

The Twenties at Bay: A Group Project

Name _____

Objectives:

1. To draw conclusions about crucial significance of the twenties.
2. To challenge commonly held notions of the twenties.
3. To work with groups to research and teach the class about a certain area of the twenties.

Introduction:

To many Americans the twenties means Babe Ruth, Charles Lindbergh, the Dempsey-Tunney fight, jazz, talkies, Model T Fords, Prohibition, flappers, radio, etc. It's possible that ordinary Americans make more associations with the twenties than with any other decade in our nation's history. In the popular mind the era has a style and mood all its own.

Historians, on the other hand, have difficulty grasping the lasting impact of the period. They note that the census of 1920 marked the first time in history that the country was predominantly urban. The decline of rural values certainly shaped the events of the decade. Too, materialism, intolerance, and corruption may have differed in degree from that of earlier periods. Your job will be to try and come to some conclusions about how the twenties fit into the nation's history based on what came before and what we know came after.

Reading:

Chapters 32 and 33 will be read during this weeklong project. You will mainly be responsible for your section and other sections will be summarized for you, but they will also be eventually assigned reading throughout the unit. You will have Feb. 10-15th to prepare for this project. It will be due in class on February 16th. You will pick your groups today and at that point I would encourage you to exchange contact information as some of this will be prepped at home.

Assignment:

- A) You will be working with a group to outline and present to the class the important details of specific events, people, and ideas of the twenties. You will be required to prepare **class notes** on your topic. They can be typed or very neatly handwritten and they must be copied off for the class. **IF YOU GET THEM TO ME BEFORE OR ON FEBRUARY 16th, I WILL COPY THEM FOR YOU.** The notes must include the Area Question that you will be addressing as you go over your topic. The class will be asked to help answer this question at the conclusion of your presentation. The notes should not exceed one page front and back. You need to select the critical pieces of information to give a good overview of your topics.
- B) You will also need a may include a **power point presentation** to accompany your presentation. This will be a supplement, not the entire presentation. You will not READ from the Power point, but REFER to it. This would be a great place to bring in primary source pictures or video clips to bring your point home.
- C) Presentations will be 10-15 minutes, no shorter, no longer. You have plenty of information to cover and I also want you to **lead the class in a short discussion** based on your Area Question. This means you as a group must discuss this question and feel confident that you can answer it and help the class answer it.
- D) Everyone in the group must participate in the presentation; dividing up the topics should easily do this. However, everyone in the group should fully understand and be able to discuss all the topics in your group presentation. Remember, your group is teaching this information to the class; there will be no other class time devoted to these topics. Do not let your classmates down!

Group One: Politics and Government

Area Question: Were the twenties a retreat from Progressivism or an extension of reform?

Topics:

1. The Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations
2. The Harding scandals and the Bonus Bill veto
3. The effects of the Nineteenth Amendment on society
4. Hoover and the Hawley-Smoot tariff

Group Two: Economics

Area Question: The twenties: Was this really a good time for business growth and production?

Topics:

1. Influence of Henry Ford
2. The agricultural problem and labor unrest
3. The growth of mass production
4. Prosperity and innovation

Group Three: Cultural clashes: Was this an age of free expression that we associate with the 1920s?

Area Question:

Topics:

1. Red Scare and Palmer Raids
2. Sacco and Vanzetti
3. Immigration restriction versus "Golden Door"
4. Traditional moral values versus modernists- Prohibition/ Scopes Trial
5. New women versus Victorian values
6. Race relations/ Ku Klux Klan? Garvyism
7. Urbanism vs. Suburbanism/ migration of African- Americans.

Group Four: Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs

Area Question: Are the twenties best remembered as a period of isolationism or of internationalism?

Topics:

1. Role of United States in disarmament conferences
2. Dawes and Young Plans for reparations
3. Relations with Mexico and Latin America
4. Kellogg-Briand Pact
5. Japan

Group Five: Mass Culture

Area Question: Was the "Jazz Age" really as carefree as it is portrayed?

Topics:

1. Harlem Renaissance/jazz and the Great Migration
2. Lost Generation (Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald, etc)
3. Creation of mass culture by radio, movies, and popular magazines
4. Increased leisure time/ professional sports, amusement parks, national parks

Group 6: The Great Depression

Area Question: How did the "Roaring 20's" lead to the Great Depression? Could it have been prevented, why or why not?

Topics:

1. Causes of the Great Depression
2. Images and Literature of the Great Depression
3. Dust Bowl
4. Hoover's response-Reconstruction Finance Commission (RFC)
5. Election of 1932