

Modernism vs. Traditionalism

U.S. History: 1920s

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	1-2 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	100 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

During a time of social change, how do modern ideas and traditional ideas clash?

Summary

In this lesson, students move through a series of primary source document sets about the culture in the 1920s to explore the tension that existed between modern and traditional values. After analyzing the documents, students engage in a guided debate on modernism and traditionalism in the 1920s. Finally, students determine for themselves whether the decade of the "Roaring '20s" was ultimately a decade of modernism or traditionalism through an argumentative essay or an op-ed writing activity.

Snapshot

Engage

Students will compare women's fashions in the decade prior to the '20s. They will also view and discuss a short videos of the 1920s inventions and make inferences about the shift in culture from traditionalism to modernism.

Explore

Students will conduct a Gallery Walk, rotating around the room to examine and analyze different document sets about the culture in the 1920's to explore the tension between modern and traditional values.

Explain

Using a graphic organizer, students will discuss the document sets and their implication for the 1920s as a decade of modernism or traditionalism.

Extend

Students will participate in a Four Corners activity to debate about the 1920s. They will discuss whether the 1920s was a decade defined by modernism or traditionalism using the evidence and facts they explored during the Gallery Walk.

Evaluate

Students will write argumentative essays on the 1920s as a decade of modernism or traditionalism using primary source evidence from the document sets used in the Gallery Walk. Alternative writing

assessments are also presented.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States History (9th through 12th grade))

USH.4.1: Examine the economic, political,and social transformations between the World Wars.
USH.4.1A: Describe modern forms of cultural expression including the significant impact of people of African descent on American culture as exhibited by the Harlem Renaissance and the Jazz Age.
USH.4.1E: Describe the booming economy based upon access to easy credit through installment buying of appliances and inventions of modern conveniences including the automobile.

Attachments

- Graphic Organizer - Spanish.docx
- Graphic Organizer - Spanish.pdf
- Graphic Organizer.docx
- Graphic Organizer.pdf
- Learning Station 1 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.docx
- Learning Station 1 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.pdf
- Learning Station 1 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.docx
- Learning Station 1 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.pdf
- Learning Station 2 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.docx
- Learning Station 2 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.pdf
- Learning Station 2 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.docx
- Learning Station 2 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.pdf
- Learning Station 3 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.docx
- Learning Station 3 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.pdf
- Learning Station 3 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.docx
- Learning Station 3 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.pdf
- Learning Station 4 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.docx
- Learning Station 4 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism - Spanish.pdf
- Learning Station 4 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.docx
- Learning Station 4 – Modernism vs. Traditionalism.pdf
- Rubric-Modern v Traditional - Spanish.docx
- Rubric-Modern v Traditional - Spanish.pdf
- Rubric-Modern v Traditional.docx
- Rubric-Modern v Traditional.pdf
- Women's Fashions - Spanish.docx
- Women's Fashions - Spanish.pdf
- Women's Fashions.docx
- Women's Fashions.pdf

Materials

- Student Handout 1- Women's Fashions
- Graphic Organizer for Modernism Vs Traditionalism
- Learning Station 1 Handout- Gender
- Learning Station 2 Handout- Religion
- Learning Station 3 Handout- Race
- Learning Station Handout-Popular Culture
- Essay Rubric

Engage

Divide students into pairs and pass out "Women's Fashions." Tell students that the culture during the 1920's was rapidly changing and nowhere was it more evident than in women's fashion. Ask student pairs to observe the differences in women's fashions between 1915 and in 1922. Ask them to list as many differences as they can see.

Ask student pairs to share their observations of the women's fashions of 1915, first. Then ask student pairs to share their observations of women's fashions of 1922. Ask students to discuss as a class, "How do these fashion changes suggest a change in the role of women during the '20s?"

Teacher's Note

Remind students that by August of 1920, women had finally secured the right to vote, as 3/4 of the states had ratified the 19th Amendment. The right to vote gave women a certain new freedom. Women's fashions exemplified this new freedom as well. Typical student responses to the women's fashion of 1915 might be that they are longer in length, more covered up, and that they include military hats and veils. Typical student responses to women's fashions of 1922 might be that they are shorter in length, less covered up, maybe more frilly or daring, more high heels, and that they are not like a buttoned up boot.

Ask students to get out a scrap piece of paper. Tell them that you will now show a short video of different inventions of the 1920s. Ask them to list the inventions or changes mentioned in the video as they watch. The video is only 2 minutes long, so you may wish to show it twice. After watching the video, ask students to find their partners again. With their list of inventions, ask student pairs to discuss the following question: "How did these inventions probably change society at the time?" Allow time for students to discuss their notes with their partner, and then discuss the question as a class.

Student responses to the video could include:

- For medicine, people could live longer or be cured of diseases.
- With the advent of radio and television, people learned more about the world around them not just locally.
- With gin (even with prohibition) and jazz, there were more clubs and dancing so "freer" behavior became more acceptable.
- Household inventions gave the people more time for leisure or to pursue other things in their lives.

Put two words on the board: "traditionalism" and "modernism." Tell students that the 1920s ushered in an era of modernism, for the most part. Still, there were aspects of society that clung to more traditional ways. Based upon what they have viewed and discussed so far, how would they define the terms "traditionalism" and "modernism." Ask for ideas and responses as a class. Write their responses under each heading on the board.

Explore

To explore the different aspects of 1920s society, students will examine different primary and secondary source documents situated throughout the room at different stations. They will rotate through all the stations. Their task will be to look for ideas and statements that show how 1920s society/culture was moving toward modernism or still struggling with traditionalism.

- Set up four stations throughout the room. Each station will get one of the "Learning Station" handouts (located under Attachments) with historical primary and secondary source documents that each revolve around the following social aspects of the time. These stations can be arranged by just taping the handouts to four different walls of the classroom or by placing the handouts on different desks throughout the room. You may wish to make multiple copies of each handout for its respective station.

Teacher's Note: Alternative Method

As an alternative, you can also divide your class into groups of four and create packets of all the "Learning Station" documents for your groups.

- Divide students into four large groups.
- Distribute the "Graphic Organizer" to students (located under Attachments). Inform students that they will be using the graphic organizer to record important information they gain as they move through the stations. You may wish, at this point, to refer to the board and what the class decided traditionalism and modernism were earlier (during your previous discussion in the Engage segment).
- Point out the different stations to the students. Inform them that they will be given 7-10 minutes at each station to gain some information about life during the 1920s. Let them know that the notes they take will be used throughout the lesson, so taking good notes will be to their benefit.

Teacher's Note

The way students move through the stations or use the documents is up to the teacher and should be based on what the teacher knows about his or her students. If a class needs structure, the teacher can assign groups to each station. After 7-10 minutes, have groups rotate to another station that the teacher assigns. For classes that require more independence, students can explore the stations at their own pace and in whatever order they deem fit.

Explain

If you had students move through the stations, assign students to groups of four to discuss their findings with each other (if you assigned students to groups and gave them document packets, have them discuss their findings as well). Ask student groups to discuss two questions:

- What evidence did you find that suggests society was moving toward modernism?
- What evidence did you find that suggests society still struggled with traditionalism?

Once students have had time to share their thoughts with their groups, guide the students through a Four Corners activity. This activity will encourage students to do two things: explain contrasting features of 1920s America to the whole class (allowing the teacher to fill in any gaps if necessary) and take a stance and defend it with evidence from the learning station documents, which will deepen their understanding by moving beyond comprehension and into evaluation.

To use Four Corners for this activity:

- Post four signs around the room that say: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
- Pose this statement to students: "The 1920s were a 'roaring' time when the country became more modern." (It may be beneficial to students to also have this statement written on the board.)
- After posing the statement to students, inform them that there is no "right" answer to this question. Their answers should be based upon the information they gained from the stations. They are to look at their notes on the graphic organizer and determine their stances.
- Point out the signs around the room. Ask each student to move to the sign that best fits his or her stance on the statement.
- Once students have moved to a sign, give them a few minutes to discuss their choices with the other students at that location. Inform them that they will be defending their stances to the other groups.
- After a few minutes of discussion, ask a representative (or representatives) to speak on behalf of the group. They should share their group's stance and give evidence from their notes to support their rationale.

Sample student responses may include:

- I agree that the 1920s was a time when the country at least started to become truly modern. Women had the right to vote, began to dress more provocatively, and generally had more independence. Music and movies talked about more controversial topics. Science made advances. Race relations weren't perfect, but at least African-American music, art, and literature were gaining some respect.
- I strongly disagree that the 1920s was a modern decade. Sure, there were some advances; but the KKK grew in popularity, many people were still treated badly, people turned against newcomers, many people were critical of science and scientific advances, and even if everyone was drinking, it was still illegal.

Extend

After students have explored different aspects of 1920s society through the learning stations and the Four Corners activity, ask the class to think of ways we see the same conflicts taking place today. Go through each of the four areas on the graphic organizer. For each category ask students to give examples of modern ideas in our current society and traditional ideas in our current society.

Students may need to take notes over this discussion to help them stay engaged. There is a blank column just to the right of the table on the graphic organizer. Ask students to label this column "Current Examples." They are to use the same categories as before. In this column, however, students can list current examples discussed with the class. For example, we have laws in society that support and enforce equal rights, but we still see in the news that some groups (e.g., gay, Black, Muslim) are still treated unfairly every day. How far do we believe we have come?

Teacher's Note

If time allows, you could host another Four Corners activity. This Four Corners would debate whether or not our current society is more modern or more traditional.

Evaluate

Have students write argumentative essays. Students should take a stance defending the 1920s as a modern decade or a traditional decade. These stances should be supported by the source evidence from the graphic organizer they used during the learning stations activity. Students can argue that the 1920s was a decade of conflict between modernism and traditionalism, but they must argue that one ultimately prevailed (to some extent) over the other.

Give students a copy of the rubric before assigning the essay so they clearly know the expectations for the essay ahead of time. Go over the rubric orally in class and explain or answer any questions students may have regarding the rubric and how they will be assessed.

Option 2: For a less rigorous assessment, students could write an editorial in place of the formal essay. For this option, have students assume the role of a 1920s journalist and write an op-ed piece on one of the cultural issues they studied. For example, they could write an op-ed on the flappers, either supporting them or criticizing them as a threat to traditional values.

Option 3: An even simpler format for writing could be that students assume the role of a citizen of the 1920s and write a letter to the editor. An example of an editorial letter would be one that supports flappers and their right to break with traditional roles or one that criticizes them for not in the more traditional roles of wife and mother. For these alternative assessments, students would still need to use their graphic organizers to support their writing with evidence.

Resources

- Video in this lesson: History.com Staff. (n.d.). 1920s Inventions [Video]. Copyright 2016, A&E Television Networks, LLC. Retrieved from http://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/videos/1920s-inventions
- More short videos about the 1920s, including the Harlem Renaissance: History.com Staff. (n.d.). The Roaring Twenties Videos [Video]. Copyright 2016, A&E Television Networks, LLC. Retrieved from http://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/videos
- Four Corners instructional strategy card: K20 Center. (2014). Four corners. Instructional Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5064550
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- Lesiak, Christine. (2001). More information about the Jazz Age: PBS. American Experience | Monkey Trial | People & Events. Copyright 1999-2001, Independent Television Service (ITVS) and PBS Online. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/monkeytrial/peopleevents/e_jazzage.html