The 1920's

Backwards Planning Curriculum Units

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How To Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called "enduring understandings." The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

1. Start with the "essential questions" listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won't know which one.

2. Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.

3. Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide's topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. You don't need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it's broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the "enduring understandings." Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.

4. Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

5. End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 20-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

6. If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
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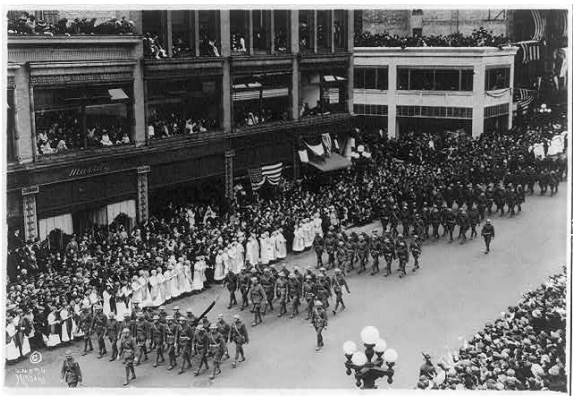
People know the 1920s by various names that imply a certain exuberance in the era: “the Roaring ’20s,” “the Jazz Age,” and “the Ballyhoo Years,” among others. In addition to its lighter side, however, the 1920s also saw sweeping change and the strife that accompanied it. The decade displayed America’s response to the upheaval of World War I with a return to “normalcy” as well as a period of high anti-immigrant and anticommunist sentiment that left a number of innocent victims in its wake. Republican leadership carried the country along on a wave of prosperity, but not without substantial corruption and graft. Industry adopted revolutionary production techniques, spawning an age of consumption and cheap credit. Ordinary Americans found their lives changed dramatically by new labor-saving devices—especially the automobile. Radio became an essential part of everyday life and led the growth of various media. The “noble experiment” of Prohibition, which tried to remedy the perceived social ills of alcohol, ended up instead fueling an explosion of organized crime and speakeasies. While some embraced the permissiveness and anything-goes spirit of the era, others sought stability and familiarity through religion. Women began to change their place in society not only by attaining the right to vote but also by stepping out of established social roles. Finally, the decade’s economic boom did not pay dividends across the board: overconfidence in the stock market and several other factors combined to create the biggest collapse the country had seen, setting the stage for the Great Depression.

Essential Questions

- Why did the U.S. experience so much political and social change during the 1920s?
- Why did the 1920s see the emergence of the "consumer society"?
- What issues led to Prohibition in the 1920s, and what problems contributed to its failure?
- Why did many see the 1920s as a period of rebellion by American youth?
- What changes occurred to marriage and the American family structure in the 1920s?
- How did government economic policies during the 1920s lead to the Great Depression?

America at the Start of the Decade

- Victorious in World War I
- Treaty of Versailles defeated
- Period of isolationism
- Republican ascendancy



Returning WWI soldiers parading in Minneapolis

By the dawn of the 1920s, the United States had emerged from World War I as one of the world's superpowers; however, it remained unwilling to accept the role of world leader. President Woodrow Wilson fell short of his goal of "making the world safe for democracy" with the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations when the Senate rejected the treaty. Without a U.S. presence in the League of Nations, the international organization lacked the credibility needed to maintain world peace.

Unwilling to consider the possibility of sending U.S. soldiers into another foreign war, most Americans favored an isolationist policy in dealing with international affairs. The election of Warren Harding in 1920 began a period of Republican Party dominance that lasted throughout the decade: from 1921 until 1933, Republicans controlled both the White House and Congress.

The Election of 1920

Warren G. Harding

- GOP nominated Ohio Sen. Warren G. Harding
- "Normalcy"
- Democrats ran Ohio Gov. James M. Cox
- Coolidge as GOP VP candidate
- FDR as Democratic VP candidate
- Republican landslide

After the Senate's rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and the defeat of the League of Nations, Republican leaders saw an opportunity to regain the White House after Democrat Woodrow Wilson's two terms. They nominated Ohio Senator Warren G. Harding for president. Harding, realizing that Americans wanted to put the war behind them, promised to return the nation to "normalcy." When questioned as to what the term meant, Harding explained that it referred not to the "old order," but rather to "a steady way of doing things,… normal procedure, in a natural way, without excess." However, it later became evident that he had little grasp of the major issues facing the country at the time. The Republicans nominated as Harding's running mate Calvin Coolidge, who as Massachusetts governor had gained fame for breaking the Boston Police Strike.

The Democrats nominated Ohio Governor James M. Cox. His running mate was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had served as Undersecretary of the Navy after a career in New York state politics. Cox and Roosevelt promised to continue Wilson's ideas as set forth in the Treaty of Versailles and to join the League of Nations.

The American public proved unwilling to continue the policies that they believed had entangled the United States in World War I, and the Democrats lost in a landslide. Harding and Coolidge received more than 60 percent of the popular vote, and more than 400 electoral votes.

The 1920s: Backwards Planning Activities

Enduring understandings:

- The 1920s saw a great deal of social and political change
- In the 1920s, America turned away from the internationalism of the World War I period and toward domestic threats and other issues
- Women gained certain political and social rights in the 1920s, especially the right to vote; however, a double standard for behavior still applied for men and women
- The 1920s was an era of conflict between science and religious fundamentalism
- The 1920s was a period of innovation in the arts and music
- In the 1920s, African Americans developed a unique culture of artistic expression centered in New York City
- Reckless economic policies and practices during the 1920s led to the Great Depression of the 1930s

Essential questions:

- Why did the U.S. experience so much political and social change during the 1920s?
- Why did the 1920s see the emergence of the "consumer society"?
- What issues led to Prohibition in the 1920s, and what problems contributed to its failure?
- Why did many see the 1920s as a period of rebellion by American youth?
- What changes occurred to marriage and the American family structure in the 1920s?
- How did economic policies during the 1920s lead to the Great Depression?

Learning Experiences and Instruction

Students will need to know…	Students will need to be able to…
1. Various social movements of the 1920s 2. Various politicians of the 1920s and their influence on government policy during the era 3. How WWI and subsequent treaty negotiations affected the development of 1920s foreign policy 4. The role of Fundamentalism in 1920s society 5. The role of mass production and advertising on society during the 1920s 6. How economic policies and the consumer society of the 1920s affected labor–management relations 7. How the social climate affected the arts in the 1920s 8. How economic policies and practices of the 1920s led to the Great Depression	9. Read and interpret primary source documents from the period of the 1920s 10. Make conclusions about various events and movements of the 1920s 11. Identify key women, political leaders, and social leaders from the 1920s 12. Recognize how trends in American society evolved during the 1920s 13. Understand changes in Americans' lifestyles during the decade 14. Determine the effect of the 1920s on public policy development 15. Understand the enduring impact of the 1920s on society and government throughout the 20th century

These lessons incorporate the following learning activities to help students reach the enduring understandings:

- Overview of essential questions and basic understandings
- Class discussion of subject matter questions in the 1920s presentation
- Teacher introduction of common terms and ideas in the essential questions and related projects
- Provide students with primary source materials from which they will complete the related projects in the unit
- Students conduct research in groups to be used later in individual and group projects
- Informal observation and coaching of students as they work in groups
- Evaluation and delivered feedback on projects and research reports
- Students create and present their unit projects
- Posttest made of multiple-choice questions covering the presentation, with one or more essential questions as essay questions

Project #1: A News Panel Show on the Impact of Prohibition

Overview:

In this lesson, students role-play principal figures on both sides of the Prohibition issue in a news panel-show format similar to *Meet the Press, Face the Nation,* or other interactive, news-based shows.

Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify and reflect the views of major players on both sides of the Prohibition issue
- Express these views in a meaningful and coherent manner
- Respectfully address and refute opposing viewpoints

Time required:

Five to seven class periods (with at least one period for the actual talk show)

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, a printer, the "Talk Show Character Chart" (provided), optional technology as described in the lesson methodology

Methodology:

Prior to beginning the lesson, consider possible roles to assign. While you may wish to add or subtract roles based on class size, you should include some or all of the roles listed below. Students may select the roles they wish to play, or you may elect to assign roles based on student abilities and personalities.

- Al Capone—Chicago mob boss who made a fortune supplying illegal liquor during Prohibition

- Richard "Two-Gun" Hart (James Vincenzo Capone)—Al Capone's older brother, a noted prohibition-enforcement agent

- Elliot Ness—Federal Prohibition agent who helped convict Capone of income tax evasion; also headed the Prohibition enforcement unit known as "the Untouchables"

- John D. Rockefeller—Industrialist who originally gave large sums of money to the Anti-Saloon League, but later supported repeal of the 18th Amendment

- Franklin D. Roosevelt—Democratic presidential candidate in 1932 who supported the repeal of Prohibition. The 21st Amendment was ratified during the first months of his administration.

- Howard Hyde Russell—President of the Anti-Saloon League during WWI

- Pauline Sabin—Head of the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform; having originally supported Prohibition, she later opposed it due to the spread of political corruption and growth of organized crime

- John Morris Sheppard—Congressman and later Senator from Texas who introduced the resolution for the 18th Amendment in the Senate and helped to draft the Volstead Act

- Billy Sunday—Fundamentalist preacher of the 1920s who supported prohibition and spoke out against alcohol use in his radio sermons

- Al Smith—Democratic presidential candidate in 1928 who supported repeal of Prohibition

- Andrew Volstead—Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who oversaw the passage of the National Prohibition Act (a.k.a. the Volstead Act)

- Wayne Wheeler—Lead attorney and head lobbyist for the Anti-Saloon League, considered the architect of the Volstead Act

- George W. Wickersham—Head of the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, also known as the "Wickersham Commission"

- Woodrow Wilson—President during the ratification of the 18th Amendment and passage of the Volstead Act. Wilson vetoed the Volstead Act but Congress overrode his veto the same day

In addition, select a student to act as the moderator of the talk show. The moderator should keep the flow of the show going and ask questions of the guests, as well possibly solicit questions from audience members. (You may wish to record an episode of *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, or another panel show to give the class an idea of how their show should be conducted.)

Depending on resources available as well as the time allotted to complete the project, you may choose to have students dress in character (in period clothes, make-up, etc.) in order to make them more believable to the audience. Also, if your school has suitable facilities, you may stage the talk show under similar conditions to a television studio, with lighting, sound, and possibly videotaping. This would provide additional roles for students to act as camerapersons, lighting and sound technicians, and other related roles.

Once roles have been assigned, allot sufficient time for students to complete research on their roles via the Internet, as well as through more-traditional means such as books, magazines, and microfiche. As students find pertinent information, have them complete the "Prohibition Panel Show Character Chart."

Depending on desired depth of the activity, you may wish to arrange the classroom (or other room where the talk show will be held) with furniture for the show. This might include individual chairs for each participant as well as the moderator, and large conference-type tables for the participants.

In some instances—particularly if the class size is large—you may wish to provide subordinate roles for students not directly participating in the show. For example, these students might act as "research assistants" aiding participants in gathering information about their roles or developing possible scripts.

Once students have completed research, have them conduct the panel show. Inform them that in order to be successful, they'll need to be convincing. In other words, they should be able to give reasonable answers to questions or refute charges made by other participants without looking extensively at their notes or other printed resources.

Allot a reasonable time for the show (likely a class period). If desired, the teacher may also wish to allow for a debriefing period for critiquing student performance as well as for student questions.

Evaluation:

After the show, you should evaluate students based on their knowledge of their character, how convincingly they portrayed their role, and their research skills in completing the character chart. While you may wish to develop your own rubric for this project, a sample rubric is included as a guideline.

Suggested Web Resources:

The following is a sampling of possible resources for the panel show. You should supplement this list by assisting students in finding related information via a reputable search engine.

Al Capone:

http://www.chicagohs.org/history/capone.html

http://www.fbi.gov/libref/historic/famcases/capone/capone.htm

Richard "Two-Gun" Hart:

http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/gangsters_outlaws/mob_bosses/capone/hart_10.html