Herbert Hoover

Writer of "Mein Kampf"

Adolf Hitler

## Weblinks for 1920s

Harry Ransom Center Teaching the American Twenties

<http://dev.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/teachingthetwenties/modern.php>

## Webquest

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/webtheroarch.html>

## Radio Commercials

- <http://www.old-time.com/commercials/1920's/Hawthorne%20Court.html>

## Music

- <http://www.dismuke.org/Electric/August99.html>
- <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/1920m.html>
- <http://www.tedstaunton.com/labels/1920-1929.index.html>

## Jazz King video clip

- <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7756859618482849158&q=king+of+jazz&hl=en>

## General Information

<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/il/state/alhn1920.html>

**Timeline:** <http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/athome/1920/timeline/index.html>

Captions for station pictures (print pictures from HRC 1920s website)

## BLAST (cover and poem by Ezra Pound)

“Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and other writers and artists advocated Vorticism, an art movement that sought to speed human consciousness up to the pace of the machine age. Their publication, *Blast*, with its bold, visual text enacted this desire to jolt people out of the slow comfort of the past.”

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: New Forms, New Ideas*

## The Dial (Drawing and excerpt from T.S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland*)

## Miguel Covarrubias drawing of jazz band

“W. C. Handy, born in 1873 in Alabama to a starkly religious and anti-musical family, engaged in his passion in secret until he found success with a traveling minstrel show in the 1890s. Soon he relocated to Memphis, wrote "Memphis Blues" and "St. Louis Blues," and became a legend. Though famously known as "The Father of the Blues," he protested that he merely transcribed the life and music of the people around him. One of the strongest rivers of influence of jazz, the blues remained popular as its own art form, but in these early days, much crossover occurred. Miguel Covarrubias captured the spirit of both jazz and blues performances in this remarkable drawing.”

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: New Forms, New Ideas*



“These images published in *Camera Work*, of both the Brancusi and Picasso-Braque exhibitions held at 291, allow a sense of the avant-garde gallery experience”

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: New Forms, New Ideas*

### *Poetry of Ezra Pound*

“Pound found that the clean, minimal aesthetic of traditional Chinese poetry could represent contemporary Western experience more successfully than Western models.”

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: New Forms, New Ideas*

### Alice Corbin Henderson, pastel southwestern landscape

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: Regionalism*

### Alice Corbin Henderson, pastel southwestern landscape

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: Regionalism*

*The Maltese Falcon* (1930) by Dashiell Hammett, dust jacket and inside flap

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: The Murder Mystery*

*The Dain Curse* (1929) by Dashiell Hammett, dust jacket and inside flap

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: The Murder Mystery*

*The Red Harvest* (1929) by Dashiell Hammett, dust jacket and inside flap

*From the HRC website Americans Encounter the Modern: The Murder Mystery*

Langston Hughes's "The Colored Soldier" **from *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes***

*From the HRC website Big Debates: After the War*

Dust jacket from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

“On the dust jacket of the 1925 first edition of *The Great Gatsby*, the mysterious ‘disembodied’ girl's face floating over Coney Island represents both the cultural and personal significance of Daisy Buchanan in Gatsby's imagination.”

*From the HRC website Small Town, Big City: Who Were the Babbits and Bohemians?*

Publicity posters from Gloria Swanson's film *Her Gilded Cage* (1922), Paramount Pictures

*From the HRC website Small Town, Big City: The Dream Factory*

*Publicity still from The Untamed Lady, 1922, Paramount Pictures*

Often elaborately costumed on-screen and off, Gloria Swanson was glamorous but had a "common appeal." Frequently playing a rich woman in love with a poor man or a poor woman marrying up, her roles reflected concerns about shifting attitudes toward class in the 1920s. Notice the changes in fashion and hairstyle from the 1919 film *Don't Change Your Husband* to those made in the 1920s.

*From the HRC website Small Town, Big City: The Dream Factory*

“Gordon Conway designed this advertisement for the French Delage, playing upon the 1920s desire for sophistication.”

*From the HRC website Small Town, Big City: The Dream Factory*

The poem "Red Wheelbarrow" from *Spring and All*, by William Carlos Williams, 1923

“Poem XXII, popularly known as "The Red Wheelbarrow" strips language down to seeming banality--note its differences from Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The poem brings the physicality of the words into prominence, and asks the reader to contemplate the simplest of objects. But it also challenges the reader: what exactly does depend on the scene he describes? To answer this question, the reader must make language anew, like a seed cracked open in the spring.”

*From the HRC website Defining American Culture: Investigating “Americanness”*