

The Jazz Age and Harlem Renaissance

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Description: This will be a study of the Jazz Age era and the Harlem Renaissance. We will study the artists, cultural, and events of the time, and the effects on the art. We will also compare this art movement to past and future movements.

Subject: English Language Arts

Duration: 250 min

Grade Levels: 6-8

Standards:

IL-18.A.3 > Explain how language, literature, the arts, architecture and traditions contribute to the development and transmission of culture.

IL-18.A.3b > Explain how social institutions contribute to the development and transmission of culture.

IL-27.B.3 > Know and describe how artists and their works shape culture and increase understanding of societies, past and present.

Resources:

[Library of Congress](#)

This website has a variety of primary resources.

Overview and Rationale:

We are going to study the era of the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance. We will study the artists of the time as well as the cultural and other events that occurred at the same time, and the effects they had on the arts. We will also look at this art movement in comparison to both past and future movements.

Objectives:

TSW be able to express how the culture and events of the day are reflected in the arts.

TSW be able to explain how literature and the arts contribute to the culture.

TSW be able to identify literature and music representing diverse cultures and styles.

Materials: Primary sources, references, websites (www.loc.gov)

Procedure: 1. Begin the lesson by playing current music. Then play some samples of the jazz music and read pieces of literature from the era (ex. Billie Holiday, Langston Hughes). Discuss how the arts pieces are reflective of the concurrent cultures.

2. Go into the occurrences of the era (ex. Great War, women's suffrage, racism...). Ask the students what they know of this period and of the culture and arts.

3. Give information about one of the artists on the first day (each day one or two different artists). Then move into the historic events of the era. Have the students do more research about the chosen artists and facts.

4. Focus on the war, voting, racism... and how the artists were living with these issues everyday. Be sure to focus on the racism the African American artists had to deal with, and how their art work was accepted or denied in American society.

5. Have the students break into jigsaw groups. Each group will have either an artist or event to learn about.

6. After jigsaw, the students will be in groups again to discuss the relationships between the arts and the society happenings.

Special Needs: Group an advanced student with a student who will need more help. Be sure to have the special need student in a group of students where they will help him or her with the research and observation of artifacts.

For Gifted Students: Instead of having the student research about the artist or fact that was already discussed, have him or her find information on an unlisted artist to add to the discussion.

Assessment: TSW do journals and writings reflecting about events and artists of the era. They will have creative thoughts and connections to the correlation about society and the arts that reflect it.

TSW complete a biography about an artist of their choice and will present it in a presentation of their choice. They will be held to a rubric. The biography should include life information, influences, ...

TSW do group presentations about artists of this particular era to movements of the past or present movements.

Extensions

For my technology lesson plan, I used the source at the Library of Congress www.loc.gov. I would take the class to the computer lab where each child would have a computer to work on. I would instruct them to go to the Library of Congress site. After clicking on it, a screen comes up with a variety of choices. I would instruct them to select, "Jump Back in Time" from the list of choices either at the top of the page or the left side. Next, I would tell them to choose the topic choice "Colonial America" in the blue boxes. It will take them to a screen that gives a brief description of Early America. After reading that, I would instruct them to scroll down to "more stories about Colonial America." (The descriptions are in yellow.) Next, scroll down to find "Freedom in Rhode Island." There they would find four pages of information about Roger Williams and his contributions to the settlement of Providence. They would be allowed to browse and read the information and enlarge the pictures. There would be no assignment with this activity. My goal for this lesson would be to introduce the students to the LOC site and encourage them to go there for additional information.

Some additional websites include:

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/hohr/springer> Students may examine real artifacts from one colonial American family. Students would be challenged to figure out what life was like 200 years ago for the colonial family. (This is a link to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.)

<http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/ushistory/colonial.html> This site contains a list of activities and recommended children's literature for teaching about colonial America.