

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT
Roaring Twenties: The Impact of High School on its Students Over Time
From Kevin Mariano

Grade – 11

Length of class period – 84 minutes (one day full day, first half of second day, first half of third day). The amount of time for this lesson can easily be amended.

Inquiry – Students will evaluate the impact of high schools while comparing and contrasting the social/moral issues that high school students dealt with during the 1920s with the data that they have collected from their peers.

Objectives

1. Students will survey their peers and gather data regarding current social and moral ideals of their peers.
2. Students will compare and contrast the common social/moral issues that high school students from the 1920s had to the modern issues of their peers and themselves.

Materials

- Chicago Daily Tribune Cartoon
- Survey of Pathfinders of America, University of Michigan, 1924
- Student Survey

Activities

DAY 1

1. Hook: "Why do you come to school?" and/or "How does school impact your daily life/who you are?"
2. Teacher notes on impact of high schools (can be from Powerpoint or other sources).
The purpose is to give a brief background.
Important questions/facts to consider:
 - 1914 = 1 mill students
 - 1926 = 4 mill students (Who is being taught? "whites" and immigrants
 - Effects of teaching more students? Immigrants learn English to assimilate "make American", generational divide (English speaker v. non English speaker), ability for the US government to maintain influence over a young and diverse generation)
 - What are the effects of increasing literacy → people can read, want to learn, more of a competitive edge, circulation of newspapers and tabloids
 - With more education = need for it → raise taxes (Tax payers have to fund education for students who are not their child... you can debate about this!)
 - Radio and Magazines → popular culture

3. In small groups, students review Primary Source (Chicago Daily Tribune) and discuss: What is the source and publication date? Explain what the source is trying to convey. What evidence is there to back up those claims? What connection can we make to our lives?
4. On a blank page, students number one through eight (at teacher discretion... teacher should review the 1924 survey questions and choose between six and eight questions for the students to answer on their page. One popular question is: "Highest school ambitions."
5. When students have answered the questions, they can compare with their small group and then, with the small group, compare to the 1924 survey answers. After a few minutes, tell the students to "Star" five of the most relevant questions to today's standards.
6. The teacher can take an extra copy of the survey, go to each group, and simply "dot" or "tally up" the most popular questions and write those on the board.
7. From here, there are two options for the students to "create" the survey that they will hand out:
(Option 1) Choose the top five questions from the survey and ask students to "come up with questions in their group that would be relevant to today." Several possible questions include: "What is your primary motivation for coming to school?", "In your opinion, what is the most influential piece of technology today?" Be careful, however. Stress to the students that their friends answer as maturely as possible. The questions the students create may come back with various/ inappropriate answers. One needs to monitor their students but also allow the students to collect data, no matter what it is, because the data "is what it is."

(Option 2) Choose the top ten most popular questions from the 1924 survey and simply use those questions to survey the student body.
8. Once the survey is made, make four copies for each student. As homework, have each student fill out one survey and "survey three of their peers" by the next class period (at lunch, in the hall, at practice, etc.)

DAY 2

1. Check the homework and have the students analyze the answers to their surveys. Go around the room and have students answer how many males/females were interviewed. Then, ask each question and have the students answer out loud their answers. If there are any similarities, discuss them, or if the students are

especially interested, stop the questions and discuss.

2. Analyze the data: Ask a few students to stay after school and analyze the data for extra credit. Count up the number of entries (will be the denominator). They can create several categories per question and, ultimately, find a percentage of answers for each category.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

1. Students will analyze the data and compare and contrast the data to the 1924 survey.
2. In full class discussion, ask what has/ has not changed in the past 90 years?
3. Have students compare percentages of answers to see if the answers are common (large difference in percentages) or if the answers are more diversified (similar percentages)
4. Write a journal entry to answer the following question:
"Based on the lesson and the survey results, evaluate the impact that high schools have had on high school students over time. What comparisons can you make of yourself to high school students from the 1920s?"

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

1. Cite evidence from a source to determine an author's purpose and intended audience.
2. Use evidence to assess the role of tradition and customs on an individual or group's choices/ decisions.