

Only Yesterday: Morals, Manners & Mayhem in the 1920's

Teacher Name: Mike Kaiman Grade level(s): 11-12 Course:
AP US History

Describe the classroom or homework activity to be performed (individual assignment, cooperative learning, cross curricular, technology based, using artifacts and/or primary sources, etc.)

- Students will read chapter five from Fredrick Lewis Allen's Only Yesterday, "The revolution of Manners & Morals" as a guide to the seismic shifts in American popular culture during the 1920's. In addition to analyzing this primary document, students will also work in groups to create and evaluate the similarities and differences between trends in youth culture then and now by creating their own Cosmopolitan style morality quiz for the Jazz Age.

Rationale (why are you doing this?)

- I find that if students compare and contrast social aspects of American history with their own lives in very practical ways they come to understand and appreciate the material even more than with teacher led instruction. This lesson plan allows for those connections to be made as students judge for themselves how they would respond to the culture wars of both then and now.

Required time frame: Two 50 minute class periods

Where in the teacher conference did you get the idea for this activity or assignment (speaker, document, photograph, activity, audio recording, other)?

- In Lynn Dumenil's lecture on women in the 1920's, she referenced Allen's work which provided the inspiration for this unit

Lesson objectives - the student will:

- Analyze the competing trends in popular culture between traditional Victorian values and the "New Woman" phenomenon of the 1920's
- Compare & contrast divides in popular culture that existed in the

1920's with contemporary controversial issues.

District, state, or national performance and knowledge standards/goals/skills met (be specific when referencing):

Missouri DESE Standards

- 2. continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world
- 6. relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

Secondary materials (book, article, video documentary, etc.) needed - cite title and other detailed information:

- None Needed

Primary sources (document, photograph, artifact, diary or letter, audio or visual recording, etc.) needed - cite detailed information:

- Allen, Fredrick Lewis. Only Yesterday: An Informal Survey of the 1920's. New York: Penguin Books, 1931. 338 p. (Available online at: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/Allen/ch5.html>)

Fully describe the activity or assignment in detail. What will both you and the students do?

- Students will read Chapter Five from Allen's Only Yesterday and answer the questions in the worksheet attached. The reading and homework can be given either in class or as a homework assignment.
- Upon completion of the reading, the instructor will lead a Socratic seminar discussion based on the questions over the reading.
- Students will take the opening quiz provided individually. Remind students they should provide responses as if they were living in the 1920's, not today. When everyone is finished the instructor will assign point totals to their answers (see provided grading scale) and compare their scores with others in the class. Appropriate discussion topics may include:
 - What is the average morality of the class?
 - What was considered by the class to be the MOST acceptable behavior during the decade of those presented on the quiz. Why?
 - What was considered by the class to be the LEAST acceptable behavior during the decade of those presented on the quiz. Why?
 - Speculate how scores would be different in eras previously covered in the

class. (i.e. Victorianism, WWI, Puritan colonialism.)

Assessment: fully explain your assessment method in detail or create and attach your scoring guide:

- In addition to including topics brought up in Allen's chapter as multiple choice questions on the unit exam, students will write an out of class essay responding to the following prompt:

How as Americans attitudes toward morality and manners changed since the 1920's? Be sure to include in your essay an overview of the roots and consequences of morality wars as they existed in the 1920's, how that has changed over time until today and an evaluation of whether or not the nation is in better or worse shape today since the Jazz Age.

- Refer to the scoring guide for essays at the end of this lesson plan.

Only Yesterday

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following selection from Fredrick Lewis Allen's book Only Yesterday. Answer the questions below. Answers will be discussed as a class at the beginning of the next period. Upon completion of the reading and questions, proceed to Part II.

1. Describe the revolution taking place in America during the 1920's that Lewis refers in this chapter.
2. How did the forces of morality rally to this revolution?
3. Explain in detail the forces working together and interacting to make this revolution inevitable.
4. Describe what Lewis mentions as the most conspicuous sign of the revolution.
5. What were some of the obvious habits or practices of women that reflected this revolution?
6. How did the change in manners change morality during the decade?
7. Describe, in detail, the immediate (i.e. by the end of the 1920's) results and aftermath (i.e. long range or contemporary) of the revolution.

Only Yesterday Moral Quiz

After reading Only Yesterday answer the following questions as if you were a young American living in the 1920's.

1. Before marriage it is appropriate to:

- a. Kiss b. "Pet" c. Have sex d. All of the above

2. It is appropriate for women in public to:

- a. Smoke b. Drink c. Cuss d. All of the above

3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = not acceptable / 10 = Strongly accepted) how socially acceptable is divorce?

4. If you were a woman in the 1920's which of the following would you wear?

- a. Rouge & Lipstick c. Cotton knickers
b. Flesh Colored stockings d. A Corset

5. Using the same scale in question #3, respond to the following question: Women 14 years of age or older should be allowed to wear a skirt of whatever length they please.

6. Should laws be passed that would legally regulate women's clothing?

- a. Yes b. No c. Perhaps

7. Is the use of contraceptives acceptable BEFORE marriage?

a. Yes b. No c. Perhaps

8. Is the use of contraceptives acceptable DURING marriage?

a. Yes b. No c. Perhaps

9. Is Prohibition a good idea?

a. Yes b. No c. Perhaps

10. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the most acceptable) how appropriate is smoking?

TOTAL

Only Yesterday Opening Quiz Scoring Guide

1. A. 2 points B. 2 points C. 4 points D.
4 points
2. A. 2 points B. 2 points C. 4 points D.
4 points
3. Add in whatever number the student responded to
4. A. 4 points B. 4 points C. 2 points D.
2 points
5. Add in whatever number the student responded to
6. A. 10 points B. 0 points C. 5 points
7. A. 10 points B. 0 points C. 5 points
8. A. 10 points B. 0 points C. 5 points
9. A. 10 points B. 0 points C. 5 points
10. Add in whatever number the student responded to

82-63: Flapper! You are beyond all hope for polite society and are a lost cause as you must have thrown out your internal moral compass at a speakeasy after several bathtub gin shots. Enjoy it while you can because a life of disaster, doom and despair is right around the corner.

62-43: Bad girl/boy...You are well down the path of total moral destruction. Beware! If you do not repent your ways soon, it will be too late. You probably smoke every now and then and engage in such lurid behavior as dancing the Charleston on weekends.

42-23: Get a new circle of friends...You're probably starting to hang around a bunch of undesirables. You don't want to end up living in a Model A down by the river, do you? No I think not!

22-0: Only the good die young...You're as pure as the wind driven snow! You listened to your Momma well. Good for you!