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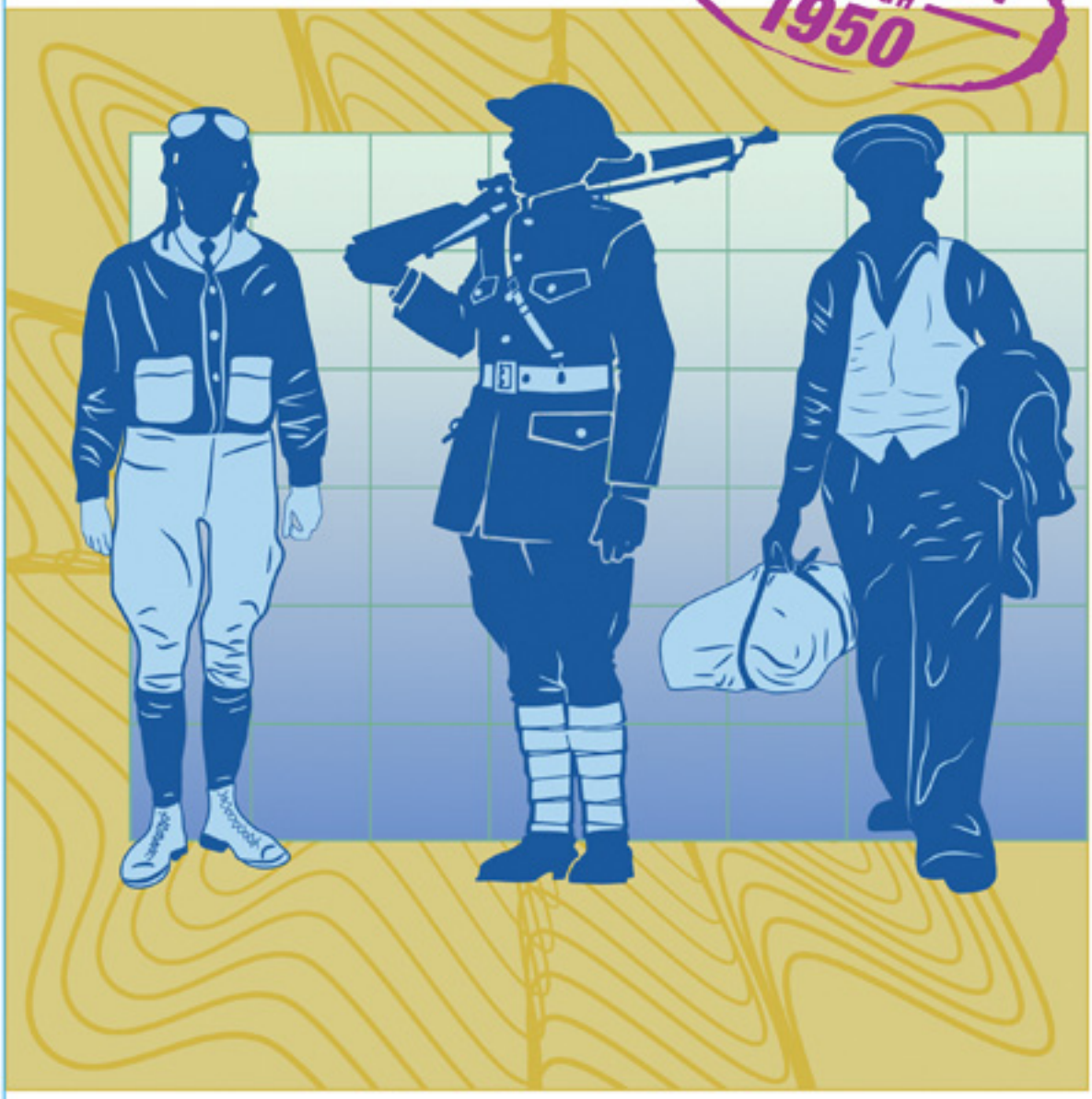
AMERICAN HISTORY ACTIVATORS

WORLD WAR I THROUGH 1950



Brief, Engaging Historical Experiences

American History Activators

World War I through 1950

By Bill Lacey

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Learn Through Experience
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

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Bill Lacey, who wrote most of the American History Activators, has written for Interact since 1974—over 40 years! During these years, he counts among his favorite publications, as author and/or co-author, *Greeks, Civil War, Patriots, Bones & Stones, Vietnam,* and *Alamo*. After earning a master's degree in history from the University of Southern California, Bill taught for 36 years in public schools in southern California and for one year (1970–1971) in London, U.K. His other pursuits include playing golf, supervising student teachers for the CSU system, and helping to raise his eight grandchildren with his wife Barbara, also an Interact author and Bill's indispensable editor and advisor.

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This work is a revised edition of *American History Activators: 20th Century—Volume 1: 1917–1949* (1995). Every Activator now has an extensive new section, "Historical Investigation Activity," written specifically to align with Common Core State Standards.

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Welcome to American History Activators

World War I through 1950

Immerse students in living history as you introduce six major milestones in American history. Whether used as lead-ins to upcoming lessons or as wrap-up activities, these mini-simulations provide your students with experiences that will shape their historical perceptions and positively enhance their understanding of past, current, and future events. Each of the six units is brief, requires little preparation, and includes a ready-to-use lesson, background essay, narration, and postscript. Each unit concludes with a corresponding Common Core-based historical investigation activity, which utilizes students' historical thinking skills and provides a driving question with primary and secondary sources for analysis.

Contents

Lindbergh's Solo Flight: 1927

Depression-Era Soup Kitchen: 1933

Radio Shows: 1938

Building Levittown: 1949

Introduction

Purpose

These simple-to-use Activators supplement your U.S. history classes and immerse your students in "living history" situations. Students get up from their desks, move around in different classroom configurations, and find themselves drawn into history that becomes compellingly real. For a variety of reasons, students seem to function better and learn more when actively engaged. American History Activators provide brief, clever, and exciting experiences for your students.

What Are Activators?

Activators possess three common elements, which embody a philosophical foundation.

1. Activators are simple and brief and require little background reading or preparation. Most Activators take one to two class periods.

2. Duplication requirements are minimal. Brief essays read and visual schematics projected can provide all the background information students need.

3. Activators involve most, if not all, of your students, be they of advanced, average, or low ability or of limited English fluency.

Teaching tip
Every student in your class will be standing, walking, marching, crawling, lying down, negotiating, plotting, and perhaps even "flying" as participants at crucial turning points in the development of our country.

Special Lessons

American History Activators provide experiences that shape students' historical perceptions and positively enhance their understanding of past, current, and future events. As you introduce the units to your students, help them to understand that we re-create history because doing so has an inherent value.

Teaching tip
An Activator provides memorable experiences that your students will retain long after other school events fade.

- **Be Prepared.** Be sure to read the **Setup, Directions,** and **Lesson Plan** options thoroughly before introducing the Activator to your students. Enlist students' help in setting the scene within the classroom.

- **Reinforce Student Response.** During the action of an Activator, your students are involved in issues and events. When students make personal comments, either in class or during the **Debriefing**, praise them for their astute remarks. Your reinforcement of their experiences emphasizes for all students that history is real because it touches them. Above all, express your pleasure that students are so involved.

Activating History

Lessons in the traditional social studies classroom embody mainly visual and auditory learning. However, many students learn more effectively in kinesthetic situations. Activators emphasize the use of body movement, or the kinesthetic learning style often seen in skilled athletes, dancers, and actors. Perhaps students respond so positively and energetically to classes in physical education, shop, art, or home economics, not to mention extracurricular activities, because they can move around and socialize as they learn. Kinesthetic learning can be underutilized in social studies, yet this form of active learning generates highly effective and often indelible lessons.

Ability Levels

Activators are appropriate to use for various grade and ability levels and appeal to a wide variety of student learning styles. Activators follow the thesis: "Keep it simple and get kids up and moving."

Gifted Students. Most gifted students love to play roles. They will probably ad lib dialogue with great success. Some gifted students are natural Directors.

Drama Students. Tap your drama students to play the pivotal roles. Allow them time to rehearse and document the performance by filming it.

Middle School Students. Spend some time before and after the action of the Activator explaining the whys of the event dramatized. Also, it is suggested that you tap your best and brightest to perform the key roles.

Lower Ability and Limited English Students. These two groups of students appreciate and respond well to the kinesthetic learning of Activators. Rehearse two or more times. Do not proceed with the action of the Activator until everyone knows exactly what will occur and when.

Grouping Students

Activators promote the concept of "students as workers and teachers as managers and facilitators." Activators allow students to participate in their learning in ways that are often unfamiliar to them. Consider the following when planning the action of an Activator:

- **Division of the Class and Assignment of Roles.** Take into account individual ability, gender balance, maturity, and ethnic diversity.
- **Student Directors.** You may select four or five student directors early in the school year to rotate responsibilities for a series of Activators. Allow each Director three or four days to prepare for his or her Activator. Meet with the cadre before and after the action of the first Activator. Review your standards and expectations for the Activators. Grant enough latitude so they may apply their talents—and their time—fully.

- **Small Group Responsibility.** Divide your students into groups of five or six. Put each group in charge of an Activator scheduled during the academic year. Allow each group three or four days to prepare for their Activator. Meet with the class before and after the action of the first Activator. Review your standards and expectations for the Activators. Select, or allow each group to select, the Director.

Time Allotment

Activators vary somewhat in length—from one to two or more class periods, depending on how extensive your preparations and **Debriefing**. Other variables include class ability, grade level, the Activator itself, which **Lesson Plan** option you choose to use, and time for rehearsals. Whatever you decide, Activator lessons are worth the time spent and pay dividends later.

Room Arrangement

Most Activators require that you move your classroom furniture around to accommodate the action. Experience proves that changing the room's configuration offers students a fresh perspective and provides a welcome change to the daily routine. If you are a teacher who uses cooperative learning teams, your students are probably veteran furniture movers. Project the provided **Schematic** as a guide, and have students quickly move the desks, tables, and chairs.

Teaching Options

Most Activators includes two or more options for how to conduct each **Lesson Plan**. Study the options carefully, and decide which one or combination will work best with your students, time constraints, classroom configuration, and administrative support.

Debriefing

A debriefing discussion of the action of the Activator is crucial to help students place the Activator lesson in the context of your course content and to ensure that they grasp the relevance of their experiences. Each Activator includes short and long debriefing suggestions. Study these options carefully and select one or more that reinforce your teaching objectives, or develop your own debriefing topics.

- Consider dividing your class into cooperative learning groups to sort out the debriefing points you decide are appropriate.
- For closure to the Activator lesson, an essay encompassing the event would be appropriate.

Learning Logs

A **Learning Log** is a special section of students' notebooks. Teachers using the Learning Log process in their classes often set aside five minutes at the end of certain—sometimes all—class periods.

- Students may write down exactly what happened in class, what they specifically did, and how they felt about what happened.
- Students may write in response to a writing prompt that you devise or that is provided in the **Debriefing**.

Visual History

Note the suggestions found in the **Resources to Consult** section of the **Lesson Plan**. Commercial films or television programs sometimes include memorable scenes re-created from history. Even without an overall story line, these scenes can effectively communicate complex and compelling history. When you know of such a scene in a film or documentary, consider obtaining the film and sharing the experience with your students. Limit the time involved to less than 15 minutes.

Flourishes

Activators themselves might be considered flourishes that supplement regular classroom lectures and reading. Yet, additional touches can enhance each Activator **Lesson Plan**. Students tend to forget most of what we think are teacher gems; instead they latch onto some strange and clever magical moments. Consider the following suggestions:

1. Find some music representative of the historical era to play as the students arrange the classroom for the action of the Activator.
2. Provide a glossary of words from the **Background Essay**, the **Narration**, or the **Postscript**. Ask for definitions after the activity.
3. If you have time, you or your students may create some historical ambiance with posters or graphics.
4. Assign one group to create an alternative scenario based on the events of the Activator.
    - Assume the opposite happened (e.g., Lindbergh never reached Paris, there was no food to be given out at the soup kitchen, etc.)
    - Change history and explore a series of "what ifs?"
    - Require that students present a different version of the **Postscript**.
5. If possible, dim the lights and use a bright light source—like a

spotlight—to focus on the main participants during the action. Later, focus the light on the individual history-makers as you read and discuss the **Postscript**.

6. Find images dealing with the event in books or on the Internet and project five to ten of these during the **Debriefing**.

Evaluation

Although your students may expect to earn incentive certificates, classroom money, or grades, it is suggested that you focus on these more subtle means of assessing student achievements:

- **Comments during Debriefing.** When your students make personal comments during the Debriefing about their anger, compassion, or perception, other students will hear and usually respond. History becomes immediate and personal, not distant and impersonal.
- **Learning Logs**. Require, or make it an extra credit option, that students write in their Learning Logs at the end of each Activator experience.

When to Use Activators

Many experts in educational motivation believe that enrichment or experiential activity should happen after students study and "master" the material. Others believe that enrichment activity can be an effective motivator, stimulating students' interest, and generating enthusiasm prior to introducing material.

Every lesson presents its own demands for the appropriate dramatic and relevant moment for introducing a related Activator. Some Activators serve as review units to sum up major events of a particular historical era. Other Activators serve to crystallize national or individual motivations that had a significant impact on the historical era.

In any case, these simple and easy-to-use American History Activators will spark your other lessons, enthuse your students, and break up the routine of an academic classroom without requiring a large commitment of your preparation time or actual classroom time.

Historical Investigation Activities

This last component affords opportunities for students to utilize historical thinking skills—as part of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)—and is an excellent way to fashion an appropriate and effective closer to each Activator. You will find at the end of each Activator a **Historical Investigation Activity** lesson that requires your students to become history detectives, sorting out facts and points of view from brief but carefully selected primary- and secondary-source documents. A **Focus Question** drives student inquiry

(e.g., "The 1938 radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds:* Did it actually produce widespread panic and hysteria among its listeners?").

This valuable coda to the Activators allows you and your students to go beyond textbooks and the short essays and dramatizations of events by examining the "raw materials" of history. Examining the documents, students delve into thought-provoking controversies and at the same time sharpen the tools that are the staples of historical investigation: evaluating evidence and making well-reasoned arguments while drawing conclusions about events in world history.

By reading like historians through primary source documents such as letters, speeches, diaries, and communiqués, students confront a "rich diet" of conflicting interpretations in sources that can only help advance their literacy and promote healthy skepticism. Hopefully, this practice will generate a set of transferable critical-thinking skills for students, who by using these skills can withstand throughout their lives the bombardment of the ploys of varied "snake-oil salesmen."

Doughboy Boot Camp
1917

Lesson Plan

Overview

This Activator places your students in a boot camp for army recruits training to become soldiers before they ship out for the trenches of France. They learn firsthand what it took to be doughboys, those tough citizen soldiers who went on the Great Adventure of 1917–1918 to turn the tide of battle in the stalemated war we today call World War I. Historian Barbara Tuchman called this war "a burnt path across history," and although this Activator falls short of simulating actual combat with "the Hun," it will reveal the kind of man and the kind of training it took for Yanks to later emerge victorious from this terrible war.

Setup

1. **Duplication**

   - Class sets of the **Background Essay** and the **Postscript** unless you are giving lectures to your students to cover this material.
   - **Role Sheet, Narration**, **Platoon Officer**, **Hygiene Lecture**, **French Lesson**, **Song Leader**, and **Indoctrination Speech** (one for each student carrying out these responsibilities).

2. **Schematic, props, costumes:** Study the **Schematic** carefully. Find and bring to your classroom any World War I props and costumes that will help create the setting and the mood. (Of course, your students can also help you find and bring such materials to your classroom.)

Teaching tip

Needless to say, the success of this activator may depend on how effectively you can motivate the participants to be "in the army" and follow orders.

3. **Roles**

   a. In this activator most of your students will be recruits in training to become doughboys. Others will role-play doctors, officers, and assorted military personnel at the camp, or cantonment. Try to think of some way to make these personnel different from the recruits in appearance. (Possibility: a red or brightly colored arm band.)

   b. Here are the roles you will need: two to three doctors/medical personnel, two physical training (PT) officers, two platoon leaders who call roll and take their men on hikes, a song leader, one French language instructor, one medical officer to lecture on hygiene, and one officer to give an indoctrination speech. Keep in mind some of these responsibilities can be filled by the same students.

   c. Assign dramatic students to the roles of key military personnel: doctors, instructors, etc. Mix up the rest of your class into two to three platoons for the boot camp training.

   d. Finally, some of the students playing special roles who have only a brief appearance may also want to role-play doughboys. Allow them to do so.

4. **Narrator(s):** Decide whether you or one or more students will act as the narrator(s)—if the script is being narrated rather than more thoroughly "acted out" as in Option B as discussed below.

Directions

1. Hand out the **Background Essay** either the day before this class as homework or pass it out now. If you have given it as homework, conduct an informal discussion of the main points brought out in the essay. If you are passing it out now, have your students read it now silently before having a brief check for understanding. Of course, if your students are younger or less capable readers, you may wish to take more time, including having portions or all of this essay read aloud.

2. Display the **Schematic** so that all can see, explain it, assign roles, hand out role sheets to key military personnel. Then have students rearrange your room to create the setting.

3. Have all students move or prepare to move their positions in the assembly area. Narrators should be in a clearly visible and audible place as you start (unless you are not doing the narration). **Note:** You may want to assign the narrator(s)—if you are not doing the narration yourself—and the major roles *a day or so before the actual activity.* However, this is usually unnecessary unless you are using Option B below.

4. You have at least two different ways you can conduct the actual activator:

Option A

1. Assign all roles using the guidelines above.

2. If you have some costumes or props to separate recruits from military personnel training the doughboys, tell students to put that costume piece on now.

3. Make sure students know the sequence of events in the activator so officers and recruits smoothly go from one activity to another. The narrators will facilitate this movement.

4. All this being done, slowly begin going through the narration. Direct your students' movements and actions. Make changes and adjustments as necessary.

Teaching tip
Some of the boot camp activities, especially the hikes, will be tedious. Tell students that this is what soldiers did and they should not complain as they are "in the Army!"

5. Proceed through the script narration at a comfortable pace, allowing for some improvisation along the way as well as for critical discussion if it comes up. Narrators should allow time for recruits to be instructed by officers and act on those directions.

6. *Option:* Turn off the lights, display a picture of a World War I cemetery on a screen, have a school band member play taps, and then you, or a student, read the **Postscript** with suitable emotion.

Option B

1. Although Option A is highly recommended for this kind of Activator, you may opt for this strategy, which lets the action sequences flow without a narration. Of course, this is the way boot camp in 1917 would have been experienced.

2. Since this option puts a premium on major people carrying out their respective roles without a narration, all military personnel involved need a day or two to review their responsibilities. Perhaps a chronology of the activator's activities could be put on the board to ensure that the activator follows the proper sequence without benefit of narration. ln addition, you could act as the voice of a camp public address system to facilitate the sequence changes. (Example: "At 0800 recruits will assemble for a six-mile hike with full pack.")

3. As an option: Turn the lights off. (See Option A #6 above.)

Teaching tip
Ask the new "doughboys" what they remember about "boot camp." Also ask why the words "boot" and "camp" seem appropriate or inappropriate.

Debriefing

Decide whether you wish to use a short or long debriefing. Here are possible ways to make meaningful what happened to doughboys-in-training in a 1917 boot camp:

Short debriefing

1. Pass out the **Postscript**. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Ask students to discuss what they learned and what they felt as they played their roles.

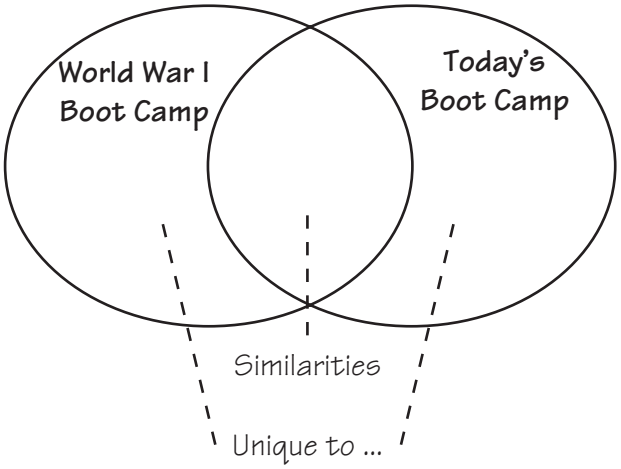
3. Consider having students write a Learning Log entry following this short debriefing.

Long debriefing

Use one or more of the following debriefing activities:

1. Pass out the **Postscript**. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on. (Also see #6 under Option A.)

2. *Discuss:* Compare your experience at a doughboy boot camp with an army boot camp today. Draw a ledger or a Venn diagram in order to categorize similarities and differences.



3. *Discuss:* Do you think this boot camp would have prepared you for the Great War, knowing what you know about what World War I was like in 1917 France?

4. To prepare for the trenches of France, what would you add to the training program of doughboys?

5. Was it proper to inaccurately call Germans the "Huns" and make them a subhuman species in ultra-patriotic speeches to soldiers in boot camps? How would the American World War I officers justify the distortions?

6. Show a video on doughboy training. Recommended: *Yesteryear, 1917* (HBO films) or *The Great War* (The American Experience, PBS). On doughboys in combat, show a snippet from *Sergeant York*, starring Gary Cooper.

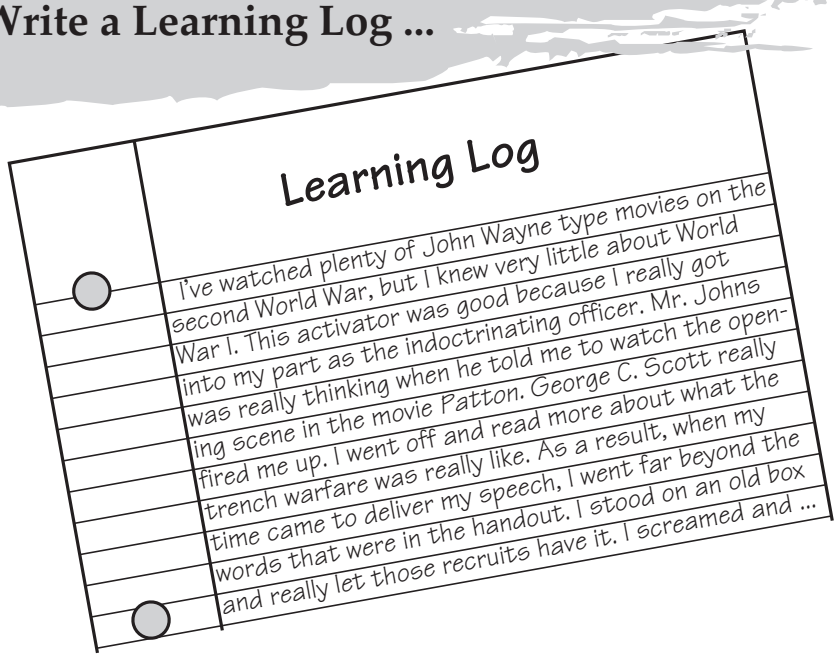
7. Show the beginning of the 1970 movie *Patton*, starring George C. Scott. Analyze his indoctrination speech to his troops with the American flag in the background. Even though the setting is World War II, the message could be at a World War I boot camp. Ask students if they would be inspired to fight "The Hun Bastard" after Patton's speech.

Teaching tip
A Learning Log is a powerful way to enhance learning. This is an actual student example.

Teaching tip
When students have participated in more than one Activator, they often willingly do plenty of extra work such as this student did. He wasn't satisfied only to add to the words in the handout; he also went out and created a quite accurate World War I officer's costume to add to the power of his speech.

8. Encourage students to write a Learning Log to encapsulate their doughboy boot camp experience.

Write a Learning Log ...



Resources to consult

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Coffman, Edward M. *The War to End Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998.

Fleming, Thomas. *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I.* Cambridge, MA: Basic Books, 2003.

Freidel, Frank. *Over There: The Story of America's First Great Overseas Crusade.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964.

Kennedy, David. *Over There: The First World War and American Society.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Zieger, Robert H. *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

Visual history

Documentaries: *The Great War: The American Experience* (1996, PBS); *Yesteryear, 1917* (HBO Cable).

Feature Film: *Sergeant York.* (A 1942 film starring Gary Cooper).

Visuals are important and often essential. And while there are countless visuals to use in the classroom for this particular Activator (films and documentaries), most of these might be difficult to find and then show. Instead, it is recommended that you, as a teacher in the 21st century, might find it easier to go online to locate exactly the kind of visuals most appropriate. As of 2016, Crash Course with John Green has been extensively utilized by teachers.

Teaching tip
Students would enjoy seeing all or key portions of this film detailing York's heroism in France.

Background Essay

Place: Long Island, New York
Time: September 1917

Carnage in France

Americans would come late to the Great War, World War I, but when the Yanks finally did arrive in 1917 and 1918, they were like a shot of adrenaline pumped into the veins of the western powers. Some even called them saviors. By 1917, the three-year-old war had resulted in unprecedented levels of carnage in northeastern France, when a gain of a few yards a day meant progress, even victory. Before it ended in 1918, this war extracted a staggering human toll: nine million soldiers and five million civilians had died. Millions more fell victim to a deadly flu epidemic at the conclusion of the war. Additionally, new countries were carved out of old empires, and maps were redrawn. Tuchman's "burnt path" metaphor rings true with an iron clarity.

Powder keg

The origins of this titanic conflict go back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when European powers scrambled for overseas empire and competed at home in an arms race to glorify each nation's patriotism. By 1900, most of these nations had national conscription (a draft) for their citizens, and some, notably Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany, glorified military service. Somehow a major war between two secret alliance systems had been skillfully avoided, but diplomacy broke down in late June 1914, in the explosive and nationalistic Balkan empire of Austria-Hungary, part of a region forever called Europe's powder keg. While on a state visit, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated in Sarajevo by a young radical, thus initiating a chain of events which ultimately led to one of history's watersheds, World War I.

The Western Front

As declarations of war were issued and armies mobilized by the two sides—Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire vs. France, Russia, and Great Britain—leaders hoped for a quick victory and a short war. Despite some advantages by both sides, within months the focus of the war came down to a 600-mile stretch of land on the western front in northern France. Here, from 1915 to 1917, the horrors of modern war took on a new, grim reality. Twentieth-century technology had provided powerful new death weapons—tanks, airplanes, machine guns, submarines, large artillery, and mustard gases—to make Europe a "killing field" unequaled in history before that time.

No-Man's Land

Over this devastated acreage, both sides dug elaborate networks of tunnels and separated their defensive positions by coils of barbed wire and a bombed out buffer zone called "No-Man's Land." To be accurate, there were other fronts in this war, but for the Europeans from 1914 to 1918, and later the Americans, the trenches of France were the center of the world.

American neutrality sinks

While the war in Europe raged during the period between 1914 and 1916, Americans for the most

part were horrified by the devastation, but at the same time they were convinced that the Atlantic "moat" which isolated them would also keep them out of war. Continually, however, the efforts to remain neutral were a struggle. On May 7, 1915, a German U-boat sank a British liner, *Lusitania,* with 128 Americans aboard. American protests to Germany brought a promise to sink no more unarmed passenger ships. In March 1916, another U-boat torpedoed a French steamer, *Sussex*, injuring two Americans. Again, President Woodrow Wilson voiced protest and once more Germany pledged not to sink passenger or merchant ships without warning.

Zimmerman Telegram and war

Soon, however, the kaiser's government failed to live up to these pledges. In March 1917, the Zimmerman Telegram, intercepted and decoded by the British, shocked Americans. This note, sent over Western Union's undersea cable from the German foreign minister to his representative in Mexico City, proposed that Mexico join Germany against the U.S. and, as a reward for victory, receive back the lands of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona that they had lost after the Mexican-American War 70 years earlier. The public release of such an outrageous deal—before the U.S. was involved in the war—shattered any hopes of keeping the U.S. from participating in the war. Within a month President Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany, which by now had stepped up its submarine attacks. The U.S. was officially at war in April 1917.

Mobilization

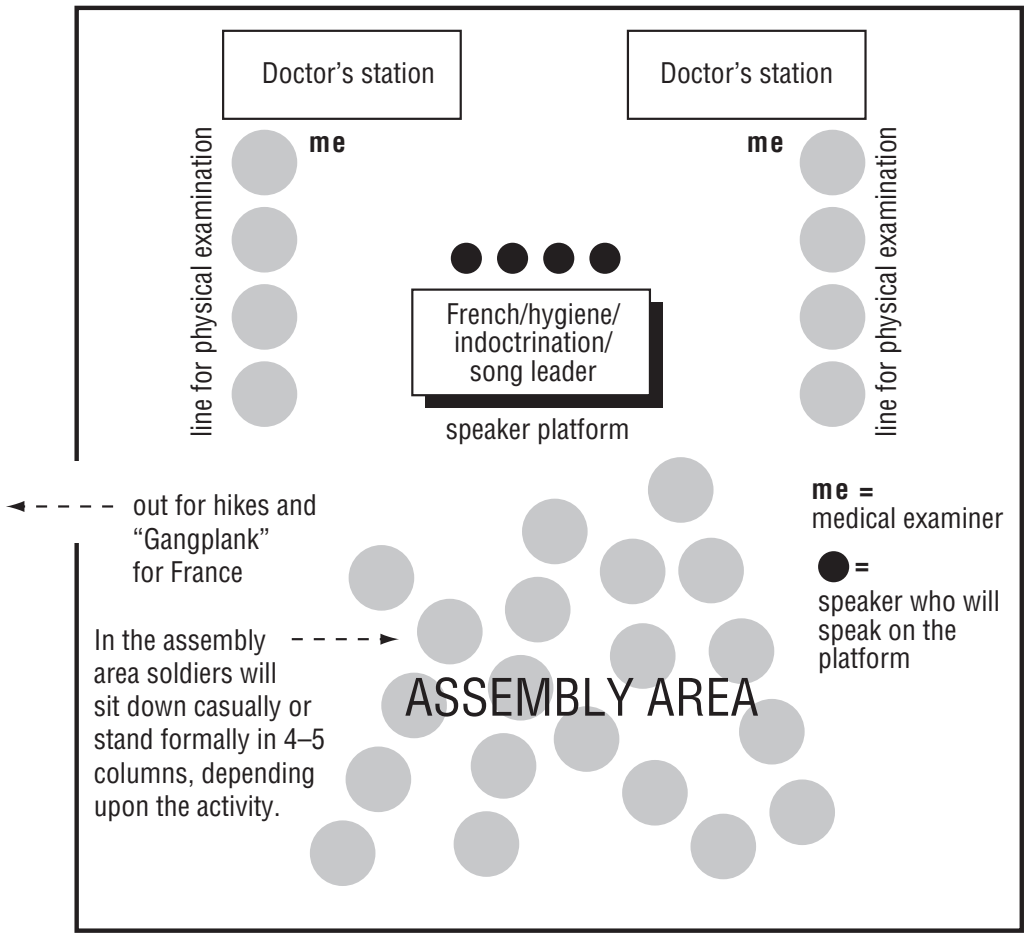
War with "Kaiser Bill's" Germany meant mobilization: to convert the United States into an arsenal with which to wage war, inspire the nation to fight the enemy, and train an army to go to France to assist the exhausted western powers. Almost immediately, factories throughout America began producing the necessary war materiel. At the same time, skilled propagandists such as George Creel started churning out posters and billboards with messages to sell the war. (The most famous example was James Montgomery Flagg's "I Want You For The U.S. Army" poster.) Perhaps the most pressing job, however, was the recruitment and training of citizen-soldiers to get them "Over There" to do battle with the enemy.

James Montgomery Flagg's famous recruiting poster

Doughboys

The task of raising, training, and equipping the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) would be of vital importance in making the world safe for democracy. Reluctantly, President Wilson had asked Congress for war, and reluctantly, but nobly, he summoned American young men to join the army and go on the Great Adventure. Now, you and your classmates will answer Wilson's call and begin the required training at boot camp to be a doughboy. So . . . *"A-ten-shun!* Straighten that line, soldier! And get ready to carry that pack without complaint on a two-mile hike!" France . . . the Yanks are coming. Over there!

Schematic



Suggestions

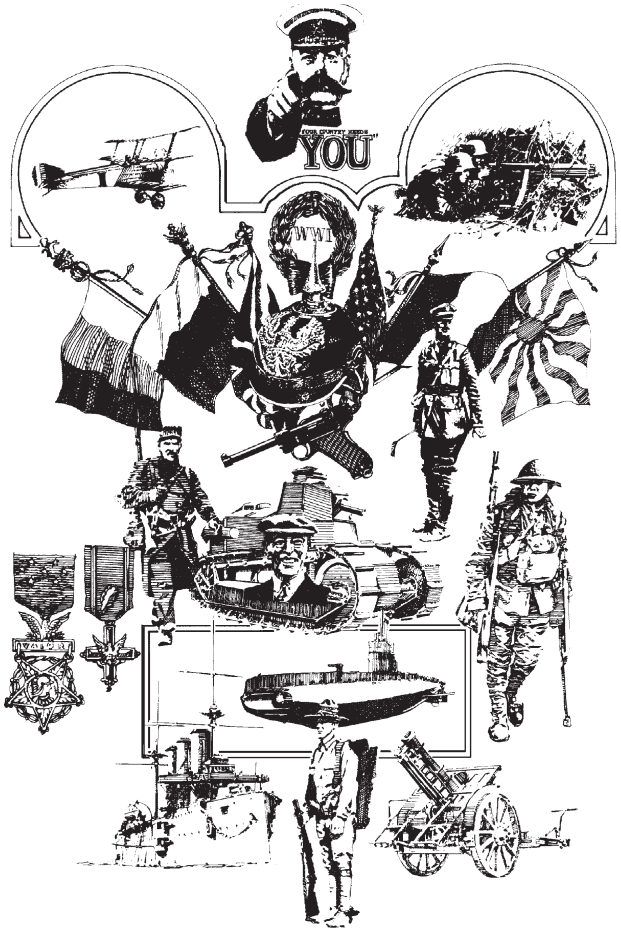
- Play "Reveille" just before roll calls as the doughboys fall in.
- Play "Over There" at key moments.
- Have officers and other authority figures bark out orders military style.
- Have soldiers sit on the floor in the assembly area during lectures/instructions.

Characters needed

- Narrator(s)
- 2–3 doctors/medical personnel
- 1–2 physical trainers
- 1–2 song leaders
- 1 French language instructor
- 1 hygiene instructor
- 1 officer to give indoctrination

(***Note:*** *Some of these characters can be played by the same students.)*

Role Sheet



Doctor

- Check heart, throat, ears, and feet.
- Have recruits jump up and down on each leg.
- Fingerprint recruits.
- Inoculate recruits.

Platoon Officers

- Call roll three different times.
- Take recruits on two hikes.

Medical Officer

- Give hygiene lecture to recruits.

French Language Instructor

- Instruct recruits in basic French words and phrases.

Song Leaders

- Lead soldiers in two to three camp songs to lift the mood of boot camp.

Physical Trainer

- Lead soldiers through series of calisthenics/ exercises (jumping jacks, burpees, push-ups, thrusting/bayonet practice, etc.).

Officer (General)

- Give an inspiring and emotional indoctrination to the doughboys just before they leave for France.

Narration

With mobilization underway, the United States had to recruit and train an army to send abroad to France. High government officials finally decided on a draft, rather than a volunteer army. Organized by the war department—with great care to avoid the inevitable controversy—the draft required American men between the ages of 21 and 30 to register at 4,000 polling places, instead of post offices. The day set aside for this massive registration was June 5, 1917. On that day, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., 10 million young men appeared and registered. Each registrant received a number up to 10,500, the total number of men registered in the largest polling place. Then, on July 20, these numbers were placed in a large, glass bowl, and a blindfolded Secretary of War Newton Baker pulled out the first number, 258. For the next 17 hours, various officials drew from all 10,500 numbers. Those selected were the new draftees who would become doughboys. But first they need to report for boot camp. (*Pause) Recruits, fall in for roll call!*

Action: Roll Call No. 1 drafters line up according to the SCHEMATIC so that roll can be taken in the assembly area. (Once done . . .)

One of the first tasks after roll call is the basic army physical. Soldiers are fingerprinted, prodded, twisted, tapped, touched with cold metal instruments, and finally poked with needles before a doctor can guarantee their good health. *(Pause)* Camp medical team, let us find out how healthy our men are!

Action: Draftees form two lines and go through a gauntlet of medical tests. (Once done . . .)

Once pronounced fit for the U.S. Army, the recruits pick up their issue of clothes, get an army haircut, assemble, and go on a brief hike. When they return, they will sit on the floor/ground in the assembly area. (*Pause*) But, first, officers, take these eager soldiers on a hike!

Action: An officer or two takes/monitors the soldiers on a brief hike. Then they return to the assembly area.

Back from the first of many physically conditioning hikes, the recruits sit down in the assembly area and listen to the necessary and required lectures. One is by a member of the medical team who talks about physical hygiene and mental health. *(Pause)* Doctor, the men await your medical wisdom!

Action: Medical personnel give a brief, dramatic hygiene talk – perhaps with visuals.

The recruits now fully realize the hidden dangers of traveling in France but see a need to learn to speak and understand the French language once they arrive and prepare to fight in the trenches. *(Pause)* Monsieur, these soldiers want to speak French. Oui?

Action: Recruits now remain in the assembly area and receive French instruction from a competent language teacher, mostly words and phrases useful in everyday situations.

Realizing that physical conditioning is so very important to a soldier's well-being and could save his life in France, officers lead their men through a series of exercises/calisthenics to develop muscular tone. *(Pause)* Officer, make 'em hurt till it burns!

Action: The physical training officer has men rise, and then in the assembly area he/she guides them through several simple gymnastic exercises.

Because walking with a backpack will be the most common soldier activity in France, the officers then take the men on a longer hike over rough terrain, simulating the cratered, bombed out "No-Man's Land" between the opposing trench lines. *(Pause)* Officers, have the men fall in and take 'em on a hike!

Action: Officers take soldiers on a longer hike and return to assembly area for second roll call.

After the men finish their hike and roll has been taken for a second time, their officers realize the importance of unit morale and the need for an occasional break from the hard and tedious training schedule. Therefore, a soldier skilled in leading large groups of men in singing now leads the eager men in a few familiar songs. *(Pause)* Song leader, let's hear some good music!

Action: The men are led in the singing of two to three familiar songs.

Before these doughboys depart, one last essential part of their training needs to be played out, the indoctrination speech—a passionate talk given by a respected officer dealing with why the U.S. is sending young men to France. *(Pause)* Lieutenant, tell 'em why we are here!

Action: An officer gives an inspirational indoctrination speech.

The doughboys have now completed their boot camp. They are ready to defend France and their flag. A last roll call is taken before boarding a troop ship bound for Europe. *(Pause)* Officer, one last roll call. Then get 'em on the ship. We're goin' to France!

Action: Officers take roll once more. Then the proud doughboys with full packs and rifles run up the gangplank. As they jump off the gangplank onto French soil, each shouts forcefully, "Lafayette, we are here!" a tribute to the aid French troops gave to Americans fighting England in the 1770s and 1780s.

Handout

Name: _____ Date: _____

Platoon Officer

You have been selected to be the platoon officer who will conduct three separate roll calls during this Activator.

Directions: As a lieutenant, you will ask one of the sergeants to call roll. Instruct him/her to bark out each soldier's last name. After the first roll call, have the soldiers report for a brief physical where they will be vaccinated and then hear a lecture on hygiene and have a lesson in French. Take the soldiers on an invigorating hike. Then conduct a second roll call. Do some basic calisthenics. Then have the doughboys participate in a "sing." The last roll call precedes their walking up a ship's gangplank to sail to Europe, ready to take on the Huns in the trenches of France. Your general will deliver an inspiring speech. *(Check off each soldier after he/she has completed each roll call.)*

Platoon list for roll call (last name only):

Name	First Roll Call	Second Roll Call	Third Roll Call
Lieutenant _____	☐	☐	☐
Sergeant _____	☐	☐	☐
Sergeant _____	☐	☐	☐
Corporal _____	☐	☐	☐
Corporal _____	☐	☐	☐
Corporal _____	☐	☐	☐
Corporal _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐
Private _____	☐	☐	☐

Hygiene Lecture

You have been selected to be the medical officer and to give a brief lecture on personal hygiene to recruits in training.

Directions: Before you give this lecture to the soldiers on your base, make up some visuals to help them see key words and phrases from your lecture. As you instruct, call on individuals to respond.

"Men, it is very important that you go to France knowing the U.S. Army and your relatives want you to have a *clean* body and *clean* thoughts. Being an American soldier means being a model or representative of our country whenever or wherever the army travels. Think about it: foreigners may get their only views of America through the appearance and behavior of you, its fighting men.

"First of all soldiers, we cannot as officers overemphasize the importance of soap and water. You must bathe often, shave, and brush your teeth whenever you can. Additionally, try to change your underwear and socks frequently. Your appearance lets all those who see you think that the Yanks are disciplined and well groomed. Sloppy soldiers make poor fighters. The Bosch will find out just how disciplined and tough we are.

"Most importantly, the U.S. Army expects you doughboys to use restraint when encountering the mademoiselles of France. There are many lonely females in and around Paris. Their brave men have fallen or are fighting to protect their homeland and womenfolk. These women may be starved for affection and easy for you men to exploit. The army, however, expects you not to take advantage of their feelings and don't forget that a different moral code exists in France.

"For another reason, you must use restraint. Venereal disease (VD) is a social disease that can kill or lead to debilitating illnesses. Promiscuous sexual activity is wrong, shameful, and can be dangerous. We urge you to remain pure in the name of patriotism. If you cannot, protect yourself. *(Pause)* How can you look at the flag in the face if you are dirty with gonorrhea? A soldier who gets a dose is a traitor! Remember, those of you who contract VD will be punished!

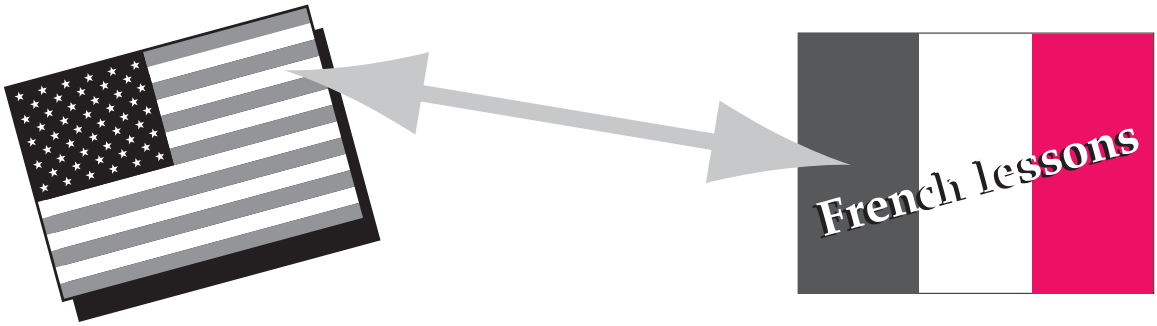
"In summary, men, keep a clean body and a clean mind. Resist the delights of the French women. Because a pure soldier is a healthy soldier who can fight Kaiser Bill's Huns again and again until we eliminate the scourge and save democracy. *(Pause)* Thank you, men."

"... keep a clean body and a clean mind ..."

French Lesson

You have been selected to be a French language instructor for the doughboys.

Directions: Before you instruct the doughboys in basic French words and phrases, review with them many of the French words commonly used in our language here in the United States: art, army, dinner, fashion, fraud, banquet, guide, sauté, garage, menu, ballet, theater, and hors d'oeuvre, to name a few. Then, like a French teacher, drill them in the words which follow on the chart. Tell the soldiers, too, that the French language is beautiful and harmonious, ideal for diplomacy, business, legal uses, as well as romance. As you teach, call on individuals to respond.



Use visuals or the chalkboard:

English	French	Pronunciation
Hello	Bonjour	Bohn jhoor
Goodbye	Au revoir	Oh ruh vwahr
Please	S'il vous plaît	See voo plegh
Thank you very much	Merci beaucoup	Mair see boh koo
Waiter	Le garçon	Gahr sohng
Madam (married woman)	Madame	Mah dahm
Mr., Sir	Monsieur	Muh seeyuh
Miss	Mademoiselle	Mahd muah zehl
Woman	Femme	Fahm
How are you?	Comment allez-vous?	Koh mawng tahlay voo
Do you speak French/English?	Parlez-vous Français/Anglais?	Par-lay voo frawng say/in-glay
What time is it?	Quelle heure est-il?	Kel-ur-eh-teel
What is it?	Qu'est-ce que c'est?	Kehs kuh seh

Song Leader

You have been selected to lead the doughboys in two to three songs during boot camp.

Directions: Your job is to lighten the mood of boot camp. Try to memorize the lyrics of these familiar "campfire" songs and *enthusiastically* guide the soldiers through the songs. *You can also look up the lyrics to other popular camp songs in the bulleted list below.*

Row, Row, Row Your Boat (3–4 part round):

Row, row, row, your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

Home on the Range:

Oh, give me a home, where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word,
And the skies are not cloudy all day.
Refrain: Home, home on the range
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word,
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

I've Been Workin' on the Railroad:

I've been workin' on the railroad, all the live long day.
I've been workin' on the railroad, to pass the time away.
Don't you hear the whistle blowin'
Rise up so early in the morn'
Don't you hear the captain shoutin', Dinah, blow that horn.
Dinah, won't you blow, Dinah, won't you blow,
Dinah won't you blow that horn,
Dinah, won't you blow, Dinah, won't you blow, Dinah, won't you blow that horn!
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah, someone's in the kitchen, I know-o-o-o
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah! Strummin' on the old banjo.
Fee Fi Fiddle -i-o, Fee Fi Fiddle-i-o-o-o-o
Fee Fi Fiddle-i-o, strumming on the old banjo.

Other songs to consider singing . . .

- Three Blind Mice
- Oh! Susanna
- Pop! Goes the Weasel
- America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee)
- Danny Boy
- Red River Valley
- Old MacDonald Had a Farm
- In the Good, Old Summer Time
- My Bonnie (Lies Over the Ocean)
- She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain
- America, the Beautiful

Indoctrination Speech

You have been selected to be the general who will deliver an indoctrination speech just before the doughboys board ship for France.

Directions: Read the following with fervor and conviction. Inspire your doughboys to fight with honor in this great mission "to make the world safe for democracy."

"Men, you're now Sammies, Yanks, Doughboys, Soldiers of the United States of America—asked to fight in France against the Germans "to make the world safe for democracy." Americans have a special place in history and you are part of that achievement. (*Pause)*

"The Hun is the enemy! For the flag—Old Glory—President Wilson, your hometown, your loved ones, your women, you will have to kill the Hun bastard—many of them. Try not to think of him as a person. He is not like you. He has chosen to support a totalitarian government led by the evil Kaiser Bill. Unlike you, he cannot think for himself. In this you have an advantage. Furthermore, all you men will fight as a unit. Don't let your buddies down. As an individual, you will fight to bring honor to yourself, your unit, and your country!

"At times you will face death. This is to be expected. When this happens, you must fight harder and overcome your well-trained adversary. But again, your president, Uncle Sam, your woman, your officers, and your fellow doughboys expect you to win and send the enemy—the Hun bastard—to his maker. Doing no less than this will give Americans—and the Allies—victory! *(Pause)*

"Off to France, men!"

Postscript

Perhaps the importance of World War I compared with earlier wars can be summed up with a comment from a veteran. He wrote that he knew this was a different kind of war when he reacted to a gas attack by trying to put a gas mask on a panicked horse. Indeed, the Great War did bridge two separate eras of conflict. In some ways it was the last of traditional warfare (horses and emperors) and the first of modern warfare (tanks, submarines, and airplanes).

The Yanks from America crossed the Atlantic Ocean to fight this new kind of war. Arriving in Brest, France, some Yank probably said, "Lafayette, we are here!"—a tribute no doubt to the French officer and his troops who helped Americans in their revolution more than 140 years before. Ready to go into battle against the Germans, U.S. commander of the AEF John Pershing rejected an allied plan to have his men fill in gaps. Instead, doughboys fought as units and in every way distinguished themselves at the key battles—Meuse-Argonne, Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel, and Belleau-Wood.

Individually, some Americans became heroes. Sergeant Alvin York, originally a pacifist from the hills of Tennessee, at the Meuse-Argonne offensive killed 17 Germans (with a mere 17 shots!) and captured 132 more. A 1942 film about York starring Gary Cooper made him a permanent American hero. Other men achieved fame through brave deeds. In the skies above France, for example, U.S. pilot Eddie Rickenbacker became America's top ace, scoring 26 victories, most of them in the last two months of the war!

During the war, the America "Over Here" made many adjustments and changes. Women took key jobs vacated by men off to war. Families experienced meatless, wheatless, and porkless days. To stoke the fires of Anti-German sentiment, sauerkraut became known as liberty cabbage and frankfurters, tube steaks. Citizens bought Liberty Bonds after hearing stirring "minute man" speeches from film stars such as Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks.

All told, more than 115,000 U.S. soldiers gave the last full measure of devotion for their country. That number pales, however, when compared with the ghastly statistics of World War I deaths: Of the five million who died in uniform, Russia lost 1.7 million, and France, 1.3 million.

When peace came at last and the fields of France were quiet once more, the Yanks came home. Their political leader, Woodrow Wilson, sailed to France expecting to carve out a lasting peace with hardline Europeans—David Lloyd George of Great Britain and Georges Clemenceau of France. Wilson's arrival with hopes of permanent peace stirred Europeans in Paris and London as nothing in history had done before. The treaty he helped hammer out at Versailles, however, was not supported by the U.S. Senate at home and eventually it failed to win ratification. Without the U.S. as a member, the League of Nations, a component of the Versailles treaty, was handicapped and thus unable to withstand the challenges of totalitarian aggression over the next two decades.

The war itself left a cynicism in many who returned to America in 1919 and a desire for isolation. One critic at the time was asked who won the war. He replied: "Who won the San Francisco earthquake?"

Historical Investigation Activity

Doughboy Boot Camp (1917)

Focus Question

Did George Creel and the Committee on Public Information go overboard in "propagandizing" America in the First World War?

Materials Needed for This Historical Investigation

- **Documents A–K**—*class set*
- **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**—*class set*
- **Recording**—*"Over There," to be played as students enter room*

Lesson Plan

1. Getting Started

   - Whether you did the Activator on Doughboy Boot Camp or not, review or find out what students know about the First World War and life on the home front during that conflict. Put responses on the board or screen as spokes of a wheel with the hub/circle labeled "World War I: Homefront." The discussion that follows should serve as a backstory to the **focus question** (along with the data in #2 in this lesson plan), and the documents the students will soon analyze. Consider also a brief discussion of "persuasion" and "propaganda" which are defined in #3 in this lesson plan.

2. Backstory to Use as Instruction

Teaching tip
YouTube has an excellent video, "Committee on Public Information" (Kraus and Speers Cornucopia of History, 2016), with historical footage that can supplement the background discussion.

   - When the Doughboys went off to boot camp in 1917, the U.S. was not behind the war effort against Germany. To blunt this skepticism, reluctance or opposition, President Wilson created (Executive Order 2594) the Committee on Public Information, or CPI, to promote patriotism, release government news of the war, sustain morale, administer "voluntary" censorship in the print and visual media, and disseminate abroad positive information about the USA, especially Wilsonian ideals.

   - To head the CPI and accomplish the above goals, Wilson chose a friend and political supporter named George Creel, a colorful and brash muckraking journalist of some note. Creel was to most observers a flamboyant, impulsive, some say tactless, but always dedicated-to-the-cause patriot who saw the CPI's role as a crusade to shape public opinion

to win the war with words and pictures. He was, in modern parlance, in charge of "public relations" and "information management."

- Newspapers, pamphlets, posters, speaker's platforms and movies—all were mobilized as "weapons" in a vast effort to bring the war home, and all under the direction of the CPI's "czar," George Creel.
- Of the divisions established within the CPI, five were the most notable: Pictorial Publicity (cartoons, posters, paintings), Speaking Division (the Four Minute Men), Advertising, News and the Censorship Board. The latter two attempted to control the flow of official war information during the war. The CPI was the *only* news source!
- Much of what came from these divisions was, to some, biased and "colored by nationalistic assumptions" (i.e. patriotism). But the CPI claimed it still allowed expression, not suppression. Whatever it took to instill a "war-will" into Americans was the goal of the CPI.
- Creel wanted to use the CPI as "a plain publicity proposition, a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world's greatest adventure in advertising," to carry the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe. Few of the recruited artists, writers, musicians, and speakers could refuse Creel's enthusiasm and determination.
- Creel was the CPI and the CPI was Creel. Many called the CPI the Creel Committee. But for all his efforts, questions down to this day remain. Did Creel and the CPI, in their missionary zeal to promote patriotism and whip up support for the war *go too far*—overboard—and as a result generate panic, hysteria and intolerance in American society? Moreover, were First Amendment rights (freedom of the press) violated in the CPI's alleged censorship efforts? Were these strict and unorthodox measures necessary to win the war at all? Further, in these efforts, did the CPI cross over from persuasion to outright propaganda?

3. Say to students, "Before we actually analyze the documents dealing with George Creel and the CPI, let's define two important terms:"

   persuasion—the act of convincing someone to embrace a point of view that is usually supported by reasoned argument and evidence

   propaganda—often exaggerated and mostly false information and ideas spread intentionally to convince people to take a particular view

4. Ask students, "So, are the differences between persuasion and propaganda that obvious? Let me illustrate the differences by showing you four posters from World War I that were drawn by artists commissioned by the CPI." At this point display the **Document I** page and discuss with students which posters clearly display persuasion and propaganda techniques, symbols, images, and messages.

5. Say, "Now allow me to pass out the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** and have you in pairs (or trios) analyze the documents and comment in the provided spaces what each document has to say to us about the mood of the era, Creel, and the CPI." Go over the response sheet with students.

6. Pass out the **Documents A–K** package. Say, "What do the documents tell us and what can we conclude? That's our task." It may be wise to orally read the first one or two documents and go over what they say. Remind students how to work through documents carefully, and tell them there is no order or sequence to the documents. Perhaps the first task might be to have students put the documents in chronological order. Once done, release students (in pairs or small groups) to work.

7. Allow 30–40 minutes for students to work before having them fill out the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**.

8. Discuss thoroughly and have students write their longer paragraphs on the **focus question** as a closure. Eventually have volunteers read these to conclude the activity.

9. As a bonus to this activity, pass out (or use the data to lecture) the page **Real German Spies**? Insert this new data only *after* students have finished their response sheets and concluded by writing their claim and evidence connection. Then, ask if this information alters in any significant way their answers to the **Focus Question**. In other words, does the real possibility of German spies make Creel and the CPI's efforts *justifiable* and *necessary?* Discuss in some detail before concluding the activity.

Option for Lesson Plan

If you . . .

- Have students whose abilities may make it difficult to analyze all the documents in this package . . .

Or

- Have limited time in class during any particular unit to implement the full package of documents . . .

Consider carefully pulling out 2–3 documents to use that will still help students think like historians. Using this strategy would mean selecting only those tasks and questions on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** that directly apply to the documents you have chosen to use. Whatever the case, these investigations, even in an abbreviated format, can still be effective and fulfill your objectives.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Points to Ponder Response Sheet

Focus Question: Did George Creel and the Committee for Public Information go overboard in propagandizing America during the First World War?

1. **Document I:** Which World War I poster illustrates "persuasion?" "Propaganda?" What words, symbols, images, or messages illustrate each technique?

   _____

   _____

2. **Document A:** What words in the "Chorus" might be called "spine-tingling" or patriotic?

   _____

   _____

3. **Document B:** What does Creel say about the allegations of censorship the CPI was charged with?

   _____

   _____

   What was he bragging about having done with the CPI? What importance did it have that he wrote his book right after the war? Why do you suppose he wrote it?

   _____

   _____

4. **Document C:** What is Newton Baker more worried about than the violence that happens to Germans over here?

   _____

   _____

   Was Baker, as secretary of war, in a position to prevent or minimize what happened during the anti-German hysteria?

   _____

   _____

5. **Document D:** Why do you suppose that this Four Minute Men Division was to Creel and the CPI deemed the most effective "propaganda" tool/instrument of all—posters and movies included? What specific words or phrases from the speech might electrify or empower Americans to buy Liberty Loan bonds to help finance the war?

_____

_____

6. **Document E:** What words or phrases in the document might apply to newspaper or magazine editors that could result in a fine or imprisonment? Is Creel's "voluntary" censorship mentioned or implied anywhere in the document?

_____

_____

7. **Document F:** What was the CPI's thinking behind making Boy Scouts dispatch bearers—a job, no doubt, that was not going to win the war itself?

_____

_____

8. **Document G:** Walter Lippmann wrote this long essay in 1920, the same year that Creel wrote his *How We Advertised America*. Who were Lippmann's readers and why did he write this? What disturbs him the most?

_____

_____

9. **Documents H and I:** While not clearly stated but implied, what role did the CPI's posters play in the anti-German sentiment in the U.S.? Could rational, intelligent people really be set off emotionally by pictures, images—even in war—to erupt into violent behavior?

_____

_____

10. **Document J:** Most Americans—even in that era—rarely went to concerts featuring classical music. What does this particular letter show beyond Stokowski's appeal? Could music written by Germanic composers really hurt the U.S. war effort?

_____

_____

11. **Document K:** The CPI controlled all war news—it was the only official and authorized news source during the 19 months of the U.S. participation. How might censorship by the CPI of U.S. troop movements affect *Farm, Stock and Home* readers in Minneapolis? How would you describe Creel's reply to Hughes?

_____

_____

12. If you could ask George Creel one question, what would it be and what kind of answer would you expect from him?

Q. _____

A. _____

13. Referring to evidence from the documents (and from the backstory's data), answer this **focus question:** Did George Creel and the CPI go overboard in propagandizing America during the First World War? Make at least 3–4 supporting points.

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. After you read the page, **Real German Spies?** reflect and then write on any alterations or changes you would make to your original response (#13) to the **focus question**. Which specific data is reflected in your changes?

_____

_____

Real German Spies?

(Note to teacher: This information is to be shared *after* students fill in and discuss the responses on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet.** Then it is suggested that the teacher find out, once shared, if this new data changes their answers to the **Focus Question**.)

All this fuss and patriotic effort to demonize an enemy thousands of miles away and censor and control all the war news coming out of Europe were measures that appeared justifiable—at least to the Wilson administration and especially to CPI head George Creel.

But were these measures to drench America in propaganda and censorship really necessary? Was there a real threat from German spies as exaggerated in Creel's pamphlets? Were there real German spies working in the U.S. to sabotage U.S. efforts to win the war? The answer is . . . yes! There were German spies, especially in the two years prior to America's entry into the war in April, 1917.

We know now that there was a network of German agents throughout the U.S. in those eventful years. Many of the spies were actual saboteurs; that is, they planned *and* then carried out acts of sabotage (terrorism, if you like), attacking the war "engine" of the U.S., especially by targeting and blowing up war supply depots and centers, bridges, and damaging U.S. ships bound for Europe, carrying weapons and ammunition.

They frequently succeeded! Especially along the East coast, German spies, working out of the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. and a secret spy ring in New York City, set fire to warehouses, munitions factories, and docked cargo ships. The most crippling act of sabotage was the destruction of a weapons depot atop Black Tom Island, which juts out into New York Harbor near the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

In the early morning hours of July 30, 1916, a massive explosion ripped through Black Tom on a scale perhaps equal to a 5.5 magnitude earthquake, that shattered windows in nearby Lower Manhattan, caused structural damage to the Brooklyn Bridge and was even responsible for scarring the torch arm of the venerable Statue of Liberty. The estimated cost of damage (in 2013 dollars) was about $400 million. It was the costliest disaster in American history up to that time.

Eventually, a flurry of police investigations (with the NYPD detective-inspector Tom Tunney) and manhunts proved that the German spy network was responsible, though most of the saboteurs involved returned to Germany or fled to Mexico, then an ally of Germany. By this time (February–March, 1917), however, the die was cast: the resumption of unrestricted German submarine warfare, the diplomatically disastrous Zimmerman Telegram episode, and the uncovering of the German spy ring made the case for going to war against Germany an almost certainty. Moreover, these events perhaps explain, though do not excuse, the torrent of anti-German propaganda from George Creel's CPI and the accompanying hysteria of these years. Americans "over here" apparently felt they faced a "real and present" danger from Germany's spies and saboteurs.

Document A

"Over There" Song

In 1917 America needed a snappy, patriotic popular song and it got one when Broadway star George M. Cohan wrote this catchy song (supposedly penned while commuting to his office in April, 1917). It became a memorable, "spine-tingling" hit, so much so that it was revived during World War II.

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get your gun,
Take it on the run, on the run, on the run,
Hear them calling you and me,
Every son of Liberty,
Hurry right away, no delay, go today,
Make your daddy glad to have had such a lad,
Tell your sweetheart not to pine,
To be proud her boy's in line.

(*Chorus*)
Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word,
Over there,
That the Yanks are coming,
The Yanks are coming,
The drums rum-tumming everywhere,
So prepare,
Say a prayer,
Send the word,
Send the word to beware,
We'll be over, we're coming over,
And we won't be back till it's over over there!

Source: Public Domain, 1917.

Document B

The CPI According to George Creel

After the war and his duties as chairman of the CPI were over, Creel wrote and published his version of the committee's work written to counter the legions of critics.

> In no degree was the Committee an agency of censorship, a machinery of concealment or repression. Its emphasis throughout was on the open and the positive. At no point did it seek or exercise authorities under those war laws that limited the freedom of speech and press. In all things, from fast to last, without halt or change, it was a plain publicity proposition, a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world's greatest adventure in advertising.
>
> Under the pressure of tremendous necessities an organization grew that not only reached deep into every American community, but that carried to every corner of the civilized globe the full message of America's idealism, unselfishness, and indomitable purpose. We fought prejudice, indifference, and disaffection at home and we fought ignorance and falsehood abroad. We strove for the maintenance of our own morale and the Allied morale by every process of stimulation; every possible expedient was employed to break through the barrage of lies that kept the people of the [enemy] in darkness and delusion; we sought the friendship and support of the neutral nations by continuous presentation of facts. We did not call it propaganda, for that word, in German hands, had come to be associated with deceit and corruption. Our effort was educational and informative throughout, for we had such confidence in our case as to feel that no other argument was needed than the simple, straightforward presentation of facts.
>
> There was no part of the great war machinery that we did not touch, no medium of appeal that we did not employ. The printed word, the spoken word, the motion picture, the telegraph, the cable, the wireless, the poster, the sign-board—all these were used in our campaign to make our own people and all other peoples understand the causes that compelled America to take arms. All that was fine and ardent in the civilian population came at our call until more than one hundred and fifty thousand men and women were devoting highly specialized abilities to the work of the Committee, as faithful and devoted in their service as though they wore the khaki.

Source: George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920).

Document C

Newton D. Baker Weighs in on Anti-German Hysteria

Newton D. Baker, author of the letter below, served as secretary of war during World War I. In this letter, he expresses concern over the American state of mind and the rampant hostility against German Americans.

> The spirit of the country seems unusually good, but there is a growing frenzy of suspicion and hostility toward disloyalty. I am afraid we are going to have a good many instances of people roughly treated on very slight evidence of disloyalty. Already a number of men and some women have been "tarred and feathered." . . .
>
> In Cleveland a few days ago a foreign-looking man got into a street car and, taking a seat, noticed pasted in the window next to him a Liberty Loan poster, which he immediately tore down, tore into small bits, and stamped under his feet. The people in the car surged around him with the demand that he be lynched, when a Secret Service man showed his badge and placed him under arrest, taking him in a car to the police station, where he was searched and found to have two Liberty Bonds in his pocket and to be a non-English Pole. When an interpreter was procured, it was discovered that the circular which he had destroyed had had on it a picture of the German Emperor, which had so infuriated the fellow that he destroyed the circular to show his vehement hatred of the common enemy. As he was unable to speak a single word of English, he would undoubtedly have been hanged but for the intervention and entirely accidental presence of the Secret Service agent.
>
> I am afraid the grave danger in this sort of thing, apart from its injustice, is that the German Government will adopt retaliatory measures. While the government of the United States is not only not responsible for these things, but very zealously trying to prevent them, the German Government draws no fine distinctions.

Source: Letter written by Newton D. Baker as quoted in David Kennedy and Thomas Bailey, *The American Spirit: U.S. History as Seen by Contemporaries, Vol. II Since 1865* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002).

Document D

A Four Minute Man Speech (October 8, 1917)

Eventually some 75,000 men and women joined the ranks of George Creel's "army" of Four Minute Men. They gave over 255,000 patriotic ("pep") speeches to millions in movie theaters, church halls, camps, and other public places. Four minutes was the time it took to change movie reels. Speeches like the one below worried even Creel himself for their intense anti-German, anti-foreign tone. Creel's "army," one observer wrote, resembled Fuller Brush Men, popular salesmen of that era.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have just received the information that there is a German spy among us—a German spy watching us.

He is around here somewhere, reporting upon you and me—sending reports about us to Berlin and telling the Germans just what we are doing with the Liberty Loan. From every section of the country these spies have been getting reports over to [Germany]—not general reports but details—where the loan is going well and where its success seems weak, and what people are saying in each community. . . .

If the American people lend their billions now, one and all with a hip-hip-hurrah, it means that America is united and strong. While, if we lend our money half-heartedly, America seems weak and autocracy remains strong.

Money means everything now; it means quicker victory and therefore less bloodshed. We are *in* the war, and now Americans can have but *one* opinion, only *one* wish in the Liberty Loan. . . .

For treachery here, attempted treachery in Mexico, treachery everywhere—*one billion.*

For murder of American women and children—*one billion more.*

For broken faith and promise to murder more Americans—*billions and billions more.*

And then we will add:

In the world fight for Liberty, our share—*billions and billions and billions and endless billions.*

Do not let the German spy hear and report that *you* are a **slacker**.

Source: Committee on Public Information, Four Minute Men Bulletin 17 (October 8, 1917) as printed in Alfred Cornebise *War as Advertised: The Four Minute Men and America's Crusade, 1917-1918* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984).

slacker = one who shirks duty/responsibility, especially in the military.

Document E

The Sedition Act of 1918

Passed in May 1918, this act led to the inescapable fact that newspaper and magazine editors would/could be punished if, indeed, they themselves failed to take part in "voluntary" censorship as articulated by CPI head George Creel.

> Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall willfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States, or to promote the success of its enemies . . . or incite insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty . . . or shall willfully obstruct . . . the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, or . . . shall willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States . . . or shall willfully display the flag of any foreign enemy, or shall willfully . . . urge, incite, or advocate any curtailment of production . . . or advocate, teach, defend, or suggest the doing of any of the acts or things in this section enumerated and whoever shall by word or act support or favor the cause of any country with which the United States is at war . . . shall be punished by a fine of not more than $10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both.

Source: United States, *Statutes at Large,* Washington, D.C. 1918, Vol. XL, pp 553 ff.

Document F

Boy Scouts as Dispatch Bearers

As an example of how the war permeated every American's life, the CPI recruited Boy Scouts to participate in the war's effort, in this case, as dispatch bearers. Actually, what they did was distribute patriotic pamphlets.

> Attention, Scouts! We are again called upon to do active service for our country! Every one of the 285,661 Scouts and 76,957 Scout Officials has been summoned by President Woodrow Wilson, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to serve as a dispatch bearer from the Government at Washington. . . .
>
> Our danger is from within. Our enemies have representatives everywhere; they tell lies; they mispresent [sic] the truth; they deceive our own people; they are a real menace to our country. . . .
>
> We are to help create public opinion "just as effective in helping to bring victory as ships and guns," to stir patriotism, the great force behind the ships and guns. Isn't that a challenge for every loyal Scout? . . .
>
> . . . Under the direction of our leaders, the Boy Scouts of America are to serve as an intelligence division of the citizens' army, always prepared and alert to respond to any call which may come from the President of the United States and the Committee on Public Information at Washington.

Source: Excerpt from a Committee on Public Information pamphlet, 1917, as printed in Tom Pendergast and others, *World War I: Primary Sources* (UXL, 2002).

Document G

Walter Lippmann Attacks "Untruths"

For over 50 years, famous critic, writer, and political commentator Walter Lippmann took on the growing trend of writing and printing untruths in the American print media. In the essay below he attacks the fallout from propagandists and censors like George Creel, who is never mentioned by name in his little book. One of Lippmann's enduring quotes is: "Where all men think alike, no one thinks very much."

> [T]he most destructive form of untruth is . . . propaganda by those whose profession it is to report the news. . . . When those who control them **arrogate** to themselves the right to determine by their own consciences what shall be reported and for what purpose, democracy is unworkable. Public opinion is blockaded. For when a people can no longer confidently repair "to the best fountains for their information," then anyone's guess and anyone's rumor, each man's hope and each man's whim becomes the basis of government. . . . Incompetence and aimlessness, corruption and disloyalty, panic and ultimate disaster, must come to any people which is denied an assured access to the facts. . . .
>
> . . . So long as there is interposed between the ordinary citizen and the facts a news organization determining by entirely private and unexamined standards, no matter how lofty, what he shall know, and hence what he shall believe, no one will be able to say that the substance of democratic government is secure. The theory of our constitution, says Mr. Justice [Oliver Wendell] Holmes, is that truth is the only ground upon which men's wishes safely can be carried out. In so far as those who **purvey** the news make of their own beliefs a higher law than truth, they are attacking the foundations of our constitutional system. There can be no higher law in journalism than to tell the truth and shame the devil.

Source: Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the News* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920).

arrogate = take claim for oneself without right

purvey = to supply or furnish

Document H

Anti-German Hysteria

Germans were not the only ones closely watched during the war. Those non-conforming dissenters—like Emma Goldman, Eugene V. Debs, and Big Bill Haywood—were actually prosecuted for opposing the war. Congress established penalties for criticizing the Constitution, the government, the flag, and the Red Cross. It wasn't easy for German Americans (some changed their names from, for example, Braun to Brown, Kuper to Cooper) or dissenters to live in the U.S. in 1918.

> German-Americans suffered the bitterest attacks. In 1917 more than two million Americans were of German birth, and millions more were of German descent. Before the war, German-Americans had been regarded as ideal citizens. . . .
>
> . . . Washington abetted the hatemongers. Employers were asked to check into the national origins of workers and to guarantee their loyalty. As a result, many Americans with German names lost their jobs. In some workshops men with foreign accents were forced to crawl across the floor and kiss the American flag. Others were accused of seditious statements and publicly flogged or tarred and feathered. At some war-bond rallies, German-Americans were forced to parade as objects of ridicule. A mob in Omaha tried in vain to lynch a German-American youth; a mob in southern Illinois succeeded. . . .
>
> States outlawed the teaching of the German language and culture, and librarians removed books by German authors from their shelves. Publishers of textbooks for schools tried to discredit rival firms by arguing that competitors were German sympathizers. One history book was attacked for simply publishing a picture of the kaiser, another for showing Frederick the Great. . . .
>
> . . . Finally, in a burst of anti-German fervor, Americans changed the name of German measles to "liberty" measles, hamburger to "liberty steak," sauerkraut to "liberty cabbage," dachshunds to "liberty pups." In Cincinnati, pretzels were banned from lunch counters.

Source: *End of Innocence, 1910-1920: Our American Century* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1998).

Document I

World War I Posters from the CPI

As part of his campaign to drench America in patriotism and demonize the Germans, George Creel commissioned talented (and some famous) artists and writers of that day to create these examples of posters and hundreds more to be splashed on buildings and billboards all over the nation.

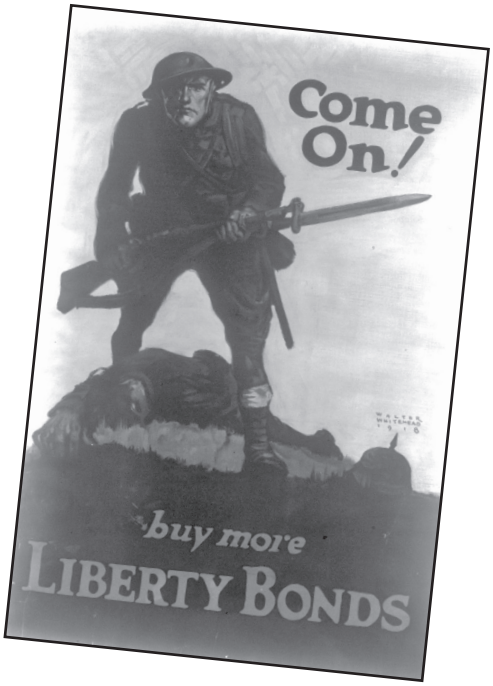


Image Source: Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administrations.

Document J

Stokowski's Letter to President Wilson

The anti-German mood is captured here in a letter from famous conductor Leopold Stokowski, pleading his case with Woodrow Wilson on behalf of musicians. Most of them were afraid of playing classical music, written by Germanic composers, notably Bach, Beethoven and Mozart at American concerts. Stokowski was English-born, though of Polish/Irish origins.

August 20, 1918

My dear Mr. President:

It is with great hesitation that I approach you with regard to a problem now agitating the musical world. . . .

The question is—whether or not the music of the classical masters born in Germany during the eighteenth and nin[e]teenth centuries should be played in America during the war.

I fully endorse the elimination of German opera for the duration of the war. . . . I also agree that it is necessary to eliminate both the German language and the works of living enemy composers from our concert stage . . . but it is still a question in my mind whether it is for the good of the country to abolish a treasure of art which does not belong to Germany but to the world. . . .

. . . [T]his question, however, is not really a musical one but a national one. . . . If, in your opinion, it is necessary for the good of the nation that the music of Bach and Beethoven be abolished from our concert programs, it is needless to say that I shall unquestionably abide by your decision. . . .

Leopold Stokowski

Source: Linda S. George, *World War I: Letters from the Homefront* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2002).

Document K

Creel's Reply to a "Censorship" Critic

Two particular divisions of the CPI became specific targets for contemporary critics: The Division of Pictorial Publicity (for its anti-German posters demonizing Germans as barbaric "Huns") and the Division of News for its "censorship." The former, it was said, helped create hysteria and was blatantly false; the latter violated the First Amendment's freedom of the press. The source below illustrates one critic's concern and Creel's reply to it.

Wrote Hugh J. Hughes, editor of the Minneapolis-based magazine, *Farm, Stock and Home:*

> [Hughes]: "Do you think we are concealing anything from Germany when we withhold from publication the approximate number of men now in France? Isn't that number quite as well known to Wilhelmstrasse as to Washington? Is not the location of American units on the front perfectly well known to Germany, likewise the ports of entry in France?"
>
> [Creel's direct reply]: "I tell you quite frankly . . . that Germany does not know how many men we have in France, or does not know their location. On the theory that the Germans are bound to find out everything, and that therefore there is no point in attempting any secrecy, we might as well send advance information of our plans in carbon to the German War Office and have done with it. Merely because we may fail in some essential of secrecy is not a reason why common **prudence** should be thrown to the winds."

Source: This Hughes-Creel exchange is quoted in James R. Mock and Cederic Larson, *Words That Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1939).

prudence = careful, wise choice; using wisdom

Ford Assembly Line
1922

Lesson Plan

Overview

This Activator will involve your students in the mass production of a Model T Ford as it becomes an automobile along a factory assembly line. Some have said that Americans in the 20th century had love affairs with their cars. True or not, the mass-production process afforded most U.S. citizens the opportunity to buy and own at least one car, even if, as it sometimes happened, they didn't own a bathtub. Said one woman in the 1920s, ''You can't go to town in a bathtub." Arguably, more than any other 20th-century creation, the automobile changed American life.

Setup

Teaching tip

Of course, you may wish to give your students a brief lecture on Henry Ford, utilizing the information in the essay. You could also include portions of or a complete video on Henry Ford and the automobile. (See Resources to Consult.)

1. **Duplication**

   - Consider a class set of both the **Background Essay** and the **Postscript** to hand out to your students.
   - Duplicate enough copies of the **Ford Motor Company Worker's Contract** page to cut apart and have a half page copy for each assembly line worker in your class.
   - Duplicate 50–75 copies of the **Model T Outline** and 12 copies of the **Model T Assembly Line Job Tasks**.

2. **Schematic, props, costumes, overlays:** Be sure you have studied the **Schematic** carefully. Find and bring into your classroom any props or costume pieces that will help create the setting and the mood of Ford's plant in Detroit of 1922. (Perhaps students could help by bringing in clipboards, stopwatches, green translucent visor caps, and elastic rings for supervisor's shirt sleeves.)

3. **Roles:** There are only factory workers and a few supervisors on the assembly line in this Activator. Any of your students can role-play workers or the two to three supervisors with clipboards and stopwatches.

Teaching tip

Of course, if you wish to spend more time on this Activator, you might do Option A first and Option B second.

4. **Option A or Option B:** Decide which of these two options you wish your class to use for this **Ford Assembly Line** activator:

   - Option A is shown on the **Schematic**. In this continuous assembly line there is no competition. The incentive should be having pride in making a terrific product rather than producing more than another competitive group.

- Option B requires that you divide your class into two distinct groups and label them "Highland Park" and "Willow Run," which were names for factory units of the Ford plant in Detroit. Make it competitive by using final production numbers to determine a "winner." Remember to require high standards in both options. If you choose Option B, the **29 Tasks** must be divided equally among the 15–20 workers in each of the two groups, instead of workers having only one task as in Option A.

Directions

1. Ensure that your students learn the historical background. To augment what is contained in your history textbook, choose one of these options: 1) Hand out the **Background Essay** either the day before the class as homework or pass it out to be read in class; 2) Give a formal lecture based upon what is in the **Background Essay** plus your other knowledge; 3) Show a film or video on Ford. You may wish to save this option for use during your debriefing (See the Debriefing section); 4) With younger or lower-ability students you may wish to read the **Background Essay** and the **Postscript** aloud as "mini-lectures" prior to the Activator and during the debriefing.

2. Check for understanding by conducting an informal discussion of the main points brought out in #1 above.

3. Briefly explain what will happen as workers for the Ford Motor Company "assemble" several automobiles. Each worker will draw his/her task on the **Model T Outline** as neatly as possible while experiencing the assembly line's pressures.

4. Point out how supervisors will scrutinize their efforts by looking for efficiency and skill and by looking for violations of contractual behavior.

5. Once the above explanation is over, have all students arrange furniture and move to their positions for either Option A or Option B. (See the **Schematic**.)

6. When the students are in their positions ready to build Model Ts, go down the line and assign a number(s) to each student. Refer to the **29 Tasks Descriptions** sheet, and make sure each student has heard the correct number. Allow students time to study the **Model T Assembly Line Job Tasks** and visually understand the extent of the task each is to perform in the Activator. Make sure you "sprinkle" the **Model T Assembly Line Job Tasks** on several workers' work stations (i.e., desks moved together as an assembly line). Workers can thus periodically look at it for help. Last, display the **Model T Outline** and tell the workers that this is the "chassis" (CHASS-see) they will build on. Finally, challenge them with a quota for the day (40–60 cars in 15 minutes, for example). If need be, answer any questions.

Teaching tip
You may wish to use colored pens to mark key places on any handouts before presenting them to the class.

7. Here is your last task before the line work begins to roll. Pass out to each worker a copy of the **Ford Motor Company Worker's Contract**. Read it to your workers, have them sign it, tell them the rules will be enforced ($.50 off their daily $5 wage for each infraction) and have each worker place this contract on a corner of his/her work station—*accessible to supervisors to mark off for infractions!*

8. Double check for readiness: all questions answered, tasks assigned and understood, rules of the contract understood, and supervisors eager to increase efficiency. Ring a bell or buzzer to initiate work. As you do, the first worker (Task #1) will take a "blueprint" of the Model T from a bundle of 60–75 blueprint sheets. He/she then completes his/her assigned task and slides the work to the worker who will complete task #2 and so on until task #29 is completed and the finished Model T "rolls off" the assembly line.

Teaching tip
If you have several classes in a row that will do this Activator, leave the unfinished work where it is on the line. This would be an action realistic to the assembly line process.

9. During the assembly line work, you should encourage the supervisors to constantly monitor their employees' work, behavior, and efficiency, and to make changes to improve efficiency (e.g., pull out one worker, replace with another; add another worker to one particular task station). Additionally, you might step in occasionally to do a quality check on a car or two. Both you and the supervisors may see violations of contract rules and decide to make a $.50 off mark on that particular worker's contract.

Debriefing

Decide whether you wish to use a short or long debriefing. Here are possible ways to make meaningful what happened along the assembly line at Ford in 1922:

Short debriefing

1. Pass out the **Postscript**. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Ask students to discuss what they learned and what they felt as they played their roles as factory workers or supervisors.

3. Consider having students write a Learning Log entry following the short debriefing.

Long debriefing

Use one or more of the following debriefing activities:

1. Pass out the **Postscript**. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Grab examples of the cars produced during the activator —early, middle, and late examples of their work—and compare the quality. Point out their differences and ask why there were variations.

3. Point out that Ford was able to dramatically lower the price of a Model T. Ask what would happen if Ford, GM, or Chrysler made a similar gesture today. Or maybe the question should be: "Could/ would any automobile company today—anywhere in the world—take such an action?"

4. Ask students to relate their feelings about working on an assembly line, doing the same task over and over again—for 8–9 hours a day—but for double the wages that most other workers make today.

5. In most years from 1913 to 1926 Ford's Model T was essentially unchanged. He said, ''There is a tendency to keep monkeying with styles and to spoil a good thing by changing it." Do you agree with Ford?

6. Henry Ford was more than just an eccentric genius. He was also anti-union, anti-Semitic, anti-formal schooling and, as World War II approached, pro-Hitler. Knowing this, if you had been living while Ford was alive, would you still have purchased a car from a Ford dealer, or would you have boycotted the company and purchased a Chevrolet or Dodge instead?

7. Ford believed his workers should be able to afford to buy the cars they produced. Cars are now almost an economic necessity as well as a status symbol. How does the importance of automobile ownership impact American families?

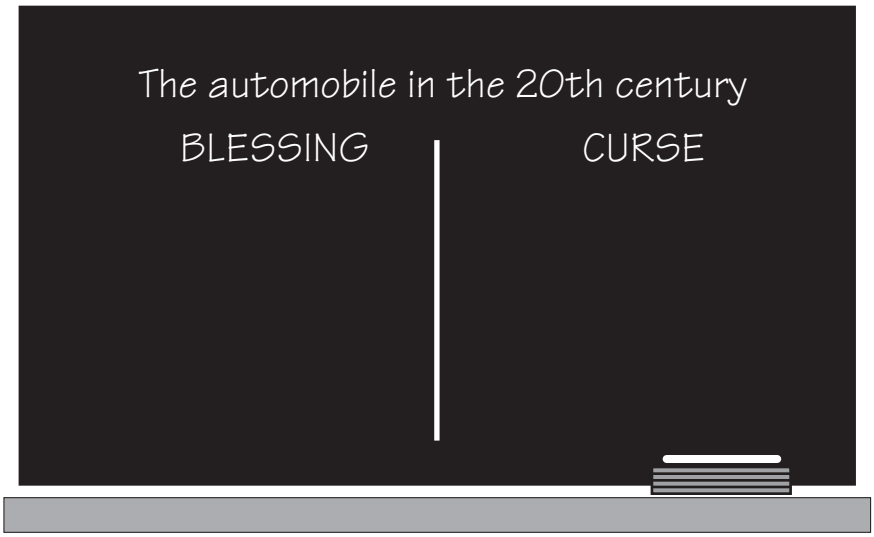
8. If you were designing a Ford today what would be the essentials you would insist on?

9. Show an appropriate film on Henry Ford. See **Resources to Consult**.

10. Have students thoroughly assess the pros and cons of the automobile's impact upon American civilization during the 20th century:

- You might have a general chalkboard discussion or have cooperative learning groups make a two-column chart assessing how the automobile has been a blessing and a curse because of its impact upon American civilization. In the latter case, provide some time for sharing the groups' charts.

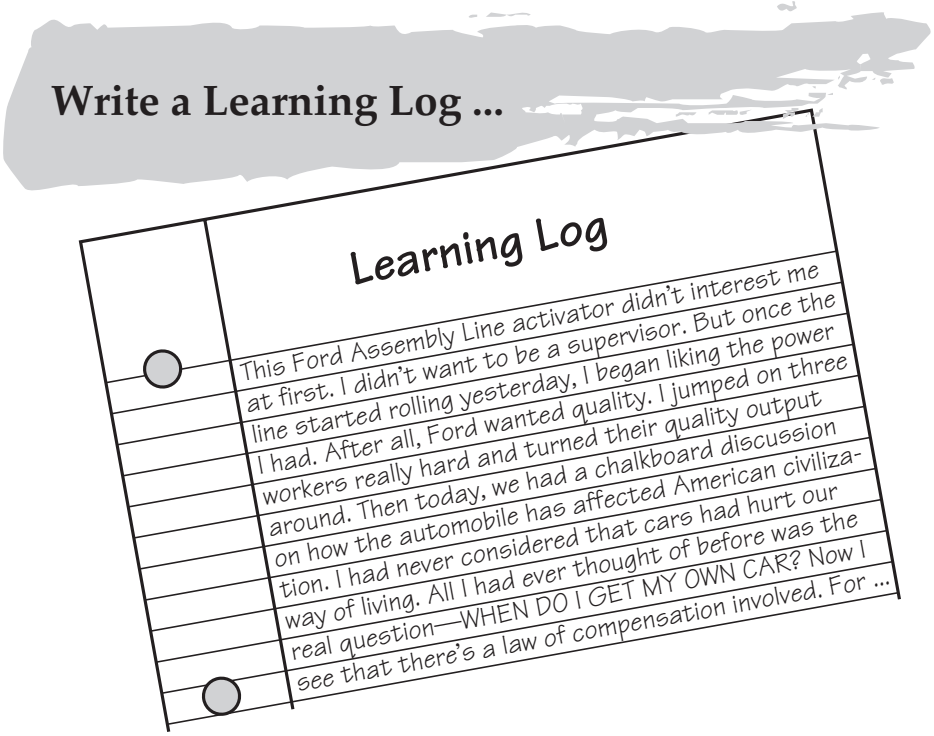
Teaching tip
A good procedure to increase student involvement is to divide students into trios or quartets (three or four students) in which they can discuss their experiences and observations. Ask trios or quartets to share with the whole class the most interesting comments they heard from one another.



Teaching tip
If you have a gifted class of students who have experienced other Interact trials, assign key individuals to work either alone or with you to plan such a trial. Having capable students plan most of the trial by themselves would be a marvelous example of empowering students to learn by turning them loose to work on the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain.

- Or you might have your class put the automobile on trial for its role in 20th century history. (Note that this option would take two or more days of class time.) Who or what would you call to testify for the prosecution and the defense? (Who would be the persons [e.g., Henry Ford]?; what would be the objects [e.g., the air bag or the cigarette lighter in the dashboard]?) Issues brought out in the trial would include whether the automobile's legacy has been mostly positive or mostly negative.

11. Have students write a Learning Log entry.



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Visual history

Documentaries: *Henry Ford: Biography* (A&E Network). Also Ford makes up segments in *Time Was the 1920s* and *Yesteryear, 1927* (HBO Cable).

TV miniseries: *Ford: The Man and the Machine* (1987).

Visuals are important and often essential. And while there are countless visuals to use in the classroom for this particular Activator (films and documentaries), most of these might be difficult to find and then show. Instead, it is recommended that you as a teacher in the 21st century might find it easier to go online to locate exactly the kind of visuals most appropriate. As of 2016, Crash Course with John Green has been extensively utilized by teachers.

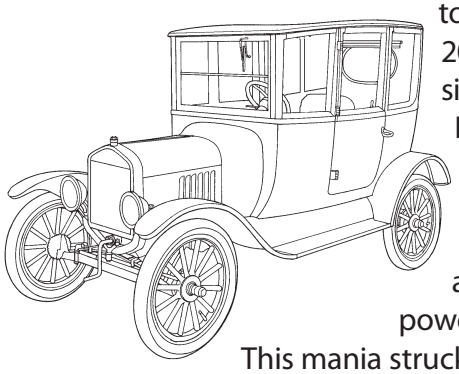
Teaching tip
Students really enjoy seeing early movies presenting early automobiles. Many films are available.

Background Essay

Place: Detroit, Michigan
Time: May 1922

Automania

Until 1900, most humans walked, then rode horses, trains, and bicycles to get from one place to another. In the 20th century this situation changed. People all over the world fell in love with, bought, and proudly drove around in gasoline-powered automobiles. This mania struck hardest in the United States where a vast geography separated communities and the need to "get somewhere" was more pronounced. In the 21st century, this mania for cars remains unabated. The automobile itself was not really invented by any one person. It has a long history that has evolved over 200 years, but only in the late 19th century industrial age did it emerge to be a potential economic and social force.

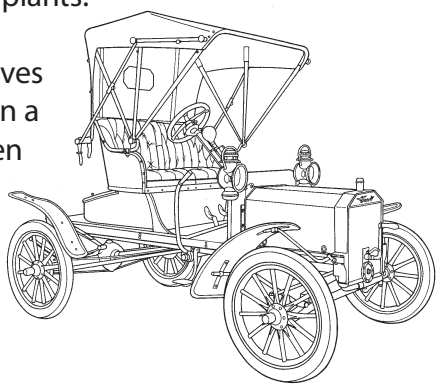


Early automobiles

In the 18th century some experimentation indicated that steam might be a possible power source. That was borne out with early trains a century later as railroads crisscrossed developing countries, including the U.S. Meanwhile, some inventors began working with gas-powered engines, and by the 1880s Europeans, particularly, had won acclaim for their work. Men like Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz developed what could generically be called "horseless carriages," which had been visibly influenced by a current rage, the bicycle, especially in its frame. In the U.S., certain enterprising men, namely Elwood Haynes, Ransom Olds, and Henry Ford, had built gasoline-powered vehicles and showcased their products in races to stir the public's imagination. By the 1900s, many famous names—Packard, Pierce, Cadillac, and Oldsmobile—had already appeared. Eight years later, the General Motors Corporation was founded by Charles Duryea. Ford, an eager young man from Detroit, began to manufacture the Model T in 1908, a car that would revolutionize the automotive world.

Henry Ford

There are many recognizable names in the first two or three decades of the 20th century, but none had more impact on the future of personal transportation than Henry Ford. Without exaggeration, he was most responsible for putting America on wheels and making Detroit the auto capital of the world. Hard-working, frugal, influenced by copybook maxims (and Henry David Thoreau), Ford was, like Thomas Edison, an American original. In 1908, Ford brought out his Model T and sold it for $850. Influenced by the "scientific management" ideas of Frederick Taylor, whose key word was efficiency and whose time and motion studies were symbolized by the clipboard and the supervisor's stopwatch, Ford installed a moving assembly line in his plants. In this process, the frame of the car moves through the plant on a conveyor belt as men on both sides of the belt assemble the car by doing specific tasks. Said the company's owner: "A man who places a part does not fasten it."



The 1906 Model N Runabout was Henry Ford's first car that many Americans could afford—only $500. It anticipated the remarkable success of the Model T.

Henry Ford

Assembly-line efficiency

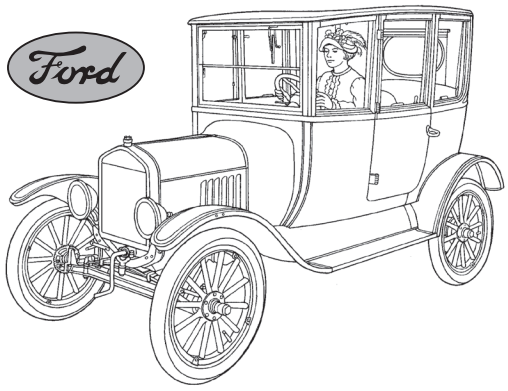
Ford's application of Taylor's ideas on an assembly line turned out an automobile Americans wanted and could afford. In 1895, there were four cars registered; by 1920, 8.25 million; by 1927, 17 million! If Ford had produced his Model T in 1908 using early production methods, his car would have cost $850; but, using the mass-production assembly line techniques of the 1920s, Ford was able to sell the Model T for $290. This fact explains why car ownership doubled in seven short years.

The men on the line

With sales in the millions, Ford's factories in Detroit expanded, and so-called satellite industries—glass, rubber, paint, steel—flourished right along with Ford. Those who worked for Henry Ford flourished, too. Men who signed on at the Ford Motor Company during the 1920s were paid an unbelievable $5 a day for a nine-hour workday. This wage was nearly double what was paid at General Motors or Dodge. At this wage, men were expected to perform expertly one to two simple tasks at waist level up to 1,620 times a shift. This work took place on a conveyor belt that moved six feet every 10 seconds. By 1925, one Model T rolled off the assembly line every 24 seconds. In one 24-hour day, 10,000 cars were produced, each one taking 93 minutes from start to finish. For the high wage and simple work, Ford's workers had some requirements: they couldn't lean on the machinery, smoke, sit, sing, talk, complain, or smile. To flaunt the non-talking rule, workers learned to communicate secretly without moving their lips in the "Ford whisper," accompanied by frozen facial expression—"Fordization of the face." Despite this and because of the excellent wage, pension plan, and Ford's policy of hiring minorities, handicapped, and ex-convicts, men literally fought to work at Ford Motor Company, now the most famous manufacturer in the world. With his workers' help, Ford's wealth had leapt to $10 billion. Suddenly he was one of the wealthiest men in the world.

Join the line . . .

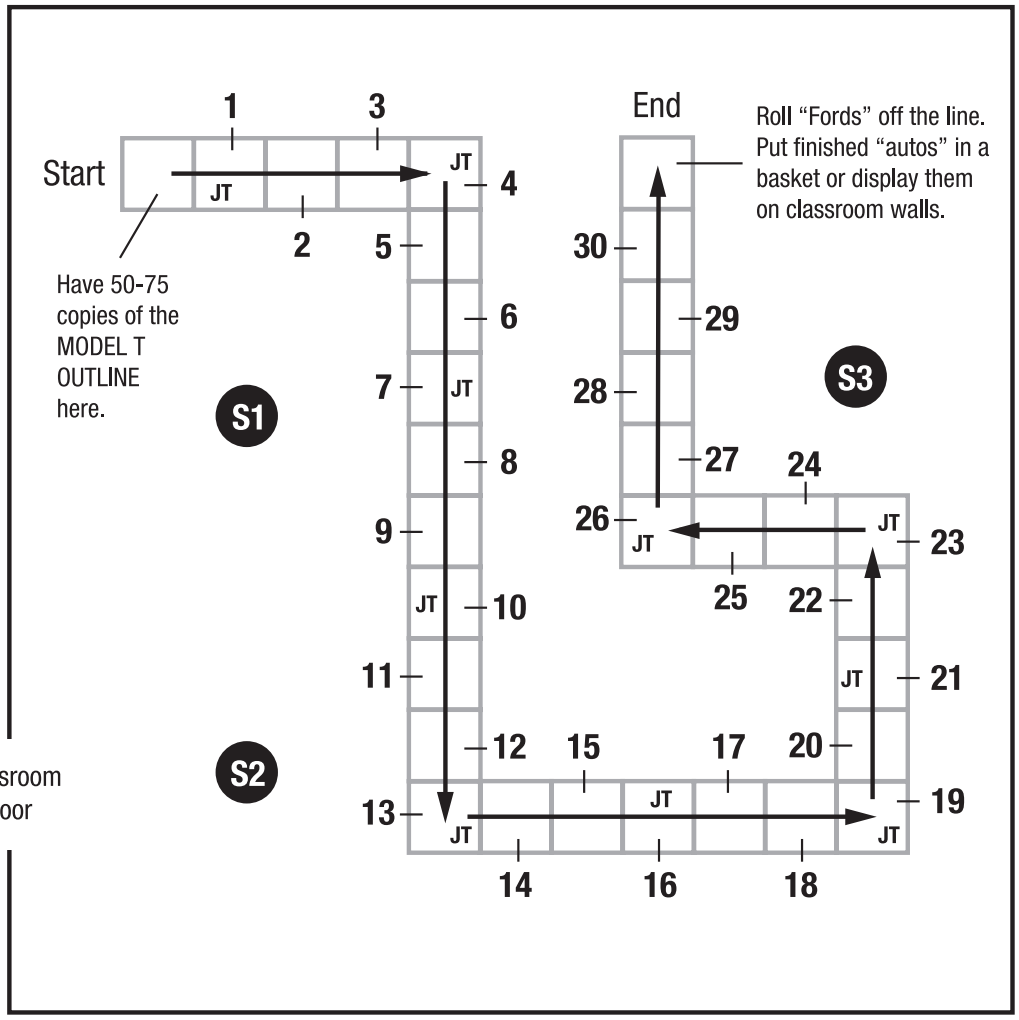
It's now time for you to earn $5 a day by working on the assembly line of the Ford Motor Company in the 1920s. You will be asked to work with others along the line, to do one simple task well, over and over again, without any hint of the "Ford whisper," much less a complaint to your supervisor, who will stand nearby with a stopwatch and clipboard. So . . . grab your tools and get ready to contribute your skill to the production of a 1922 Ford Model T.



A 1922 Ford Model T like those you are going to build.

Image Source: Portrait of Henry Ford. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-cph.3c11278.

Schematic



Characters needed

- 2–3 supervisors (white #s in black circles) wear visors, use clipboards, and stopwatches
- 15–30 workers (black #s)

Suggestions

- Use both sides of line to enhance reality.
- Speed up/slow down line to achieve desired goals.
- JT = Place copies of Model T Assembly Line Job Tasks along the line.
- Workers must stand, and they must work at waist height.
- Rearrange workers and stations periodically in order to increase efficiency (i.e., the number of "autos" produced).
- Run the activity for about 10–13 minutes.
- See Option B if you wish to encourage team competition.

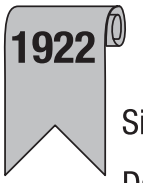
MOTOR COMPANY WORKER'S CONTRACT

While I work for the FORD MOTOR COMPANY, I promise:

- to work hard at my job;
- to learn English and to speak English;
- to accept the company directive advice: never drink; never gamble; and never pursue any malicious, derogatory, or immoral behavior;
- not to lean on the assembly line's machines or belts;
- not to sit, squat, sing, talk, whistle, or smile while on the job.

For obeying this code, I will be proud to work here and be paid $5.00 a day for working 9 hours.

(Workers at Chrysler and General Motors are currently earning $2.50 for their daily work.)



Signed: _____

Date: _____1922

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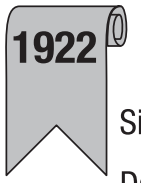
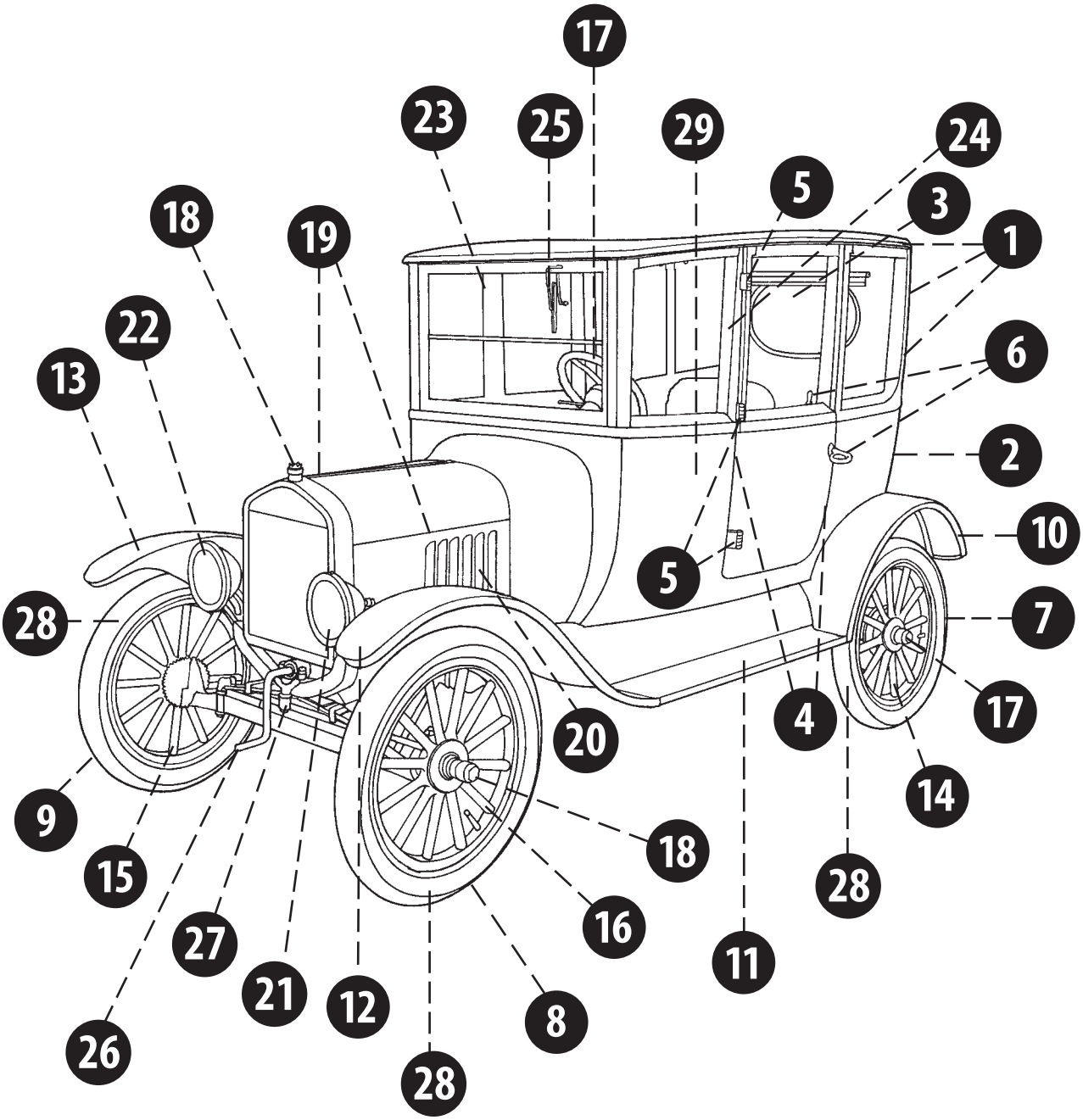


Signed: _____

Date: _____1922

Model T Assembly Line Job Tasks



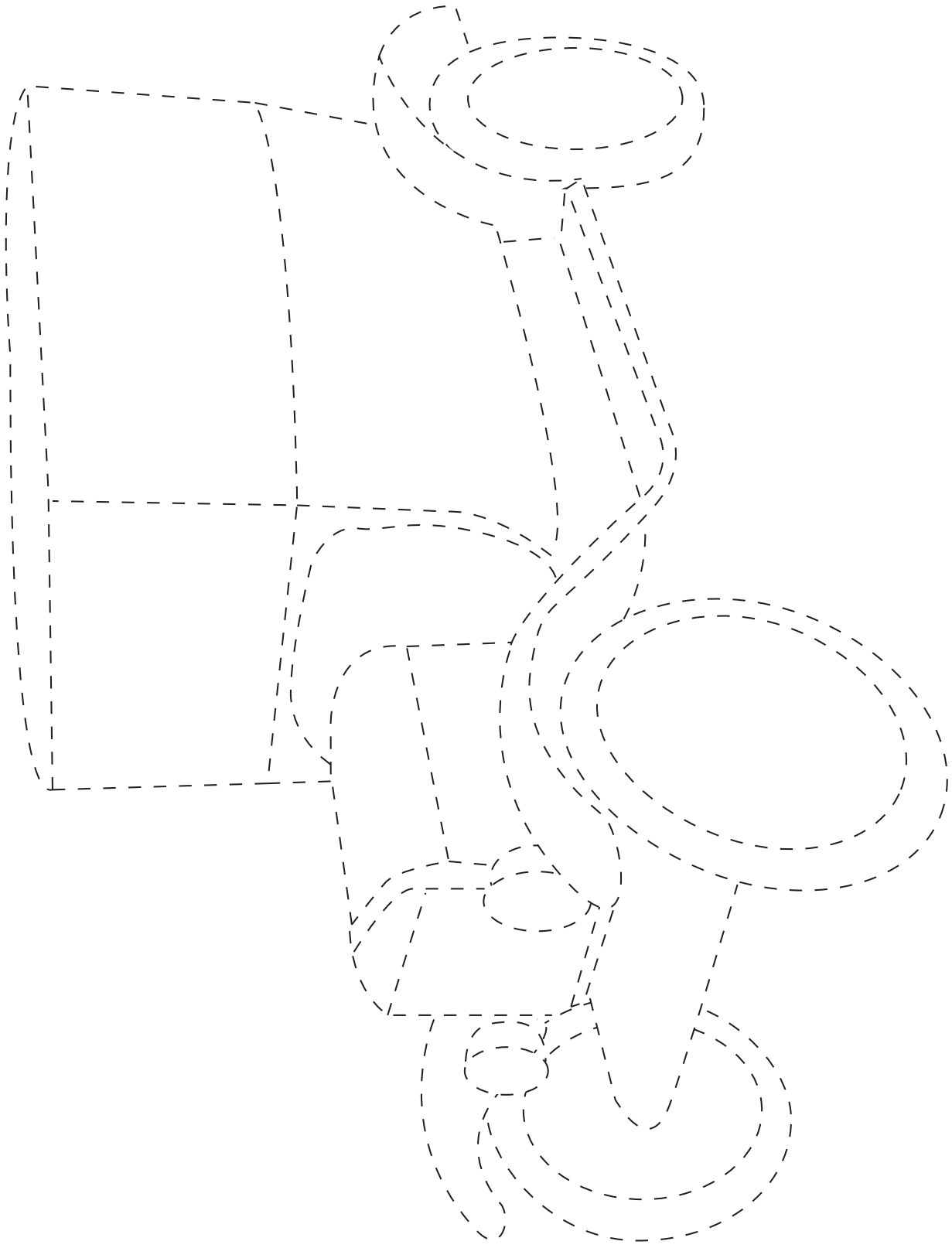
29 Tasks Descriptions

(All tasks are drawn on the **Model T Outline** with a pencil by each worker.)

1. Outline top half of car (window line and above)
2. Outline bottom half of car, excluding fenders, wheels, running board, doors, hood, etc.
3. Rear window and blind under rear window
4. Side door
5. Hinges on side door
6. Door handle and door lock knob
7. Outline back tire, excluding spokes, cap
8. Outline left front tire, excluding spokes, cap
9. Outline right front tire, excluding spokes, cap
10. Outline rear fender
11. Outline running board
12. Outline left front fender
13. Outline right front fender
14. Rear tire spokes
15. Front right tire spokes
16. Front left tire spokes
17. Rear tire hubcap and steering wheel
18. Front left hubcap and hood radiator cap
19. Outline hood and radiator front
20. Louvers on hood
21. Left headlight
22. Right headlight
23. Detail front window
24. Detail side windows
25. Windshield wiper
26. Crank handle between front tires
27. Axle detail
28. Color tires black
29. Color/shade body black

Name: _____ Date: _____

Model T Outline

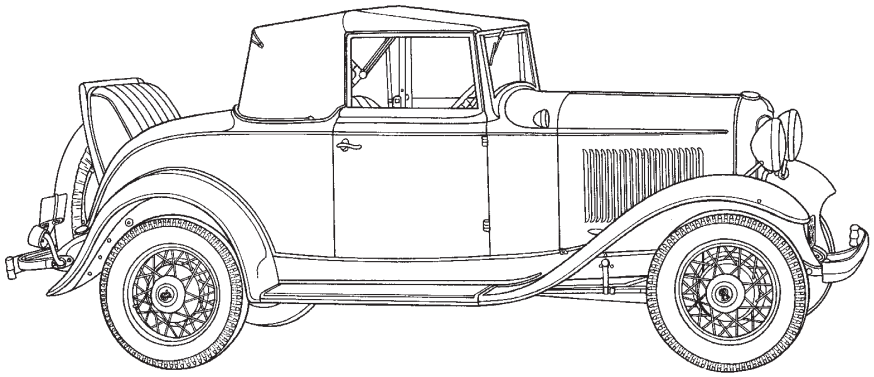


Postscript

Anyone studying our history realizes that Ford and other auto manufacturers had great impact upon the history of America. In almost every aspect of life, the car brought revolutionary changes. For a start, the automobile gave Americans great mobility and a new sense of distance and space. The automobile affected where they worked and where they lived. Suburbs sprang up along with developing motel and gas station industries near state highways, which now crisscrossed, like ribbons, remote countrysides.

Perhaps a bigger impact was on American society. In one sense, the car brought families together for outings and Sunday afternoon drives after church. It also gave young drivers in the 1920s unprecedented freedom, independence, and privacy. Before the availability of the car, teens courted each other at home in the family parlor under the scrutiny of dad and mom. Now, with a car, young people had a "private room" away from adult supervision. At the same time, Viennese psychiatrist Sigmund Freud added to the problem of supervising reckless youth of the decade by emphasizing the need to release pent-up sexual feelings. Freud and the automobile's "advantages" gave parents plenty to worry about.

Statistically, Ford was the top car seller during the 1920s, although General Motors sold nearly as many of its popular car, the Chevrolet. In fact, Chevrolet sales in 1927 passed Ford's Model T, forcing Henry Ford to shut down his plant that year and introduce another car, the Model A. The strategy worked: the Model A soon outsold the Chevrolet, at least for one year. After 1930, Chevrolet outsold Ford, for the most part, for the next 60 years.



The 1932 Ford V-8 Cabriolet was the first V-8 engine offered in a car that was popularly priced. This automobile was refined and produced for 21 more years.

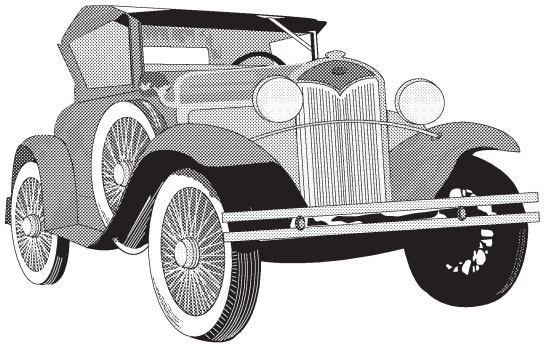
In 1932, Ford brought out the first eight-cylinder car at a low price, but few efforts by any auto manufacturer had any effect on buying habits. During the Great Depression (1930–1939), daily survival was a greater need than hubcaps and quick-drying paint jobs on cars. The entire auto industry remained depressed during the years just before World War II. During that conflict, many car companies, like Ford, reconverted to produce planes, tanks, and Jeeps. About the time of Henry Ford's death (1947), the auto industry revived and prospered mightily during the 1950s and 1960s, when American consumerism reached its zenith.

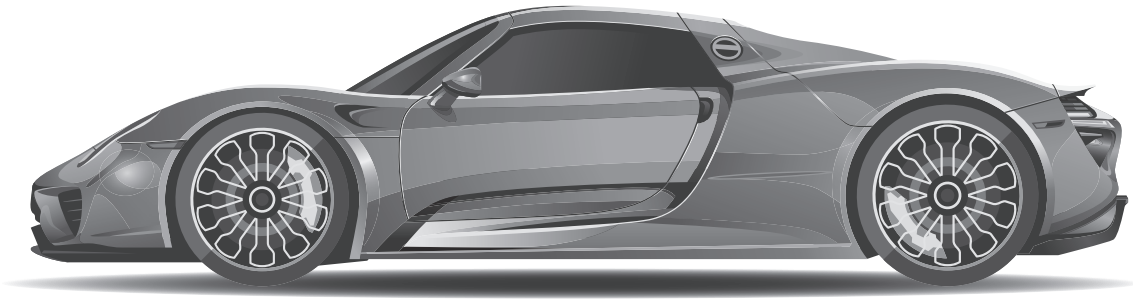
By the 1970s the glory days of the auto industry in the United States were over. Foreign competition from Japan and Germany (the Volkswagen was an early competitor of Ford and GM) foreshadowed the problems which would confront Detroit in the last 20 years of the century. With so many choices available, Americans began to buy Hondas, Toyotas, and Datsuns from our Pacific Rim competitor, Japan, and Volkswagens, BMWs, Mercedes, Porches, and Audis from Western Europe. Slow to react

to the need for gas efficiency, American auto companies, despite modernizing their plants with robotics, lost millions to foreign sales. A growing trend, however, has seen U.S. manufacturers team up with Japanese car companies to co-produce, for example, Hondas in Tennessee. Indeed, the automobile world has changed since the days of Henry Ford's Flivver.

Henry Ford, a dreamer, helped us all dream. How about your dream—restoring an old Model A . . . or having a four-wheel drive for the mountains . . . or flying along in "the ultimate sports car"?

Dreams





Historical Investigation Activity

Ford Assembly Line (1922)

Focus Question

Should auto icon Henry Ford's "dark side," notably his anti-Semitic words and actions, be a factor in judging his overall importance in U.S. History?

Materials Needed for This Historical Investigation

- **Documents A-D**—*class set*
- **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**—*class set*

Lesson Plan

1. Getting Started

   - Whether you did the Activator on Ford Assembly Line (1922) or not, review or find out what your students know about Henry Ford, the way his company made cars, and his overall importance in U.S. history. This can be done by drawing a hub/center on the board/screen and writing down student responses as spokes on a wheel with the hub labeled "FORD." The discussion you then have will serve as an effective preparation for what follows.

2. Backstory to be Used as Instruction (Consider using the data in this Activator's Background Essay and Postscript to supplement the outline below.)

   - Henry Ford—Automobile Icon. He launched the second Industrial Revolution by mass producing cars in factories where his management paid workers $5 a day, a gesture unheard of in his time. His Ford Motor Company made sturdy, inexpensive cars that the average person could afford. By doing this he put America—the world—on wheels, popularizing a vehicle (then called the Model T, Flivver, or Tin Lizzie) that we all rely on and enjoy to this day—the automobile!

   - The man behind all this change, this progress—Henry Ford—was, to all who knew him and to future historians, a simple man with a complex personality. Likewise, Ford was also a man of contradictions: a visionary but incredibly ignorant; a benevolent employer who paid higher wages but fought unionization and was indifferent, sometimes cruel, to his workers; a rural, mid-western tinkerer and mechanic who built Greenfield Village and filled it with relics and antiques of the 19th century, only to play a major role in destroying that outdated provincial world with his cars.

- He was a folk hero, a legend, an extremely wealthy entrepreneur whose front-porch opinions and cracker barrel homilies eventually grew tiresome and seemed out of place, though, at the time, they made good copy.
- Ford had at least one unforgivable character flaw—his "dark side"—that remains repulsive, and stains perhaps his record and incalculable legacy: Ford was a bigot, an anti-Semite. This despite having within his social and professional circle several Jewish friends, including a popular Detroit rabbi and the Ford Motor Company's own chief building architect.
- Though anti-Semitism was common in Ford's time, Ford's prejudice was deep, and he used his considerable influence to stoke and justify hatred and suspicion of Jews.

3. Say, "The focus question in this activity is 'Should auto icon Henry Ford's "dark side," notably his blatant anti-Semitic words and actions, be a factor in assessing his place in U.S. history?' This is our challenge today as we explore and analyze his beliefs and actions in documents related to his character, in this case, his 'dark side.'" Ask students, "Should we always consider the entire person—good and bad—when we scrutinize history-makers? Should these negative 'dark sides' matter if their contributions to humankind are massive and alter the way we live, are governed, and if they make life easier and more fulfilling?" Pass out the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** and have students respond to this question. Ask students to give examples of people, living or deceased, who fit this contradiction. After allowing students 5–8 minutes to write their responses, discuss these responses with students.

4. Say, "It appears that we do have a plethora of interesting examples to compare with today's **focus question** on Henry Ford. So, our working hypothesis might be . . ."

5. Say, "It's time to pass out and analyze the **Documents A–D** package to see if we can eventually draw some conclusions about the legacy of auto icon Henry Ford." Pass out the document package and explain what to do. Divide students into pairs (or groups of three) to read and analyze the documents. Perhaps you or a student should read aloud the first one or two documents and discuss the gist of each. Remind students that they should analyze the documents carefully and that there is no chronology or sequence to them.

6. Allow 20–30 minutes for students to do the work of reading, analyzing, and writing responses on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**.

7. Finally, discuss responses and have students read their last answer to the **focus question** on Ford.

Option for Lesson Plan

If you . . .

- Have students whose abilities may make it difficult to analyze all the documents in this package . . .

Or

- Have limited time in class during any particular unit to implement the full package of documents . . .

Consider carefully pulling out 2–3 documents to use that will still help students think like historians. Using this strategy would mean selecting only those tasks and questions on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** that directly apply to the documents you have chosen to use. Whatever the case, these investigations, even in an abbreviated format, can still be effective and fulfill your objectives.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Points to Ponder Response Sheet

Focus Question: Should auto icon Henry Ford's "dark side," notably his anti-Semitic words and actions, be a factor in judging his overall importance in U.S. history?

1. Should we always consider the entire person—good and bad—when we scrutinize history-makers? Should their "dark side" matter if their contributions to humankind are massive and alter the way we live, are governed, and make life easier and more fulfilling?

_____

_____

2. After analyzing **Documents A–D**, what kind of man was Henry Ford? List 5 words to describe him.

_____

_____

3. **Document A:** What specific words, phrases, or ideas connect Ford to anti-Semitism?

_____

_____

4. How do you think Ford himself reconciled (to settle, resolve) his bigotry with the fact that he had close Jewish friends?

_____

_____

5. How is it possible for Ford, as a visionary and mechanical genius, to have such outdated and hurtful ideas about one religious group?

_____

_____

6. What specific slurs and stereotypes does Ford apply to Jews?

_____

_____

7. **Document B:** How would you describe the tone of Ford's apology letter in 4 or 5 words? Does the letter sound sincere or insincere?

_____

_____

8. **Document C:** How would you describe the Ford-Hitler connection?

_____

_____

Besides being anti-Semitic, what else connected the two men?

_____

_____

9. **Document D:** Professor Diner suggests the influences on Ford's life that made him a blatant anti-Semite. Which one influence seems to be the most logical reason for him to hate Jews? Why?

_____

_____

10. Is it a stretch to blame the Holocaust (the extermination of European Jews in World War II), at least in part, on Ford's influence on Hitler? What evidence in these documents supports such a theory?

_____

_____

11. If you could ask Henry Ford one question, what would it be and what kind of answer would you expect?

Q. _____

A. _____

12. Based on the documents you analyzed, write a long paragraph answering the **focus question** at the top of this sheet. Make at least 3 major points to substantiate your claim, with evidence from the documents.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Document A

Ford's Own Words

Henry Ford's odious and blatant anti-Semitism had been in place for decades but first came into the public arena in the early 1920s when his views were featured in articles, pamphlets, and personal newspaper columns found in his own weekly newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*. Much of the information about the Jews he referenced came from faked soon-to-be discredited (in 1921) works purporting to be conversations of Jewish leaders planning to destroy Christian civilization by disrupting Gentile life by war, revolt, and disorder and finally dominating the world's politics, commerce, and finance. Today we know that one close friend of Ford actually wrote most of the pamphlets and "Mr. Ford's Own Page," which appeared each week in his newspaper. Another close associate, Ernest Liebold, supplied the data from the discredited book, reprinted later as *The International Jew: The World's Problem*. But the essential ideas and motivation came from the automaker.

> The reader of the work learns that just about everything controversial or bad about American life came under attack as an international Jewish conspiracy. Even jazz, short skirts, and rolled-downed stockings were the work of the Jews, who owned the garment industry.
>
> Another claim: Jews were the evil bankers who caused World War I. It was all hokum and nonsense, of course, but Ford was gullible and was taken in, especially by Liebold. Below are several quotes "written" by Ford during the 1920s that capture the "pure, undiluted Henry Ford." Close analysis reveals spurious [false] facts, predictable arguments, slurs, stereotypes and simple messages. Moreover, these particular messages are frightening and written with strong conviction.
>
> - "International financiers [people who loan money] are behind all war. They are what is called the international Jew – German Jews, French Jews, English Jews, American Jews. I believe that in all those countries except our own the Jewish financier is supreme . . . here the Jew is a threat."
> - "The Jews are *not* 'The Chosen People,' though practically the entire Church has succumbed to the propaganda which declares them to be so."
> - "Jews have actually invaded, in person and in program, hundreds of American churches, with their subversive and impossible social ideals. . . ."
> - "Among the distinguishing mental and moral traits of the Jews may be mentioned: distaste for hard or violent physical labor; a strong family sense;. . . a marked religious instinct; the courage of the prophet and the martyr rather than of the pioneer and soldier; remarkable power to survive in adverse environments, combined with great ability to retain racial solidarity; capability for exploitation, both individual and social; shrewdness and astuteness in speculation and money matters generally; a . . . love of display and a full appreciation of the power and pleasure of social position; a very high average of intellectual ability."

Other opinions of Ford found throughout the articles and "Mr. Ford's Own Page":

- "The Jews are the scavengers of the world."
- "Wherever there's anything wrong with a country, you'll find the Jews on the job there."
- "Our money and banking system is the invention of the Jews, for their own purposes of control, and it's bad. Our gold standard was founded by the Jews; it's bad, and things will never get right until we are rid of the power they hold through it."
- "I know who caused the war—the German-Jewish bankers! I have the evidence. . . . The German-Jewish bankers caused the war."

Source: "The International Jew" and "Mr. Ford's Own Page" (articles from *The Dearborn Independent)* as quoted in Steven Watts, *The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

Document B

Ford's Apology to Jews

When the articles and personal beliefs from "Mr. Ford's Own Page" appeared in print, they created an uproar across the nation. Oddly, some journalists and "critics" expressed approval and as a result, subscriptions to the *Dearborn Independent* increased in number. It seemed that Ford's blatant anti-Semitism blended nicely with powerful enduring traditions of some who had difficulty adjusting to a more diverse, modern country. Yet most Americans were appalled by Ford's crusade against Jews, puzzled at how this quirky mechanical wizard could believe such outdated nonsense. The views of the offended coalesced [came together] in 1925–1927 when Ford and his Dearborn Publishing Company faced a libel suit for defamation of character filed by California attorney Aaron Sapiro, who demanded restitution [compensating for damages or loss] of $1 million "to vindicate myself [Sapiro] and my race." Ford had personally attacked Sapiro in 1924 as being part of the Jewish conspiracy. An auto accident prevented Ford from testifying and he settled out of court. His reputation had hit bottom. Ford had some supporters who wanted him to run for president in the next election, and this lawsuit, until resolved, remained untidy, if not unsavory, to an electorate. Excerpted below is Ford's letter of apology/retraction to Sapiro. Along with the letter and a cash payout to Sapiro, Ford ceased publishing the *Independent*—but Ford continued a few years later with a new salvo [sudden outburst] against the Jews. Many readers doubted the letter's sincerity. Some close to Ford believed he never read the apology letter or was even aware of what it contained, that his lawyers had drawn it up on his instructions. Further attacks on Jews continued well into the 1940s.

> For some time past I have given consideration to the series of articles concerning Jews which since 1920 have appeared in *The Dearborn Independent*. Some of them have been reprinted in pamphlet form under the title "The International Jew." Although both publications are my property, it goes without saying that in the multitude of my activities it has been impossible for me to devote personal attention to their management or to keep informed as to their contents. It has therefore inevitably followed that the conduct and policy of these publications had to be delegated to men whom I placed in charge of them and upon whom I relied implicitly. . . .
>
> Those who know me can bear witness that it is not in my nature to inflict insult upon and to occasion pain to anybody, and that it has been my effort to free myself from prejudice. Because of that I frankly confess that I have been greatly shocked as a result of my study and examination of the files of *The Dearborn Independent* and of the pamphlets entitled "The International Jew." I deem it to be my duty as an honorable man to make amends for the wrong done to the Jews as fellow-men and brothers, by asking their forgiveness for the harm that I have unintentionally committed, by retracting so far as lies within my power the offensive charges laid at their door by those publications, and by giving them the unqualified assurance that henceforth they may look to me for friendship and good will.

It is needless to add that the pamphlets which have been distributed throughout the country and in foreign lands will be withdrawn from circulation, that in every way possible I will make it known that they have my unqualified disapproval, and that henceforth *The Dearborn Independent* will be conducted under such auspices that articles reflecting upon the Jews will never again appear in its columns.

Source: Henry Ford, Letter, June 30, 1927, as reprinted in Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).

Document C

Was Ford Hitler's Inspiration?

It might be a stretch to blame Henry Ford's public and private anti-Semitism for influencing German dictator Adolf Hitler's extermination of the European Jews during World War II, but some historians are convinced there is a link, starting with the fact that Ford is the only American mentioned in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's blueprint for Germany's future. In 1938 Ford accepted "The Order of the Grand Cross of the German Eagle," the highest honor bestowed on a foreigner. Ford's views were admired and respected in the Third Reich, perhaps lending Hitler a framework for his own anti-Semitism.

> Hitler often spoke of Ford to his followers, frequently bragging about financial support he had received from the American industrialist. With the press, Hitler was more guarded, yet at times he did express his adulation. When Ford was said to be running for president of the United States, for example, Hitler told *Chicago Tribune* reporter Raymond Fendrick that Ford had 100 percent of his support. "I wish," Hitler said, "that I could send some of my shock troops to Chicago and other big American cities to help in the elections. We look to Heinrich [Henry] Ford as the leader of the growing Fascist party in America." His reverence for Ford did not wane, and in 1931 Hitler summarized his feelings when a *Detroit News* reporter asked what the portrait of Ford on Hitler's wall meant to him. "I regard Henry Ford as my inspiration," Hitler said.
>
> Hitler was not given to public adulation of those of non-German stock. His political posture simply would not permit it. Yet his admiration for Ford was both real and thoroughly understandable. Henry Ford's anti-Semitic propaganda which flowed into Germany lent credibility and reputability to Hitler's own.

Source: Albert Lee, *Henry Ford and the Jews* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1980).

Document D

Interview with Hasia Diner, Historian

While the American public over the years has minimized Henry Ford's anti-Semitism, if they are aware of it at all, and continues to buy his cars, historians conversely, with perhaps few exceptions, are very knowledgeable on the subject and several have even written specifically about Ford's bigotry: Arthur Lee, Max Wallace, and Neil Baldwin come to mind. When PBS television did a program on Ford for the American Experience series in 2012, they also interviewed historian Hasia Diner, a professor of Hebrew and Judaic studies at New York University. What follows is the essence of that interview.

PBS: What is the climate of anti-Semitism in America during the late 19th century?

Diner: . . . All sorts of attributions were made to "the Jews." The Jews killed Christ, the Jews do not want to accept the truth of Christianity, the Jews made money off the war, the Jews are profiteers, the Jews cheat you in business. The Jews have a certain phenotype: the Jew has a hook nose, the Jew is loud, the Jew talks with his hands. . . .

PBS: What exposure might Henry Ford have had to anti-Semitism when he was growing up on a farm in rural Michigan in the 1870s and 1880s?

Diner: The world that Henry Ford grew up in was one that very likely offered him certain themes about the Jews. He might have heard about them in church, that they were responsible for the crucifixion. He could have heard about them when somebody grumbled about having shopped in a Jewish-owned store and felt that they didn't get the right price, or that they were sold shoddy goods, that the Jewish shopkeeper was too aggressive in trying to talk them into buying something. . . .

PBS: What kind of things did Henry Ford blame on Jews?

Diner: Throughout *The Dearborn Independent,* Ford published articles that would refer to Jews in every possible context as at the root of America and the world's ills. Strikes: It was the Jews. Any kind of financial scandal? The Jews. Agricultural depression? The Jews. So "the Jew," in a way, became the symbol of a world that was being manipulated and controlled. . . .

PBS: Ford also republished the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—what is that?

Diner: The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a notorious forgery that originally came from Russia, and [was] translated into English. [It] claimed the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy – that a group of Jews got together and basically planned the fate of the world, be it financial catastrophe, be it war. The world was controlled by this little cabal of Jews. [This forgery was] printed in *The Dearborn Independent* as a factual piece. And so someone reading it would take this to be the news.

PBS: What separates Ford from other people who were publishing anti-Semitic material during this time?

Diner: There are lots of small town newspapers that publish scurrilous anti-Semitic material, so it wasn't unusual in that way. But what's notable about *The Dearborn Independent* is that it was also spread through the Ford Motor dealerships. . . .

And because *The Dearborn Independent* was published by Ford, it meant that other newspapers would pick up on what he said. . . . [T]his was Henry Ford's newspaper, and pretty much anything Henry Ford did was news. . . .

What Henry Ford says, people stop and listen. There are people who talked about him as a potential presidential candidate in the 1920s. . . . Henry Ford's ability to gain a national audience with his words made him a very dangerous person. . . .

PBS: What did the Jewish community think about Ford's paper?

Diner: For the Jews who are reading Ford's rants in *The Dearborn Independent*, this is very frightening. . . . They're really tracking this. . . .

. . . Ford is just about the most popular American, certainly one of the wealthiest; here's the person whose money and whose influence commands tremendous attention, spewing stuff that's no different than what Hitler is saying in his beer hall meetings in Munich at the same time. . . .

. . . I think it caused them to feel that they had to prove themselves, that it wasn't just enough that they were sober, honest, hard-working citizens. They had to make these pronouncements about how American they were.

PBS: In 1938, Ford received an award from the Nazi regime called the "Grand Cross of the German Eagle." How do we make sense of this award? What does it mean?

Diner: The Germans honor Ford, we could say, for a couple reasons. For one thing, they're very taken with the whole assembly line technological modernization. The Model T and Volkswagen are sort of similar cars. The idea of the Volkswagen, the people's car, was to be affordable to the average German. It's kind of like the Model T of its day. . . .

. . . From the point of view of anti-Semitism, Hitler could look at Ford as somebody who was – let's call him an age-mate. They were both in the 1920s beginning to write and disseminate information about what they both considered to be this great powerful threat, "the Jew". . .

And Hitler was very much inspired by Ford's writing. And the idea that this could happen in the United States, I think, was very important to Hitler. . . . I think Hitler would have derived a degree of satisfaction to be able to point to Ford as, in a way, just as good an anti-Semite as he was.

PBS: Is it possible to quantify the damage Ford wrought?

Diner: It's hard to say how much damage Ford did. . . .

Hitler was very aware of Henry Ford, of Henry Ford's writings, and praised them. He turned to the same documents. There's a common thread. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a cherished text for both. And there were certainly business connections between Ford Motors and the Nazi regime.

Source: From *Henry Ford: American Experience* (PBS, 2012).

Lindbergh's Solo Flight 1927

Lesson Plan

Overview

This Activator puts your students in the cockpit of the *Spirit of St. Louis* as it soars over the Atlantic Ocean en route to Paris in late May 1927. Piloted by the "Lone Eagle," Charles Augustus Lindbergh, the small plane and its soon-to-be-famous pilot will make history, generate an incredible outpouring of hero worship, and at the same time, launch the modern air age. No event stirred 20th-century Americans like Lindy's flight, and your students will be a part of it.

Setup

1. **Duplication:** Consider duplicating the **Background Essay** and the **Postscript**, although you may choose to use them to convey the information to students in a brief oral presentation. Also duplicate **Acting Out Lindy's Flight** to be used just before takeoff and **Narration** if you opt to use student narrators.

2. **Schematic, props, costumes:** Study the **Schematic** carefully. Find and bring to your classroom any props and costumes that will help create the settings of Lindy's flight. Your students can help find costume pieces—goggles and swim caps—and bring them in.

3. **Roles:** In this activator you fill no special roles because everyone is Lindbergh. All students vicariously experience the flight together. To encourage students to really immerse themselves in the Lindbergh persona, have a Lindbergh look-alike contest. Award classroom dollars or points for winners. Show some pictures of Lindbergh a day or two before the Activator to inspire the search for an authentic aviator's cap and goggles.

4. **Narrator(s):** Decide whether you or one or more students will act as the narrator(s).

5. **Flourishes:** Dispay pictures of Lindbergh's flight on the screen during the activator. Recommended: *The Pathfinders* (Epic of Flight Series) Time-Life Books, 1980, pages 51–107.

Teaching tip

This flourish, requiring some extra time, could become a sight-and-sound experience, especially if you play an audio recording of an airplane engine.

Directions

1. Hand out the **Background Essay** either the day before the Activator as class homework or pass it out at the beginning of the Activator period. If you have given it as homework, conduct an informal discussion of the main points brought out in the essay. If you are passing it out now,

you may wish to read the essay aloud to the students as they read along with you, pausing to explain the main points. (Whether or not to use this latter choice is, of course, determined by your students' age/abilities.)

2. Now have students move desks, tables, and chairs to resemble what is on the **Schematic**. Students should have their caps and goggles ready to put on as they prepare to slide into their chairs. Narrators should be in an inconspicuous place, preferably behind the students.

3. Before the narrators begin to read, go over **Acting Out Lindy's Flight** with students and review how each of these actions will be acted out. Demonstrate or have students demonstrate all of the actions preparatory to the flight.

Teaching tip
This rehearsal of reactions will enhance the success of the "flight." Have one or two students model what to do in each requested reaction.

4. Unlike most Activators in this series, this Activator has just one option—the narrators read, and the pilots react.

5. Before the narration begins, make sure you show the students how to turn their desks over to resemble the cockpit of the Spirit of St. Louis on its flight to Paris. Whatever kind of desk you have—single unit or separate small tables and chairs—both can serve as Lindy's cockpit. Ideally, the small tables can be turned over, and the two farthest legs can be used as the throttles and the tables' undersides can function as foot rests—if the tables are at a 45° angle. The single-unit desk used in most schools has less flexibility, but it will work, even though students are sitting on the floor guiding the "plane," instead of sitting in a chair. But they don't turn the desks over yet—wait!

6. Once all is ready, have the narrators read the **Narration** at a slow pace so that your aviators can act out the required movements and emotions. You can direct or encourage students as needed. Allow your students to improvise.

Teaching tip
This is a terrific, emotional closure to the simulated flight.

7. At the end, select one student to be Lindbergh. Have the other pilots converge on him yelling, "Lindbergh! Lindbergh! Lindbergh!" As they do, they should pick him up out of the cockpit and carry him on their shoulders to the front of the room where the image of the real hero is on the screen. At this point, the crowd should return to their planes, except the hero, and you or a designate should read the **Postscript** as students focus on the screen's image. (See Setup #5 for recommended sources from which to find pictures.)

Debriefing

Decide whether you wish to use a short or a long debriefing. Here are possible ways to extend the lesson if you wish to intensify the meaning of what happened during the Activator on Lindbergh's epic flight in 1927:

Short debriefing

1. Pass out the **Postscript** if you didn't use it immediately after the flight. (See lesson plan, #7.) Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Ask students to discuss what they learned and what they felt as they played their role of Charles A. Lindbergh—man, aviator, hero.

3. Consider having students write a Learning Log entry following the short debriefing.

Long debriefing

Use one or more of the following debriefing activities:

1. Pass out the **Postscript** if you didn't use it immediately after the flight. (See lesson plan, #7.) Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Explain how within two weeks after Lindy's flight, two or more pilots crossed the Atlantic, one ending near Berlin—300 miles farther than Lindy. Ask if this fact diminishes the significance of his flight.

Teaching tip

Numbers 3 and 4 could develop into quite a discussion. Celebrities, idols, and heroes are always excellent topics for heated debates.

3. Heroes show courage, seek prizes, risk their lives, have nobility, perform a feat, and capture the public's imagination. Does Lindbergh fit some or all of these attributes? Who in American society today fits these attributes? What's the difference between heroes and celebrities?

4. The 1920s produced a plethora of idols: Babe Ruth, Rudolph Valentino, Red Grange, Jack Dempsey, Gertrude Ederle, and Bobby Jones. How does Lindbergh's flight compare with the achievements of these others?

Teaching tip

A good procedure to increase student involvement is to divide students into trios or quartets (three or four students) in which they can discuss their experiences and observations about one or more of #3–4, #6–8. Finally, ask the trios or quartets to share with the whole class the most interesting comments they heard from one another.

5. While most laud Lindbergh as a true hero, some say he was a reckless spotlight-seeking fool. Make a case for this minority opinion.

6. Inside your classroom, create a cockpit that is approximately the size of the real *Spirit of St. Louis* (37" wide, 32" long, 51" high). Fill it up with objects similar to those found in the real cockpit, place a student inside, and then discuss the problems of "living" in this limited space for 33-1/2 hours with no window straight ahead! (See Nevin, *The Pathfinders*.)

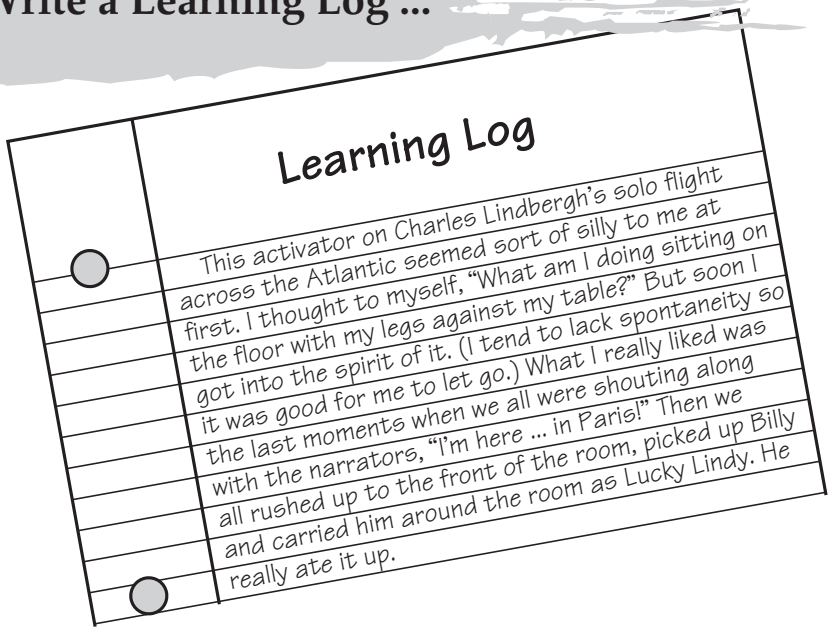
7. Lindbergh won the $25,000 Orteig prize. Have someone compute how much money that would be today with inflationary changes since 1927. (The check is in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum near the plane.)

8. Lindbergh received countless awards and honors upon his return, including a New York ticker-tape parade (four million cheered and threw 18 tons of paper), promotion to full colonel by President Calvin Coolidge, songs written about him, two million dollars' worth of gifts from 69 countries, and the distinguished Flying Cross and special commemorative medals. Considering that he received this outpouring at age 25, did he apparently handle fame and celebrity well? How would you have handled such adulation and instant stardom?

9. Show the last 30–40 minutes of *The Spirit of St. Louis* starring James Stewart, or locate the documentaries *Yesteryear, 1927,* and *Time Was the 1920s* (shown originally on HBO cable).

10. Have students write a Learning Log entry after this debriefing.

Write a Learning Log ...



Resources to consult

Teaching tip

Consider showing key portions of this film —particularly the final half hour.

Berg, A. Scott. *Lindbergh*. New York: Berkley Books, 1999.

Bryson, Bill. *One Summer: America, 1927.* New York: Anchor Books, 2014.

Kessner, Thomas. *The Flight of the Century: Charles A. Lindbergh & The Rise of American Aviation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Lindbergh, Charles A. *The Spirit of St. Louis*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1971.

———. *We.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927.

Miller, Nathan. *New World Coming: The 1920s and the Making of Modern America.* Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2003.

Moore, Lucy. *Anything Goes: A Biography of the Roaring Twenties.* New York: The Overlook Press, 2011.

Nevin, David. *The Pathfinders* (The Epic of Flight Series). Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1980. pp. 51-107.

Ross, Walter S. *The Last Hero: Charles A. Lindbergh*. New York: Manor Books, 1974.

Visual history

Documentaries: Both *Yesteryear 1927* (HBO Cable); *Time Was: The 1920s* (1985 HBO Cable) have segments on Lindbergh's flight.

Feature film: Billy Wilder's *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957) captures the excitement and danger of Lindy's adventure as no documentary could. Starring James Stewart, the last half hour deals with the ordeal and the Paris arrival.

Visuals are important and often essential. And while there are countless visuals to use in the classroom for this particular Activator (films and documentaries), most of these might be difficult to find and then show. Instead, it is recommended that you as a teacher in the 21st century might find it easier to go online to locate exactly the kind of visuals most appropriate. As of 2016, Crash Course with John Green has been extensively utilized by teachers.

Background Essay

Place: Across the Atlantic Ocean
Time: May 1927

Leonardo da Vinci and early flight

Perhaps it was a clever Greek 2,500 years ago who conceived some contraption to enable humans to soar in the sky like a bird, yet the first evidence of any such dream is found in the sketch notebooks of Renaissance artist and scientist, Leonardo da Vinci. He truly believed that man could, with mechanical, birdlike wings, actually fly. A century and a half later, Sir Isaac Newton set forth a basic theory of air resistance. But it wasn't until the late 1800s that the first principles of aerodynamics to achieve flight in a machine heavier than air were established. Until 1900 most human ventures into the sky were in lighter-than-air balloons. Some individuals flirted with danger by experimenting with gliders, sometimes with deadly results.


Leonardo da Vinci

The Wright brothers

In the early 20th century two Americans risked experimenting with manned flight in a heavier-than-air machine—Orville and Wilbur Wright, owners of a bicycle business in Dayton, Ohio. They built their first airplane, the Flyer, and on the sand dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, December 17, 1903, they finally achieved flight in their engine-driven, human-controlled plane. Of the three flights made that windy day, the last attempt went 852 feet in 59 seconds. Except for inventors, few paid much attention to the Wrights' achievement, but the Wrights and others, like Glenn Curtiss, Louis Blériot, and Cal Rodgers, kept pushing the distance of flight to several miles over the next decade.

World War I (1914–1918)

If one event advanced aviation in the 20th century more than any other, it was the Great War. Both sides, the Central and Western powers, realized the value of the airplane for locating military forces and operational bases of the opposing side. By the war's end, the airplane had developed into a major weapon and had created a cadre of "knights of the sky" such as Baron von Richthofen and Eddie Rickenbacker—who staged daring dogfights above the trenches of France. Its potential as a revolutionary weapon of war assured, the airplane emerged from the war with a limitless future, or so it seemed.

Barnstormers of the 1920s

Yet, with peace in 1919, the decade of the 1920s saw the airplane turn into a near dinosaur, a relic of the past war with no apparent use or purpose. In the United States, former World War I aces found they could ply their skills only as pilots for the U.S. Post Office or as barnstormers. These men performed aerial stunts at county fairs, guiding their planes in odd flying formations, wing walking, and even leaping from one plane's wing to another while at high altitudes. Needless to say, many were killed. Other similarly skilled pilots worked in all kinds of weather to deliver mail between cities, an important function but with nearly the same dangers.

Charles A. Lindbergh

One of these U.S. postal flyers was a young, tall, thin, Minnesotan named Charles A. Lindbergh. A college dropout, Lindbergh fell in love with airplanes and made his first solo flight in 1923.

A year later, he enrolled as a flying cadet in the U.S Air Service Reserve in Texas. After being commissioned a first lieutenant in the Missouri National Guard, he began his duties as a U.S. air mail service pilot flying mail between Chicago and St. Louis. "Slim," as he was called, had found his niche.

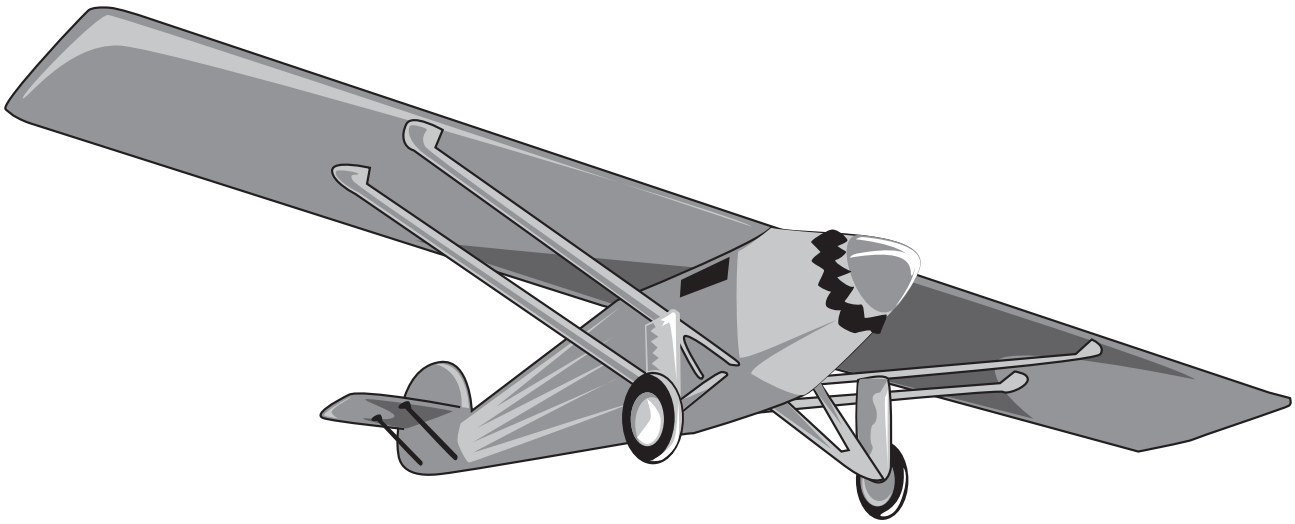
The Orteig prize

As shy and focused as he was, Lindbergh was not above seeking fame and fortune in the new and exciting aviation age. While seated in a movie theater one evening he learned of a $25,000 prize to be awarded to the first aviator who could successfully fly nonstop to Paris from New York. The Orteig prize, named after a New York City hotel owner, was offered in 1919, but no one had yet won it. Inspired and eager, Lindbergh soon found backers in St. Louis, an aircraft company (Ryan Airlines) in San Diego to build a plane, and a name for the craft—*Spirit of St. Louis.* Working against time and several competitors ready to take off and win the prize, Ryan employees finally completed the plane and watched Lindbergh set off from San Diego, California, to Long Island, New York, to prepare for the transatlantic journey. As he did, Lindy set a coast-to-coast record.

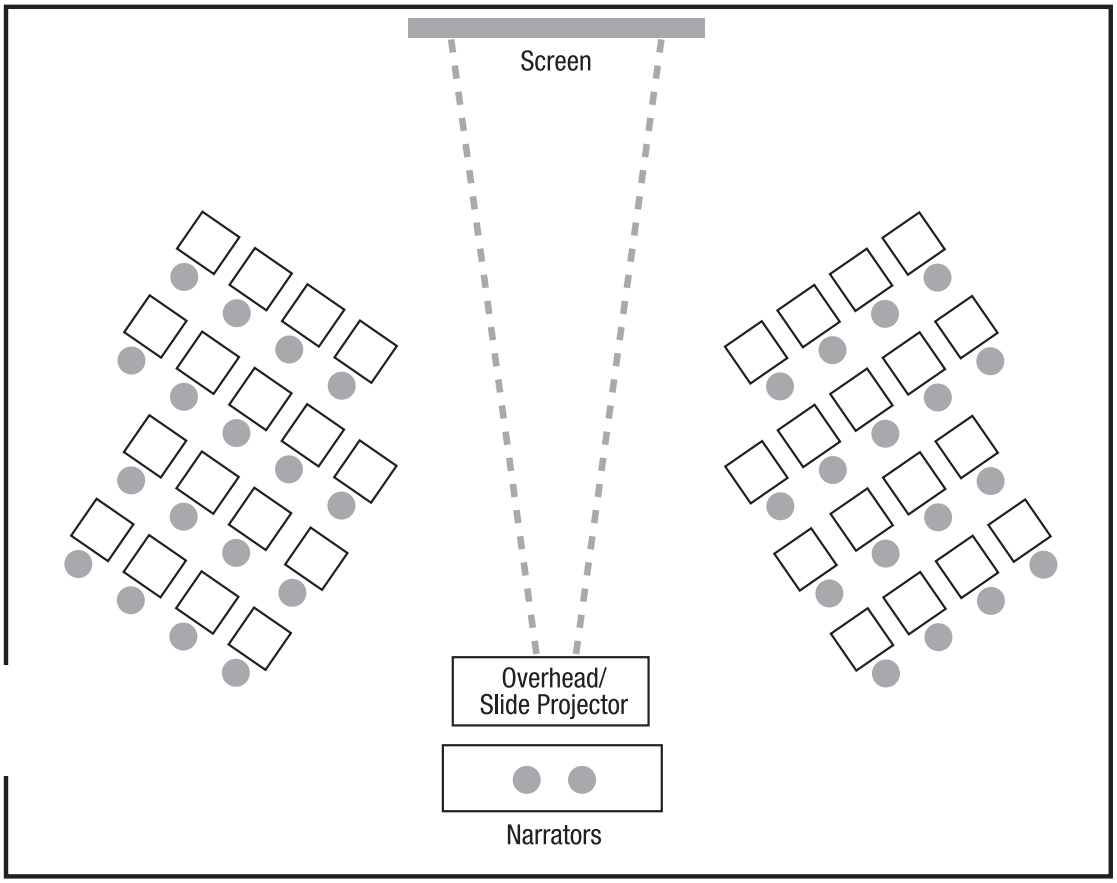
Waiting for the weather

Once Lindy arrived in New York, he discovered that several of his rivals were indeed ready to take off to Paris, but the weather over New York, the east coast, and the Atlantic was foul and unaccommodating, despite it being late spring. Nonetheless, Lindbergh and Ryan officials knew they must take that risk and get airborne. Also ready to begin the 3,500-mile flight from Roosevelt Field were famous flyers Richard Byrd and Clarence Chamberlin.

Now you are about to become "Lucky Lindy," or "The Flying Fool," as the headlines put it. You will step into the small plane's cockpit to begin this epoch-making flight above the cold and forbidding waters of the North Atlantic toward Europe. Put on those goggles, get that steady hand on the throttle, and prepare to lift off from the wet runway. Take 'er to Paris, Lindy!



Schematic



Suggestions

- Depending upon the type of desks/tables you have in your room, consider these suggestions:
    a. **Small tables:** Turn them over and have students sit in chairs. The students' hands will then use a table's most distant legs as throttles and the table's underside (at a 45-degree angle) as the foot pedals.
    b. **One-unit desks:** Turn them over and have students sit on the floor. Students' hands will then use the chairs' legs and undersides as throttles and foot pedals.
- **Images:** Get images from the sources recommended in the **Lesson Plan Setup** #5. Show any images during the appropriate stages of the flight. End with an image of Lindy in front of his plane.
- **Costumes:** Encourage students to bring in some sort of goggles and swim caps to simulate Lindy's essential gear. High boots would add reality, too.
- **Lights:** Turn lights off/on to simulate night/day.

Narration

1. You, Charles A. Lindbergh, are half asleep at two o'clock in the morning, May 19, 1927. Your mind wanders over the events of the past few months. A blur of images comes: Accepting the challenge of trying to win the $25,000 prize for the first pilot to fly from New York to Paris, getting funds to build the airplane, flying to New York, and now waiting for the weather to clear so you can attempt the dangerous flight. But sleep won't come. So you open your eyes, get up, dress, and arrive at nearby Roosevelt Field's hangar at 3 a.m. By 7:30 a.m., the *Spirit of St. Louis'* engine appears revved up enough to take off. You look down the runway and notice that the rain has stopped but the pavement is slick and wet. If you don't do it now—fly across the Atlantic to Europe—others, also eagerly waiting for the weather to break, will beat you to Paris.

2. Crowds gather around and you ***awkwardly get into the small cockpit*** of the plane (*pause).* ***Put your right hand on the throttle,*** pull back a few times, and notice the engine responds nicely. Since you are tall and lanky, the cockpit is cramped. Everything around you is necessary for the flight. Some items—a radio and a front window, for example—have been eliminated to make room for the 451 gallons of gasoline needed for the 3,000-mile flight. At 7:47 the wooden blocks in front of your wheels are pulled and you slowly make your way down the rainsoaked runway.

3. ***The throttle feels good in your experienced hand.*** As you travel the runway, the plane slides in the puddles. Up ahead, an ambulance truck anticipates a possible tragedy. You pull back on the throttle stick and *Spirit* rises slowly off the runway higher and higher until you are 200 feet in the air. But ahead you see some high telephone wires. ***Pull back on the lever.***

4. ***Some body language is required*** as you barely clear the wires on the edge of Roosevelt Field. In fact, your landing gear breaks one wire but you're in the air! Down below near the hangar, friends yell, "Take her to Paris, Slim!" (*pause*)

5. Hours later you ***look outside*** and notice Rhode Island through the fog and rain, then Nova Scotia, a bit of open sea, then Newfoundland—the last chunk of land before you will sight Europe. (*pause*) It is now 12 hours since take off.

6. It's been 30 hours since you've had solid sleep. You are tired so you ***slap your face*** to stay awake. You look down at the Atlantic and see some icebergs. You vary your elevation from 10,000 feet to 50 feet. Flying lower will prevent frost from developing on the wings and engine. The weather clears and soon it becomes dark. (*Turn off lights*.)

7. The temperature drops and you ***shiver with cold***. You think of failure, of turning back, of landing on an iceberg. Landing on an iceberg—you must be hallucinating! (*pause*) Hours later, the sun comes up, *(turn on the lights)* but you are getting sleepy. Should you eat some of the five sandwiches or drink some coffee? No. It might make you sleepier. Sleep.

8. Sleep. Sleep. Your ***eyes close gradually***. Your grip on the throttle lever lets up. Your head goes to the side as the plane, without your guidance, circles . . . down . . . down . . . down toward the cold sea. For several minutes the *Spirit* spirals down and down.

9. A fly lands on your cheek, making you ***itch reflexively***. As you ***rub your face***, your ***eyes open*** and you realize that you've been asleep. You shake your head, slap your face again, sit up, and regrip the throttle tighter. Soon the plane speeds toward your destination.

10. You ***shudder*** as you think how close you came to death in a watery grave. It is now midafternoon—27 hours after leaving Roosevelt Field.

11. ***Looking down at the ocean***, you see some specks. (*pause)* Fishing boats! Could land be that close? *(pause)* Two hours later you're shocked as land comes into view.

12. You say aloud, ***"It must be Ireland! I can't believe it! I'm only about 400 miles from Paris!"*** The map confirms your excitement. (*pause)* Soon the green fields of England pass underneath.

13. You ***stick your head out the window***—receiving a blast of cold air—and ***wave and yell to the townspeople*** in the village below. Crossing the English Channel, the idea of sleep is replaced with hunger.

14. With one hand you reach for the wrapped sandwiches. You devour them and drink some water.

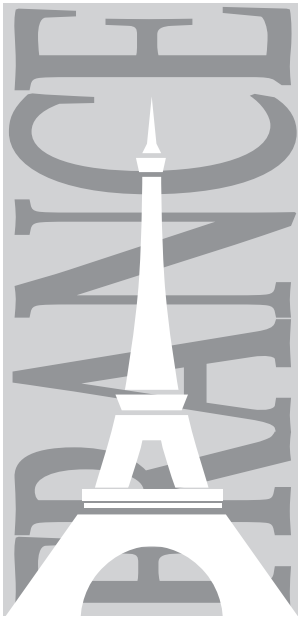
15. As the *Spirit* soars over the western coast of France, it turns dark again. *(Turn off the lights.)* You check your map to find the Seine River which leads to Paris. You look out the window and see the river's mouth. The lights of Paris loom in the distance.

16. Suddenly . . . the engine sputters! You ***panic***! Your heart thumps and starts to race. No! No! So close!

17. Then you realize that it's time to change your gas tanks. You ***shut off one and turn on another***. Within seconds the engine adjusts and begins to hum again. Several minutes later you sight the famous Eiffel Tower, circle it once, and then head northeast to find Le Bourget Airport.

18. Within minutes you see rows of floodlights and ***guide the plane down for a landing***. The throttle responds in your hand. Down, down, down.

19. The wheels bounce the plane—one, two, three times. You exclaim, ***"I'm here . . . in Paris!"***



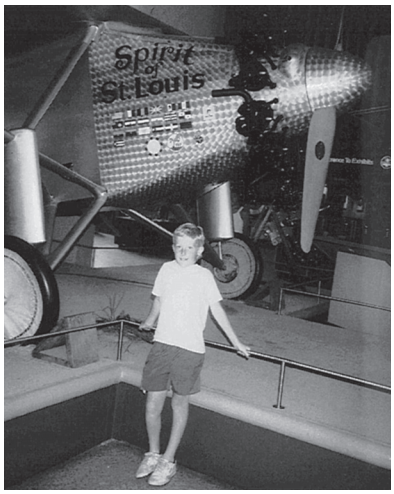
"*I'm here!*"

Acting Out Lindy's Flight

1. Lying in bed, tossing and turning —eyes closed, restless.
   (*At this point turn tables/desks over and use as cockpit.)*
2. Getting a tall body into a small cockpit.
3. Holding hand on throttle continually—but reacting to changes in piloting.
4. Using body language to help the plane fly over telephone wires.
5. Looking outside.
6. Slapping your face.
7. Shivering with cold.
8. Falling asleep slowly, head dropping.
9. Itching your face; slapping face; regripping throttle.
10. Shuddering . . . barely avoiding death.
11. Looking outside, seeing fishing boats.
12. Lip-synching Lindy's words and looking at a map.
13. Facing out of window; yelling at townspeople.
14. Reaching for, unwrapping, eating sandwiches; drinking water.
15. Checking map; looking out of window.
16. Panicking!
17. Shutting off gas tank; turning the other one on.
18. Guiding plane to land.
19. Lip-synching Lindy's words.

Postscript

In a decade of zany publicity stunts and sports and motion picture idols, Charles Lindbergh was a genuine hero. His flight had all the elements of an exciting publicity stunt—death, drama, and competition—and he had all the attributes needed for the public to embrace him. He was tall, thin, boyish, unassuming, shy, handsome, modest—and he seemed to embody simple virtues. His feat, however, was to prove that the unthinkable—transatlantic flight—was possible. This transportation and communication advance launched the world into a new age. The epic nature of his flight and the revolutionary possibilities it represented made Lindbergh almost a mythic figure.



Copies of the *Spirit of St. Louis* are displayed in museums around the United States. Here is one in the Aero Space Museum in San Diego, California.

The huge crowds at Le Bourget Airport in Paris and elsewhere in Europe foreshadowed the worldwide fame he would receive. Yet, Lindbergh's fame in the late spring of 1927 led to a life of both triumph and tragedy. Awakening from the euphoria of his Paris arrival, he found himself a world celebrity. He was escorted back to the U.S. on a special navy cruiser, had a massive New York ticker-tape parade, and received many medals. Lindy consented to the Smithsonian's request to permanently display the *Spirit of St. Louis* in its museum. Once back in the U.S., Lindbergh discovered that his life would be a battle between the private person he wanted to be and the public person he had become almost overnight.

Indeed, Lindbergh's whole life was a soaring human drama, especially the years following the great flight of 1927. A controversial and lonely man, he married a diplomat's daughter in 1929. With her, he sought privacy from an aggressive press. In 1932 their first born, Charles Jr., was kidnapped and murdered. Public reaction to this crime led to the passage of the so-called Lindbergh Laws, which allowed federal intervention in interstate kidnapping cases. From 1935 to 1939, the Lindberghs lived in Europe, where he became impressed with the Nazis and their war machine. Back in the U.S. he became a leader of the America First movement, a noninterventionist group that held anti-war views and opposed the foreign policy of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Once the U.S. entered World War II, Lindbergh worked as technical adviser to manufacturers of military aircraft. Redeeming himself during the war, in 1945 Lindbergh was named special consultant to the chief of staff of the U.S Air Force, which commissioned him as a brigadier general in 1954. He also worked as an important executive for Pan American World Airways and took on personal projects involving ecology, wildlife, and conservation. A restless man, he also continued to fly, completing several around-the-world flights.

In mid-1974 he learned that he had lymphatic cancer. By late August he was failing fast. He put his papers together, planned his funeral in detail, and talked with his five children. Deciding to be buried in a simple eucalyptus coffin on a hill on Maui, one of the Hawaiian Islands, he soon lapsed into a coma on August 25, 1974, and died the next morning at 7:15. It was his last flight. Although millions had pursued him as the American hero of the 1920s, only a handful attended his funeral and burial at a churchyard in Hana, Maui.

Historical Investigation Activity

Lindbergh's Solo Flight (1927)

Focus Question

In this age of crossing boundaries, did the flappers spearhead positive change for the New Women of the 1920s?

Materials Needed for This Historical Investigation

- **Documents A–I**—*class set*
- **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**—*class set*

Lesson Plan

1. Getting Started

   - Ask students, "What can you tell me about the 1920s and specifically about women after the First World War?" Write responses on the board as spokes emanating from a "hub" circle and then discuss those responses, emphasizing obvious changes in society brought about by the 19th Amendment (women's suffrage), the 18th Amendment (prohibition of alcoholic beverages) and the wider use of the automobile for social and recreational purposes.
   - As a motivator, duplicate **Images of Gibson Girls and the Flapper**. Say, "Is it obvious what the 'mother' (Gibson Girl) would say to her flapper 'daughter' about her appearance? What words come to mind? Are all mothers in any generation pretty much of one mind about their daughter's appearance? This is what happened in the 1920s—a real generation gap until many mothers, for the first time in American society, decided they wanted to look younger, like their daughters!"

2. Backstory to Use as Instruction

   - Charles A. Lindbergh, the subject of this Activator, was one of several national heroes and heroines who were idolized as celebrities in the decade that has been described as zany, prosperous, fast-paced, colorful, roaring and even golden. The war was over and "America," wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald, "was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history." These ten years of the 1920s were characterized by movement to the cities, prohibition of alcohol, conservative politics, a booming economy, widespread use of the automobile, thrill-seeking youth and the radio.

- Lindbergh's feat, flying solo over the Atlantic Ocean to Paris, launched the modern air age and brought about a revolution in aviation. Events like Lindy's solo flight made life exciting, especially for the young.
    - Another revolution, less dramatic perhaps, was also taking place in the 1920s, one in manners and morals, according to journalist and chronicler of the decade, Frederick Lewis Allen. A new postwar generation of "Flaming Youth"—young men and especially young women—changed American society forever, some believed. Warner Fabian, in his book *Flaming Youth,* called them "desperadoes." These women—and the men, too, were "the shock troops of the rebellion." These New Women shimmied and shook to the lush numbers and hot sounds of "barbaric" saxophone jazz, got "blotto" with their boyfriend "sheiks," went joyriding, smoked and drank in public, and overturned many of "society's conventions," making modesty, restraint and ladylike behavior yesterday's bore. By the mid '20s, the Edwardian ideal (the Gibson Girl) had nearly vanished.
    - Accelerated by the growing political independence women achieved from the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote, women of the early- to mid-1920s, especially flappers, spearheaded a social rebellion. All these headlong pursuits of freedom seemed to break down some of the barriers between the sexes and moved society toward greater acceptance of woman as man's equal.

3. Ask, "Is all this accurate? In fact, did this new morality of eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-we-die spirit from the just concluded war—and the availability of birth control—fuel a rejection of the humdrum routine society expected of young women? Did all this liberation, this freedom, this independence, also aided by a robust economy, bring about deep (and permanent) changes in the status of women? Were they "revolutionaries," these symbols of the Jazz Age? In short, did they spearhead real change?"

4. Say, "Before we examine the documents about the flapper's role in changing society, I want to hand out your **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** and have you reflect and answer question #1."

5. Refer to students to **Images of Gibson Girls and the Flapper** again. Have students answer question #1, writing 5 words/phrases describing each woman based on the images. This should provide a lively introduction to the investigation activity.

6. Say, "I will now hand out the document package for you to analyze. Try to get the big picture of who the flappers were but also to find evidence to support, modify, or disprove the **focus question**.

7. Pass out a package of the **Documents A–I** and explain what to do, perhaps reading aloud **Document A** and analyzing what it has to say about flappers.

8. Before you divide the students into groups and release them to work, show the opening scene from the 1967 film, *Thoroughly Modern Millie,* where Julie Andrews as Millie transforms herself from a bumpkin into a flapper. Have students note each change and which change is the most empowering.

9. Divide the class into pairs, trios, or foursomes to work on the documents. Allow 30–35 minutes for students to work. Remind students to read carefully through each document, making mental or written notes that will form responses on their **Points to Ponder Response Sheets.**

Option for Lesson Plan

If you . . .

- Have students whose abilities may make it difficult to analyze all the documents in this package . . .

Or

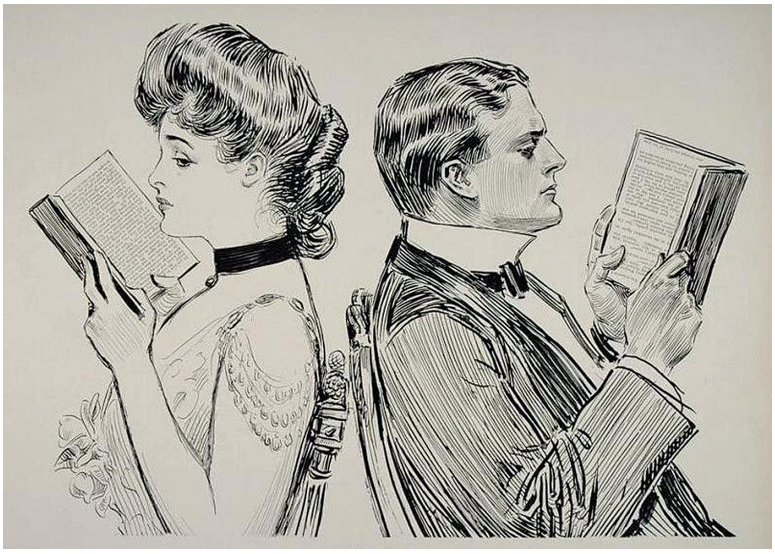
- Have limited time in class during any particular unit to implement the full package of documents . . .

Consider carefully pulling out 2–3 documents to use that will still help students think like historians. Using this strategy would mean selecting only those tasks and questions on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** that directly apply to the documents you have chosen to use. Whatever the case, these investigations, even in an abbreviated format, can still be effective and fulfill your objectives.

Images of Gibson Girls and the Flapper

Charles Dana Gibson (Gibson Girl) was a very popular artist and his drawings and illustrations became the signature women of his era. Note the differences in dress, poses, and facial expressions between the Gibson Girls and the flapper.

1.



2.

3.

Image Source: 1. Cover illustration for *Collier's magazine,* October 30, 1909, by Charles Dana Gibson.
2. *Their First Quarrel,* a 1914 print by Charles Dana Gibson.
3. "Where there's smoke there's fire" Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-01589.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Points to Ponder Response Sheet

Focus Question: In this age of crossing boundaries, did the flappers spearhead positive change for the New Women of the 1920s?

1.

Gibson Girl	Flapper

2. **Images of Gibson Girls and the Flapper:** As you compare images of the Gibson Girls and the flapper, reflect on this question: Is there usually a wide gap between adjacent generations of females, especially in appearance and behavior? Why or why not?

_____

_____

3. **Document A:** How would you sum up Ellen Page's appeal to parents about the flapper?

_____

_____

4. **Document B:** After reading the lyrics to the 1920s songs and reading the lines of poems, what kind of "new" woman emerges? Is she merely mischaracterized or is her "wild child" stereotype a perceived reality in the lyrics of both genres?

_____

_____

What words would you lift from the songs and poems to defend your P.O.V. (Point of View)?

_____

_____

5. **Document C:** How did the lives of working women compare with the relatively privileged lives of flappers? Do you think flappers forged any changes that affected other women of the era?

_____

_____

6. **Document D:** Generally, what do college newspapers of the 1920s say about that generation of youth? How are these men and women of college age different from previous generations? What makes them more "radical?"

_____

_____

7. **Document E:** According to *The New Republic* editor Bruce Bliven, his "Flapper Jane" character goes beyond obvious appearance and shocking behavior to change the new women up to 1925. What words describe their contribution to the path to equality?

_____

_____

8. **Document F:** What kind of power and influence does N.W. Ayer & Sons public relation firm attribute to the flapper and her young men that might make a strong argument for flappers as revolutionaries? Explain.

_____

_____

9. **Document G:** UC Berkeley historian Paula Fass has written that there was something more important than political rights (19th Amendment – votes for women) or economic opportunity that flappers helped pushed forward. What was it? Do you agree with her P.O.V.? Why/why not?

_____

_____

10. **Document H:** From these two contemporary descriptions, what seemed to be the most distinguishing characteristics of a flapper? Why do you think these stood out as so important?

_____

_____

Of all the 13 flapper qualifications, which 2 or 3 probably . . .

- Irked her parents the most? Why?

_____

_____

- Gave the flapper the most empowerment and personal satisfaction? Why?

_____

_____

11. **Document I:** After carefully scanning these pictures of flappers, what kind of tone or attitude emerges? Were flappers changing American society or were they merely frivolous? Explain.

_____

_____

Is there any notion at all that flappers were spearheading a feminist revolution? Explain.

_____

12. If you could ask a flapper one question, what would it be and what kind of response would you get?

Q. _____

A. _____

13. Based on **Documents A–I** that you have analyzed, write a long paragraph answering the **Focus Question** at the top of this sheet. Make at least 3–4 major points to substantiate your position.

Document A

A Flapper's Plea to Parents

If one judges by appearances, I suppose I am a flapper. I am within the age limit. I wear bobbed hair, the badge of flapperhood. (And, oh, what a comfort it is!) I powder my nose. I wear fringed skirts and bright-colored sweaters, and scarfs, and waists with Peter Pan collars, and low-heeled "finale hopper" shoes. I *adore* to dance. I spend a large amount of time in automobiles. I attend hops, and proms, and ball-games, and crew races, and other affairs at men's colleges. . . .

I want to beg all you parents, and grandparents, and friends, and teachers, and preachers—you who constitute the "older generation"—to overlook our shortcomings, at least for the present, and to appreciate our virtues. I wonder if it ever occurred to any of you that it required *brains* to become and remain a successful flapper? Indeed it does! It requires an enormous amount of cleverness and energy to keep going at the proper pace. It requires self-knowledge and self-analysis. We must know our capabilities and limitations. We must be constantly on the alert. Attainment of flapperhood is a big and serious undertaking! . . .

. . . We are struggling to regain our equilibrium. The times have made us older and more experienced than you were at our age. It must be so with each succeeding generation if it is to keep pace with the rapidly advancing and mighty tide of civilization. . . . Give us a helping hand. . . .

. . . Parents, study your children. Talk to them more intimately. Respect their right to a point of view. . . .

. . . Remember that we are the parents of the future. . . . Make your lives such an inspiration to us that we in our turn will strive to become an inspiration to our children and to the ages! Is it too much to ask?

Source: Ellen Welles Page, "A Flapper's Appeal to Parents," *Outlook* magazine (December 6, 1922).

Document B

Songs and Poems about Flappers

The lyrics on this page express the spirit and verse of the era and the flapper. One can't imagine these songs being written before 1920 or after 1929; they indeed capture the 1920s.

IF YOU KNEW SUSIE

If you knew Susie, like I know Susie
Oh, Oh, Oh, what a gal
There's none so classy as this fair lassie
Oh, Oh, holy Moses, what a chassis
We went riding, she didn't balk
Back from Yonkers
I'm the one that had to walk
If you knew Susie, Like I know Susie
Oh, Oh, what a gal.

FIVE FOOT TWO, EYES OF BLUE

Five foot two, eyes of blue
But oh, what those five foot could do
Has anybody seen my girl?
Turned up nose, turned down hose,
All dressed up in fancy clothes,
Has anybody seen my girl?
Now if you run into a five-foot-two
Covered in fur,
Diamond rings and all those things,
Bet-cha life it isn't her.
But could she love, could she woo?
Could she, could she, could she coo'
Has anybody seen my girl?

RUNNIN' WILD

Runnin' wild, lost control
Runnin' wild, mighty bold
Feelin' gay, reckless too
Carefree mind all the time, never blue
Always goin' don't know where
Always showin', I don't care
Don't love nobody, it's not worth
while
All alone, runnin' wild.

THE FLAPPER

By Dorothy Parker

The Playful flapper here we see,
The fairest of the fair.

She's not what Grandma used to be,—
You might say, au contraire.

. . . . . .

She nightly knocks for many a goal
The usual dancing men.

Her speed is great, but her control
Is something else again.

Document C

Working Women of the 1920s

Not all women were considered or pretended to be flappers. Some became semi-flappers; most were simply working girls, though they all witnessed a "whirlwind of change."

> Although the flapper got all the publicity, the working girl was the norm. . . .
>
> Ten million women worked for wages during the 1920s – one in five wage earners in 1927 was a woman – but this was hardly a sign of equality or liberation, as it is sometimes portrayed. Often balancing a job, home, and children on low pay, working women had few, if any, opportunities to enjoy the independent and indulgent lifestyle portrayed in Life, Vanity Fair, and other popular magazines. Almost a third of working women, particularly blacks and the foreign born, were employed in the decidedly unglamorous field of domestic work.
>
> The increased presence of women in white-collar jobs changed the makeup of the female workforce, which had been primarily lower-class. Office and sales work was regarded as less demeaning than factory and domestic work, and middle-class girls and women flocked to these "lace collar" jobs. By 1930, the number of women in clerical jobs had surpassed the number of women working in factories. Government studies showed that women could be found in 537 of the 572 occupational categories listed in the census of 1920, but 86 percent of working women were clustered in female-designated occupations in which they made less money and had less status than men. . . .
>
> For most women the reality was far grimmer. A job meant the drudgery of a low-level, low-paying position as a stenographer or a file clerk or a salesperson, and the work was usually monotonous and routine. There was a large wage differential between men and women in the same job: women earned little more than half of male salesmen's salaries. The National Industrial Conference Board reported that in December 1927, the average weekly wage for all males was $29.35; for women it was $17.36.

Source: Nathan Miller, *New World Coming: The 1920s and the Making of Modern America* (Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 2003).

Document D

College Newspapers Reflect on "Flaming Youth"

College newspapers and yearbooks (earlier called Annuals) are a fertile source for memories as well as probing what students at the time were thinking.

> We are radical – we youths. We are experimenting with life. We are radical in the sense that we are dissatisfied with some existing conditions in the world, and we want something done about it. We are radical because we disavow the old-time proprieties. We are living in a world of confusion and excitement, and we are radical because in a world dominated by machines, a world of naturalistic science and psycho-chemico-libido psychology, it is fun to be radical. . . . They will discover that we are not so radical but that we have very few convictions about anything.
>
> Cornell Sun, February 4, 1927

> Modern youth is wild and reckless and radical, we are so often told that we have almost come to believe it. Perhaps it isn't so. Perhaps it is only that the world changes, that everybody of our time is a little different from those of any other era, that youth shares in the difference instead of standing still. And after all, it is probable that the changes are not as considerable as some of us hope and others of us fear. Modern life is like the ocean – a lot of lashing and lather on the surface with miles of unmoved depths below.
>
> Duke Chronicle, April 27, 1927

> We who number ourselves among the so-called wild and wicked youth, already flaming, would prefer to go out with drums beating and bugles blowing if it is necessary that we go. Slow funeral marches are not sweet to the ears of youth. We want to have strength enough left to make one last convulsive kick. We want to be young before we are old.
>
> Ohio State Lantern, October 7, 1925

Source: Various statements made in college newspapers (1925 – 1927) as reprinted in Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

Document E

Interviewing "Flapper Jane"

"Jane," say I, "I am a reporter representing American inquisitiveness. Why do all of you dress the way you do?"

"I don't know," says Jane. This reply means nothing: it is just the device by which the younger generation gains time to think. Almost at once she adds: "The old girls are doing it because youth is. Everybody wants to be young, now – though they want all us young people to be something else. Funny, isn't it?"

"In a way," says Jane, "it's just honesty. Women have come down off the pedestal lately. They are tired of this mysterious feminine-charm stuff. Maybe it goes with independence, earning your own living and voting and all that. There was always a bit of the harem in that cover-up-your-arms-and-legs business, don't you think?"

"Women still want to be loved," goes on Jane, warming to her theme, "but they want it on a 50-50 basis, which includes being admired for the qualities they really possess. Dragging in this strange-allurement stuff doesn't seem sporting. It's like cheating in games, or lying. . . ."

". . . Of course, not so many girls are looking for a life meal-ticket nowadays. Lots of them prefer to earn their own living and omit the home-and-baby act. Well, anyhow, postpone it years and years. They think a bachelor girl can and should do everything a bachelor man does. . . ."

That fact is, as Jane says, that women to-day are shaking off the shreds and patches of their age-old servitude. "Feminism" has won a victory so nearly complete that we have even forgotten the fierce challenge which once inhered in the very word. Women have highly resolved that they are just as good as men, and intend to be treated so. They don't mean to have any more unwanted children. They don't intend to be debarred from any profession or occupation which they choose to enter.

Source: Excerpt from Bruce Bliven, "Flapper Jane," *The New Republic* (September 9, 1925).

Document F

The Economic Power of "Flaming Youth"

Taking out a full-page ad in the venerable magazine *Saturday Evening Post* in 1925, advertising agency N.W. Ayer & Sons made one fact of business life very clear. (The ad agency was responsible for such famous slogans as: "A Diamond Is Forever," "Reach Out and Touch Someone," and "Be All You Can Be.")

> You may regard the new generation as amusing or pathetic; as a bit tragic, or rather splendid. You may consider their manners crude, their ideals vague, their clothes absurd. Their cynical, humorous discussions of social conditions may stir you to admiration or fill you with helpless rage.
>
> But it is useless to deny that these youngsters have a definite bearing on the thought, literature and customs of our day. And particularly do they exert a powerful influence on buying habits and the movement of merchandise.
>
> The tremendous increase in the sales of cosmetics and silk stockings in the last ten years is a revelation of power. . . . Practically all men's clothes are young men's clothes. Most frocks are designed for young women.
>
> Today they are careless of tradition, heedless of responsibility. But tomorrow these young women will be home executives. These young men will conduct our businesses. They will buy enormous quantities of every conceivable kind of staple merchandise.

Source: *Saturday Evening Post* (January 10, 1925) as quoted in Elizabeth Stevenson, *Babbitts and Bohemians: The American 1920s* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967).

Document G

What Women in the '20s Really Wanted?

> While the behavior of all youth was cause for concern, a special apprehension was reserved for the manners and attitudes of young women. The American woman had been the special stabilizer of nineteenth-century society, and it was the change in female behavior which underlined the overall changes that had taken place. It was the new definition of equality that was most troubling, for it was apparently not the same thing that the old feminists had in mind. . . . [T]he modern young woman . . . defined equality not as political rights or economic opportunities but as something more subtle and more threatening: freedom – the right to self-expression, self-determination, and personal satisfaction. To traditionalists this smacked of immorality, self-indulgence, and irresponsibility.
>
> This was alarming for it meant not merely a granting of rights but an upheaval in social relationships and the destruction of formerly effective controls. . . . [T]he new woman of the twenties was not dissatisfied with the kitchen if it was freely chosen, but she refused to be consigned to a single role and she expected to be satisfied in each. Asking for more than merely to have a man choose her as a wife and the mother of his children, the new woman expected to be satisfied "as a lover and a companion," and she insisted on *"more freedom and honesty within the marriage. . . ."*
>
> All this appeared to portend the collapse of noble womanhood as it had been understood.

Source: Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

Document H

What Makes a Flapper?

> A Connecticut damsel gives the following recipe: - "Take two bare knees, two rolled stockings, two flapping galoshes, one short skirt, one lipstick, one powder-puff, 32 cigarettes, and a boy friend with a flask, season with a pinch of salt, a dash of pepper, and cover with some spicy sauce, and you have the old-time flapper."

Source: *The Sunday Times* (February 19, 1928).

Typical Flappers

You've heard 'em called that, but did you ever really understand what it meant? This will straighten you out . . . Thirteen qualifications. Count 'em:

No. 1, hat of soft silk or felt;

No. 2, bobbed hair;

No. 3, flapper curl on forehead;

No. 4, flapper collar;

No. 5, flapper earrings;

No. 6, slip-over sweater;

No. 7, flapper beads;

No. 8, metallic belt;

No. 9, bracelet of strung jet;

No. 10, knee-length fringed skirt;

No. 11, exposed bare knees;

No. 12, rolled hose with fancy garter;

No. 13, flat-heeled, little girl sandals.

Source: *Weekly Journal-Miner* (Prescott, AZ: August 2, 1922).

Document I

Actual Flappers

Image Sources: Left: Courtesy of Historic American Building Survey.
Right: Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-93721.

Depression-Era Soup Kitchen 1933

Lesson Plan

Overview

This Activator will put your students into a breadline and a soup kitchen during the early years of the Great Depression. Your students will re-create what happened to many Americans who were down-and-out and needed a free meal in "hard times." They will role-play people in line—mostly men—getting a free bowl of soup and some scraps of bread, but a few of them will role-play soup servers, apple sellers, bakers, and a charity speaker at the local mission. By participating in this Activator, they will likely experience what it must have been like to be out of work, depressed, hungry, and ashamed because they, as head of a family, cannot provide their family with food and security in a national economic catastrophe that is threatening to drown them.

Setup

1. **Duplication:** Consider duplicating both the **Background Essay** and the **Postscript**, although this is not absolutely necessary.

2. **Schematic, props, costumes:** Study the **Schematic** carefully. Find and bring into your classroom any Depression-era props and old clothes and hats that will help create the setting and mood. Inspire students to bring in the same, especially old clothes. Tell students you expect all of them to bring in

   - old clothes to wear (overcoat, hat, shoes);
   - a pie tin or old bowl; and
   - an old spoon.
   - (Enlist two to three students to bring in old newspapers to use as "Hoover blankets.")

Teaching tip

Talk with your students in advance about what would enhance the classroom experience. For example, you might ask, "Do any of you have a grandparent or great-grandparent who lived during the Great Depression and would speak to the class about his/her experiences?"

3. **Roles:** This Activator has no script like some of the other 20th century American history Activators. There are only a few key roles, which are briefly explained on the **Role Sheet**. Recruit good, dependable students to fill these roles, especially the charity speaker who has to give a brief but inspirational lecture. The other roles need to have students who will dress up as down-and-outers, apple sellers, and soup servers. Roles should be assigned a day in advance of the activity.

4. **Narrator:** There is no narrator in this Activator. You, however, should fully explain what you expect will happen and its sequence. (See below.)

5. **Soup makers (cooks):** If you so choose, make the soup at home and bring it in on the day of the Activator. Along with the soup, bring in a

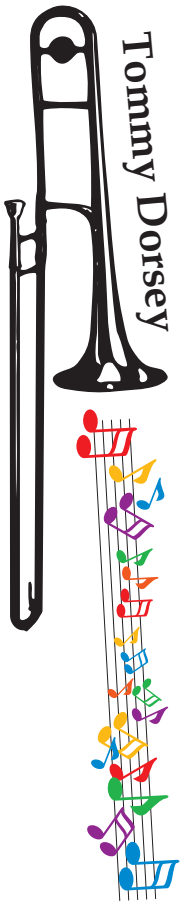
propane camping stove with two burners. Place the stove on the soup tables and keep the soup at least warm most of the day. Perhaps one pot per class would ensure "fresh" soup each class period.

- Alternative option to cooking the soup beforehand: Have two to three students in each class buy the ingredients and make the soup at their homes the night before. Make sure you choose reliable students as cooks. Remember: **no soup, no Activator**, unless you want all students to pretend they are eating soup.
- If you choose to have students make the soup, you might as well assign some students to bring in bread, too. Have them bring the bread in the day before the Activator. Don't be surprised to see bread creations from their bread-making machines. To keep costs low, encourage the purchase of day old baguettes, which break into small chunks very well.
- Soup makers (you or your students) should follow the directions on the package's ingredient list. Recommended recipe: buy chicken or beef flavor instant bouillon. A 6-1/4 oz. jar should serve 50 or more people. Once heated on a small two burner camp stove, toss in some cans of cooked carrots or peas, but not too many veggies. ***Remember:*** Soup kitchen soup was usually lukewarm, flat, thin, and watery!

Directions

1. Hand out the **Background Essay** on the day before or on the day of the Activator. If you have given the essay as homework, conduct an informal discussion of the main points. If you are passing it out now, read the essay aloud to students as they read with you, pausing to explain the main points. (Make this choice based upon your students' ages/abilities and time constraints.)
2. Display the **Schematic**, explain it, and have your students rearrange your room to create the soup kitchen/mission setting you desire. Make sure students, especially those with assigned roles, know what to do over the next 15–25 minutes. Don't forget to have at least one kettle of soup warming up for your first class of down-and-outers.
3. Have all the down-and-outers go into the hall, corridor, or outside, whichever is appropriate to your situation. Have two to three of them lie down and cover themselves with "Hoover Blankets." Make a short speech encouraging them to act like they're near starvation and unemployed.
4. Go back inside and help the speaker, apple sellers, and soup servers get ready. Now start letting the vagabonds in by rows (three abreast).

Teaching tip
Of course, if you have imaginative students who are into drama, you could have them create other props for the soup kitchen.



5. Watch the Activator proceed and help each student play his/her role appropriately. Circulate, encourage, and perhaps be in costume yourself. Have a bowl of soup and use your bread chunk to get the last bit of soup out of your "bowl."

Flourishes to consider

1. Play 1930s music. Recommended: Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Count Basie, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Duke Ellington, Bob Crosby, Billie Holiday, Helen O'Connell, Martha Tilton, Bing Crosby, and Rudy Vallee.

2. Learn and teach students to dance the popular Big Apple, the Lindy Hop, or the Lambeth Walk. Jive up the kitchen with some "Truckin." Of course, such a flourish lifts the experience out of the somber reality of a 1933 soup kitchen, but it might enhance the Activator and make it an even more indelible learning activity. (See *This Fabulous Century, 1930–1940*, especially pp. 230–241, for lots of ideas to expand upon this Activator.)

3. Display some photos from books. (See *This Fabulous Century, 1930–1940*, pp. 44-73.) Some excellent Depression-era photos showing breadlines could set the "hard times" milieu.

4. Print up some song sheets of "Tomorrow" from the Depression-era musical *Annie* (but actually written and performed in the 1970s). Find a copy of *Brother Can You Spare a Dime?* and have students sing it before "Tomorrow." Do the same with "Beans, Bacon, and Gravy." In the paperback book, *Brother Can You Spare A Dime?* there's a clever "Soup Song" (pp. 84–85), sung to "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean."

5. Take photos during the activator (or have a student photographer do it). Black-and-white photos would be even more realistic! A week later display the pictures and watch students crowd around the display.

6. Have a student dress up like President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt and be wheeled in a wheelchair. Have him partake of the soup and then explain what he will do to bring about an economic recovery to relieve the misery.

7. Show a snippet from a Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy, or Shirley Temple film to illustrate how people escaped to the movies for a laugh or two.

8. Have two gangsters come in and "rob" a few people. Then have J. Edgar Hoover and two "G" men rush in and make an arrest.

9. Have two students make up sandwich boards (e.g., "I Need Work") to wear over their shoulders.

10. Have one student be "shaved" by another and tell people in the kitchen that he's got a job interview coming up.

Debriefing

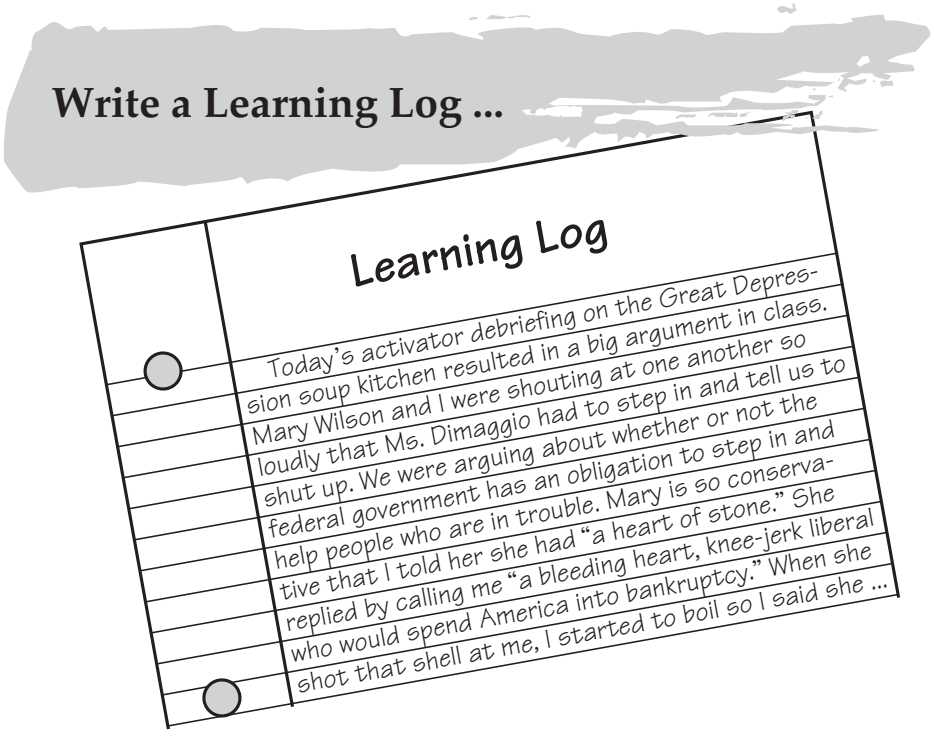
Decide whether you wish to use a short or long debriefing. Here are possible ways to make meaningful what people in the 1930s went through:

Short debriefing

1. Pass out the **Postscript**. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Ask students to discuss what they learned and what they felt as they experienced the soup kitchen.

3. Have students write a Learning Log entry following the short debriefing. Notice the power of this example:



Teaching tip
A good procedure to increase student involvement is to divide students into pairs or trios so they can discuss their experiences and observations. Finally, ask trios or pairs to share with the whole class the most interesting comments they heard from one another.

Long debriefing

1. Pass out the **Postscript**. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Possibly show the short video clip from *Ironweed* if you feel the language is not inappropriate for your students. Discuss with your students how close the Activator experience came to the film. Ask these questions:

   - What was the mood of the film?
   - Was the soup kitchen scene what you visualized before you came to class today?
   - Were the characters believable?

3. Discuss further questions:

   - Do you feel any sympathy for those in the film, or the homeless in our communities today?
   - Does the government (local or federal) have an obligation to help people who are in need?
   - Should our welfare system, which aids down-and-outers today, be altered in any way?
   - Do we have laws and institutions today in our economy and society that would prevent mass unemployment, hunger, and despair, such as in the 1930s?

4. Show some pictures from *This Fabulous Century, 1930–1940*, pp. 40-73, which depict the misery of the real Depression of the early 1930s. Elicit responses from students on what is on the minds of the people in the pictures. Have students write biographical paragraphs on several people in these pictures. Give names and a personal history up until the photo was snapped. ("My name is...")

5. Consider having students write a five- to seven-point strategy (Imagining they are an adult with a family of four) to lift their families out of a similar depression in the near future. Ask if these options were available to the people of 1933. Why or why not?

6. Have students write a Learning Log entry following any of the above.

Teaching tip

The Learning Log example on the previous page is an example of how powerful such writing can be as a student reflects upon a classroom experience.

Resources to consult

Allen, Frederick Lewis. *Since Yesterday: The 1930s in America.* New York: Harper & Row, 1986.

Kennedy, David M. *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Manchester, William. *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974, especially pages 24-25 on a soup kitchen and chapter one, "The Cruelest Year," on how Americans coped.

McElvaine, Robert S. *The Great Depression: America, 1929–41.* New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2009.

Terkel, Studs. *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression.* New York: Avon Books, 1973.

Watkins, T.H. *The Great Depression: America in the 1930's.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993 (accompanies PBS miniseries, 1993).

———. *The Hungry Years: A Narrative History of the Great Depression in America.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999.

Visual history

Documentaries: *Life in the Thirties (1956), Brother Can You Spare A Dime? (1975), Time Was the Thirties, Yesteryear, 1933* (HBO Cable).

Feature film: *Ironweed* (1987) starring Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep is a mature film on the Great Depression; it contains strong language. There is a short soup kitchen segment early in the film. ***Note well:*** *Do not use this segment—or any segment of* Ironweed—*without previewing it in advance to see if it is appropriate for your students.*

Visuals are important and often essential. And while there are countless visuals to use in the classroom for this particular Activator (films and documentaries), most of these might be difficult to find and then show. Instead, it is recommended that you as a teacher in the 21st century might find it easier to go online to locate exactly the kind of visuals most appropriate. As of 2016, Crash Course with John Green has been extensively utilized by teachers.

Background Essay

Place: New York City, New York
Time: February 1933

After the crash

When the stock market collapsed on October 29, 1929, many Americans were hit hard. Within months, some wealthy individuals and some companies lost everything. People who worked for these companies found "a private kind of shame when the pink slip came," wrote author Studs Terkel. Many had no real prospects of finding another job. As the economy hit bottom during 1931-1933, more companies went under, laying off even more workers who, in turn, became almost non-consumers. Consequently, other industries began to falter.

Herbert Hoover

Elected president in 1928 to extend the "prosperity" of the 1920s into the next decade, Herbert Hoover, a lifelong problem-solving engineer and public servant, seemed the perfect person to deal with America's economic woes when they hit in the early months of the 1930s. Hoover, however, was wedded to the past with perhaps an outdated belief in rugged individualism, or self-reliance, an American trait he believed far superior to a government dole. Despite well-intentioned actions like the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (lending money to banks, railroads, and other large companies), the Hawley-Smoot Tariff (raising exports on agricultural products), and an optimistic "the economy is fundamentally sound" attitude, Hoover didn't really gauge the enormity of the disaster. In short, Hoover skirted the Depression, never doing enough or giving sufficient funds to make a difference on the streets or on the farms.

Bonus Marchers

Out on the streets the mood was one of despair and anger. One group demanded action from Washington. Veterans from the Great War, due bonus payments in 1945, demanded payment now, in 1932. Some 20,000 came to the capital, camped in vacant lots, and vocally demanded that Congress release the money 13 years early. When Congress voted down the proposal, with Hoover's support, frustration and anger among the so-called Bonus Marchers' Bonus Army resulted in a clash with police, causing two deaths. Hoover used this event to order General Douglas MacArthur to drive out the unhappy veterans with tanks and tear gas, while conservatives hailed the president's action against these "dangerous radicals." By now most of the public was convinced that Hoover and his administration were thoroughly insensitive to the personal calamities faced daily by average Americans.

Hoovervilles

The dramatic scattering of the Bonus Marchers in the summer of 1932 made it easy to blame President Hoover for the hard times. Even before 1932, his name became a prefix for new words generated to define the poverty and hobo lifestyle of Depression-era America. People who lost their homes now lived in shanty towns—called "Hoovervilles"—on the outskirts of cities. In public parks, homeless men slept on benches, covering their bodies with "Hoover blankets," or newspapers. "Hoover hogs" were jackrabbits or gophers caught and cooked to replace the traditional Sunday ham. "Hoover villas" were public latrines used for overnight stays. "Hoover flags" were empty pockets turned inside out. Probably unfairly, Americans made the president

accountable for their situation, and he became the fall guy—the focus of the abuse.

"A gray, black, human snake"

By 1933, millions of Americans (we'll never really know how many) were desperate. Out of work and with his family depending on him, the breadwinner, the patriarch, the father/husband bore the brunt of the despair. When he couldn't provide for his family, he felt ashamed and humiliated. Many of these men abandoned their families and became what one called "a generation of wanderers," vagabonds, or hobos. Unable to find work and seeing that each job they applied for had hundreds of seekers, these shabby, disillusioned men wandered aimlessly without funds, begging, picking over refuse in city dumps, and finally getting up the courage to stand—and be seen publicly—in a bread line for free food. To accommodate these shamed, idle, and malnourished legions, charities, missions, and churches began programs to feed them.

Resembling "a gray, black human snake," breadlines often formed as early as 4 a.m. on cold wintery days when men lined up six across to wait as long as two to three hours before they could sit down inside a soup kitchen and partake of the meager fare offered. (In January 1931, 82 bread lines in New York City served 85,000 "meals" daily!) Men who experienced the waiting in line recall the personal shame of asking for a handout, unable to care for oneself or to provide for others. Most men found it difficult to look into the eyes of other men in line, who, if asked, had similar stories to tell.

A soup kitchen

What was it like to be in a 1933 soup kitchen? Piecing together recollections, it seemed to resemble an experience at summer camp, with obvious distinctions. First, the men might be "asked" to listen to a sermon for 10–20 minutes before being served any food. Once the speech was over, the men got back in a shorter line and, cafeteria style, were served a cup or bowl of soup or stew. They then sat down at community tables where hunks of stale bread awaited them ("but never soda crackers," writes historian William Manchester) on large plates. Sometimes coffee was served.

Most men described the soup as tasteless, thin, watery, lukewarm, and rarely with any vegetables. Some recall never being offered a second bowl or having bread to accompany the soup. Others, though a smaller number, remember second helpings, bread, cheese sandwiches, and oatmeal.

After several minutes, some authority figure from the mission or church came up to the men who had been eating and asked them to leave, to make room for the others still outside. At this point the departing men went over to another breadline to begin their wait for another meal. This process would be repeated until the third day when familiar "chronic deadbeats" were evicted from the long lines.

Breadlines in perspective

Interestingly, breadlines were confined usually to the winter months and to a few major cities such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Research indicates that cities such as Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Detroit, and Milwaukee had very few breadlines. In fact, most cities in America probably had no soup kitchens. Why some, like New York, had nearly 100 and others, like Los Angeles, had few or none is open for speculation.

Furthermore, in cities where these "human snake" lines existed, there appears to have been no women. Photographs of the breadlines show lines with only men. There were no breadlines in European cities, where the economies suffered similar problems. During the 50 years prior to the 1930s, nations like Britain, France, and Germany had in place unemployment insurance programs, which may have lessened the impact of widespread poverty and hunger.

Wait in line . . . taste the soup

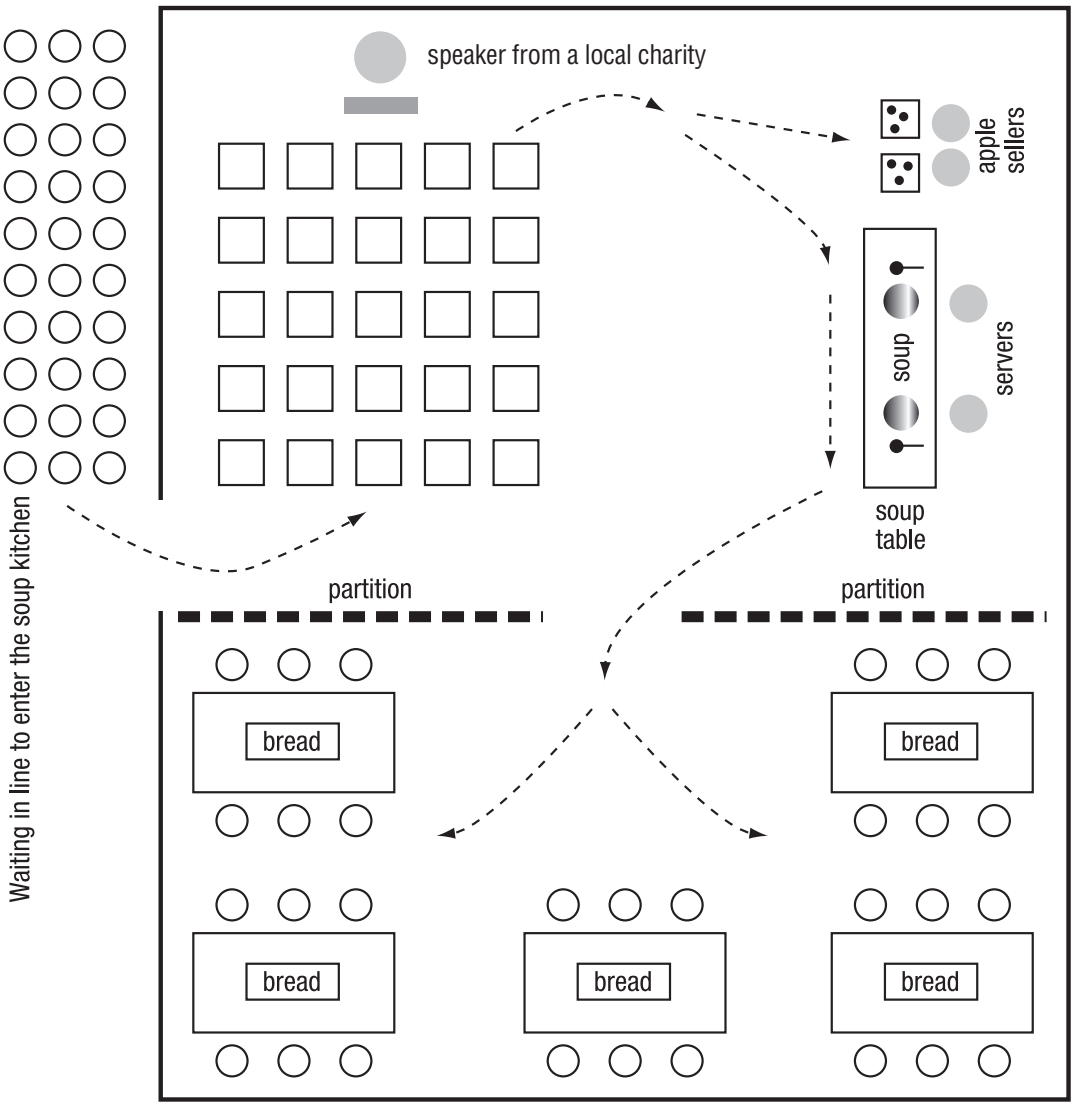
Humiliating as it was to wait and get into a soup kitchen in 1931, it was nearly a universal experience for urban people of all classes, or at least it was a metaphor for what most Americans were caught up in during the "hard times" of the early 1930s.

Now you will re-create this experience with your classmates. Play your role to the hilt and, as you do, feel some empathy for an earlier generation's struggle to survive, cope, and hang on to some dignity in the winter of 1933, amidst personal calamity no doubt unique in our history.

Unemployed men queued outside a Depression-era soup kitchen opened in Chicago by gangster Al Capone.

Image Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Schematic



Suggestions

- Stage the soup kitchen in the school cafeteria.
- Partition off the dining area from the lecture area.
- Use chairs only for the lecture audience.
- Try to use rectangular tables for dining.

Role Sheet

Apple sellers

You buy 25–30 apples (small inexpensive ones in a large bag), put them in a cardboard box on a red flyer wagon, so that you are ready to sell them to your fellow down-and-outers as they wait in line for free soup. When all are inside, continue selling to them for three to five cents apiece.

Acting tip
When you speak, speak with feeling!

Soup servers

One or two of you wear white shirts and white aprons as you ladle out a cup of soup to each down-and-outer who is in front of you across the serving table. As you do this chore, commiserate with the hungry men. For example, you might say, "This hearty fare will fix you up on this cold winter morning."

Men under Hoover blankets

Two or three of you lie down "outside" near the breadline, place old newspapers over your body, and pretend you are asleep.

Speaker from a local charity

In most cases, soup kitchens were run by churches and community missions. As a sort of requirement, the men in line had to sit through a short lecture before being served the free soup and bread. As this speaker, compose a one- to three-minute lecture including:

- The economic catastrophe cannot last.
- Have faith in our leaders, especially President Hoover.
- Be positive. Keep looking for work.
- Love each other.
- Help each other.
- Share food and clothing.

Acting tip
Come dressed in a clean suit with a white shirt and tie.

You'll do a better job on your sermon if you practice it at home the night before—in front of a mirror and/or a parent. Make sure your voice is warm and passionate. Look the down-and-outers right in the eye as you speak.

After your lecture go around the tables and say positive, uplifting things to the men. Cheer them up! Pat them on the back!

Postscript

While it is true that soup kitchens and breadlines were neither evident in every city nor present in any cities all year round, they were a very important lifeline for many who needed a meal to survive the hard times of the early 1930s. Men who stood in city breadlines and others like them who struggled in small towns and on farms across the country found it difficult to understand why such poverty and misery happened to them.

It was easy to focus blame for America's economic ills on the White House. President Hoover's detached manner gave critics a field day, and the country's pre-election conditions of 1932 made his reelection impossible. In that pivotal campaign and election, Hoover the Republican was trounced by Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A former governor of New York, Roosevelt had already experimented with statewide relief programs, and he now promised a "New Deal" for the American people. The public sensed a man who cared and would help them.

After FDR's inauguration on March 4, 1933, he launched a blizzard of "alphabet agencies," each designed to help an aspect of society or the economy. His goal: to put men back to work and give relief to the suffering. To do this, he led Congress to act upon an unprecedented number of reforms that reached into the future, far beyond the New Deal. Since the government was becoming closely involved in business and industry, many would label Roosevelt's programs socialistic. Others answered that the New Deal used unorthodox methods to save our capitalistic system and to increase the national government's role in helping American citizens.

How did the struggle for survival affect the common people who stood in breadlines and tried to find meaningful things to do to forget their day-to-day problems? A very small percentage, if any, starved. Most coped the best way they could—eating less, recycling items, moving in together, and wearing handed-down clothes. The struggle's effects were seen years later. Months and years of an uneven diet, exposure to the elements, and bouts with mental depression produced thousands of cases of malnutrition, people with concave abdomens, loose and sallow skin, bad teeth, heart and circulatory problems, mental disorders, and limb deformities. The vagabonds of the 1930s, who roamed the country on freight trains and ate beans day after day in makeshift hobo jungles, often suffered from these illnesses.

One can only wonder what further effects could have burdened later generations had it not been for the relief programs of the New Deal, and the churches, missions, and charities that opened their hearts and doors to feed desperate, hungry men a bowl of soup and a piece of stale bread.

Historical Investigation Activity

Depression-Era Soup Kitchen (1933)

Focus Question

Should Herbert Hoover be judged a failure as president for his apparent indifference to suffering and his lackluster efforts that possibly made the Depression worse?

Materials Needed for This Historical Investigation

- **Documents A–G**—*class set*
- **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**—*class set*

Lesson Plan

1. Getting Started

   - Ask students, "What can you tell me about President Hoover's administration, the man himself, and the conditions of the country during most of his term as president—1929–1933?" Write responses on the board as three major spokes emanating from a "hub" circle and discuss those responses. If students did the Activator, this should be easy.

2. Backstory to Use as Instruction

   - Herbert Hoover (1874–1964) has been called the "accident" president because he took office just eight months before the calamitous stock market crash in October, 1929. To a large degree, Hoover was clearly a victim of bad timing, for he had little to do in causing the Crash of '29 and the near collapse of the U.S. Treasury. Before 1920, Hoover had an illustrious career in public service. Indeed, his early life exemplifies personal grit, determination, and hard work. Born in Iowa, he was orphaned at the age of nine and moved to Oregon to be raised by relatives. After graduating from Stanford University in California, Hoover became a renowned engineer and traveled all over the world solving problems and founding companies. As he did, he became quite wealthy and earned a sterling and deserved reputation as a skilled problem-solver, investor, financier, and organizer of men.
   - Soon, however, his government in the U.S. called him to public service. His work administering the distribution of 2 million tons of food during the Great War for Belgium Relief earned him the title of "The Great Humanitarian."

- When the U.S. entered the war in April 1917, Hoover was called upon by President Wilson to head the U.S. Food Administration. Using the slogan "Food Will Win the War," Hoover established set days for Americans to avoid eating specified foods (meatless Mondays) so these foods could be saved for soldiers' rations. This power wielded by Hoover ("the food czar") preaching the "gospel of the clean plate" was dubbed "Hooverizing" by government publicists.
- After his success organizing wartime food production and consumption, Hoover, in the postwar years, organized shipments of food to relieve starving Europeans, including the Russians and the defeated German peoples.
- For his efforts, the New York Times honored Hoover as one of the "Ten Most Important Living Americans." That label helped Hoover consider a potentially unlimited political career in the 1920s.
- Eventually, Hoover accepted a position as Secretary of Commerce in the cabinets of Presidents Harding and Coolidge. As expected, he served successfully in this post, among other accomplishments, improving relations between government and business. Some believe that Hoover was the best, most efficient, Secretary of Commerce down to our day.
- The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 flooded millions of acres and displaced some 1.5 million people. Hoover was requested by several governors to set up health units in the flooded states, helping to stamp out malaria, pellagra, and typhoid fever. His success there brought Hoover even more fame and honor and increased his fame as a selfless humanitarian.
- All these efforts made Hoover a leading Republican candidate in 1928, especially after incumbent Calvin Coolidge chose not to seek a second term. Hoover became the thirty-first president when he defeated New York Governor Al Smith in November 1928.
- Within months of his inauguration, however, American's booming economy "laid an egg." Despite his efforts to turn the economy around with limited federal government assistance and an avoidance of socialism policies, President Hoover's inflexible, rigid philosophy of "rugged individualism" proved not to be the right solution for such a massive economic downturn.
- The "hard times" in the years 1930–1932 hurt Hoover's chances of being reelected. In fact, Hoover became the "whipping boy" for almost every individual and group in the country and his name became an adjective for the makeshift measures of the Depression's new poor: Hoovervilles were shantytowns for the homeless; Hoover flags were pants pockets turned inside out; Hoover wagons were abandoned cars; Hoover blankets were newspapers that hobos used to cover themselves at night.

- It was in this atmosphere that down-and-out Americans went to the voting polls in November 1932, and, rejecting Hoover, voted for the Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt.

3. Say, "From this backstory and the Activator you have experienced, before we examine the documents on this subject, do you think Herbert Hoover deserves to be called a failure as president because his apparent indifference, conservative principles, and seemingly lackluster efforts to relieve misery during the 'hard times' weren't enough and, in fact, made the early Depression years worse?"

4. Pass out the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** and have students hypothesize (see the statement in #1) about Hoover's role in the early Depression.

5. After a few minutes of writing, stop your students and poll them with a show of hands, giving you a working hypothesis. Discuss responses if you have time. Say, "Our working hypothesis, before we analyze the documents, is . . ."

6. Pass out the **Documents A–G** package. Say, "What do the documents tell us and what can we conclude? That's our task." It may be wise to orally read the first one or two documents and go over what they say. Remind students to work through documents carefully, and tell them there is no order or sequence to the documents. Perhaps the first task might be to have students put the documents in chronological order. Once done, release students (in pairs or small groups) to work.

7. Allow 30–40 minutes for students to work before having them fill out the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**.

8. Then discuss thoroughly and have students write their longer paragraphs on the **focus question** as a closure. Have volunteers read these to conclude the activity.

Option for Lesson Plan

If you . . .

- Have students whose abilities may make it difficult to analyze all the documents in this package . . .

Or

- Have limited time in class during any particular unit to implement the full package of documents . . .

Consider carefully pulling out 2–3 documents to use that will still help students think like historians. Using this strategy would mean selecting only those tasks and questions on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** that directly apply to the documents you have chosen to use. Whatever the case, these investigations, even in an abbreviated format, can still be effective and fulfill your objectives.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Points to Ponder Response Sheet

Focus Question: Should Herbert Hoover be judged a failure as president for his apparent indifference to suffering and his lackluster efforts that possibly made the Depression worse?

1. Initial Hypothesis: Because of his indifference to suffering by others and his lackluster efforts to relieve the plight of the "common man," President Herbert Hoover should be considered a failure.

   Your Initial Reaction:

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. **Document A (3 excerpts):** Based on excerpts 1 and 3, which was worse for the desperate: doing without (hunger, deprivation) or loss of hope and shame for being on relief?

   _____

   _____

   In excerpt 2, which year statistically was the worst in GNP, stock values, and unemployment?

   _____

   _____

3. **Excerpt 3:** What is meant by "Mellon pulled the whistle?"

   _____

   "Hoover rang the bell?"

   _____

4. **Document B:** What specifically does candidate Roosevelt blame Hoover for? (Use a maximum of 15 words.)

   _____

   _____

5. **Document C:** How is the phrase "rugged individualism" used in opposition to "paternalism" and "state socialism"?

_____

_____

Hoover's 1928 statement about "the abolition of poverty" seemed incredible considering what happened less than a year later. Do you think Hoover was just ill-informed, and ignorant of economics, or did the Crash of '29 come on too suddenly to avert? (**Note:** Hoover spoke these words as he was running for president.)

_____

_____

6. **Document D:** Composed for the musical *Annie* in 1977, this song indicates exactly what about the Depression and Hoover?

_____

_____

7. **Document E:** Hoover was in a losing battle with FDR when he spoke these words in 1932. In what ways is this both an honest and a dishonest campaign speech?

_____

_____

8. **Documents F/G:** Hoover's reputation has gone through a revisionist stage. What specific data from these documents can be used to bolster the claim that Hoover was, like others in the 1930s, a victim, an "accident," of the Great Depression?

_____

_____

What data in these 2 documents might be used to argue that Hoover failed?

_____

_____

9. If you could ask President Hoover one question, what would it be and what kind of answer would you expect from him?

   Q. _____

   A. _____

10. In one lengthy paragraph answer the **Focus Question**, using evidence from the document package to support your point of view.

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

11. Postscript: As president of the United States, Hoover has over the years been blamed for the miseries caused from the near-collapse of the economy and the ensuing despair and hopeless attitude held by most everyone affected. Is this fair—to blame Hoover or any other president for the economic slumps and recessions or economic booms? Do recessions and booms happen as part of the economic cycle?

Document A

Reflections of "Hard Times"

Excerpt 1

> Here were all these people living in old, rusted-out car bodies. I mean that was their home. There were people living in shacks made of orange crates. One family with a whole lot of kids were living in a piano box. This wasn't just a little section, this was maybe ten-miles wide and ten-miles long. People living in whatever they could junk together. . . .
>
> I think that's the worst thing that our system does to people, is to take away their pride. It prevents them from being a human being. . . .
>
> I don't think people were put on earth to suffer. I think that's a lot of nonsense. I think we are the highest development on the earth, and I think we were put here to live and be happy and to enjoy everything that's here. I don't think it's right for a handful of people to get ahold of all the things that make living a joy instead of a sorrow. You wake up in the morning, and it consciously hits you—it's just like a big hand that takes your heart and squeezes it—because you don't know what that day is going to bring: hunger or you don't know.

Source: Peggy Terry of Chicago, in Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Avon Books, 1973).

Excerpt 2

GNP, Stock Values, and Unemployment

Year	Gross National Product (in billions)	Stock Values New York Stock Exchange (in billions)	Unemployment (Percent)
1920	$140.0	$5.5	5.2
1921	$127.8	$4.7	11.7
1922	$148.0	$5.7	6.7
1923	$165.9	$5.9	2.4
1924	$165.5	$5.9	5.0
1925	$179.4	$7.6	3.2
1926	$190.0	$8.6	1.8
1927	$189.8	$10.5	3.3
1928	$190.9	$13.7	4.2
1929	$203.6	$17.9	3.2
1930	$183.5	$14.4	8.7
1931	$169.3	$7.5	15.9
1932	$144.2	$3.8	23.6

Source: Henry W. Bragdon, and others, *History of a Free Nation* (New York: McGraw-Hill/Glencoe, 1998).

Excerpt 3

Mellon* pulled the whistle,
Hoover rang the bell
Wall Street gave the signal,
And the country went to hell.

—Anonymous Ditty

*Andrew Mellon – a very wealthy Secretary of the Treasury during the 1920s

Document B

Candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt Attacks His Opponent, Herbert Hoover

Despite giving credit for Hoover's "unremitting efforts," FDR assailed the incumbent president on several counts in this campaign speech, mostly indicting Hoover for "wrong action, for delayed action, for lack of frankness and for lack of courage."

> Finally, when facts could no longer be ignored and excuses had to be found, Washington discovered that the depression came from abroad. In October of last year, the official policy came to us as follows: "The depression has been deepened by events from abroad which are beyond the control either of our citizens or our Government"—an excuse, note well, my friends, which the President still maintained in his acceptance speech last week. . . .
>
> So I sum up the history of the present Administration in four sentences:
>
> First, it encouraged speculation and overproduction, through its false economic policies.
>
> Second, it attempted to minimize the [1929 stock market] crash and misled the people as to its gravity.
>
> Third, it erroneously charged the cause to other Nations of the world.
>
> And finally, it refused to recognize and correct the evils at home which had brought it forth; it delayed relief; it forgot reform.

Source: Speech of August 20, 1932, given in Columbus, Ohio as printed in *Roosevelt's Public Papers*, Vol 1, p. 677.

Document C

Hoover's Own Words (1928)

During 150 years we have builded [sic] up a form of self-government and a social system which is peculiarly our own. It differs essentially from all others in the world. It is the American system. It is just as definite and positive a political and a social system as has ever been developed on earth. It is founded upon a particular conception of self-government in which decentralized local responsibility is the very base. Further than this, it is founded upon the conception that only through ordered liberty, freedom and equal opportunity to the individual will his initiative and enterprise spur on the march of progress. And in our insistence upon equality of opportunity has our system advanced beyond all the world.

During the war we necessarily turned to the Government to solve every difficult economic problem. . . . We were challenged with a peace-time choice between the American system of rugged individualism and a European philosophy of diametrically opposed doctrines—doctrines of paternalism and state socialism. . . . It would have meant the undermining of the individual initiative and enterprise through which our people have grown to unparalleled greatness. . . .

There is, therefore, submitted to the American people a question of fundamental principle. That is: shall we depart from the principles of our American political and economic system, upon which we have advanced beyond all the rest of the world, in order to adopt methods based on principles destructive of its very foundations? . . .

. . . We are nearer today to the ideal of the abolition of poverty and fear from the lives of men and women than ever before in any land. And I again repeat that the departure from our American system by injecting principles destructive to it which our opponents propose will jeopardize the very liberty and freedom of our people, will destroy equality of opportunity, not alone to ourselves but to our children.

Source: 1928 Campaign Speech by Herbert Hoover as reprinted in Diane Ravitch, Ed. *The American Reader: Words That Moved a Nation* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990).

Document D

Broadway Takes a Cheap Shot?

Excerpt from song "We'd Like to Thank You Herbert Hoover"

All:

Today we're living in a shanty
Today we're scrounging for a meal

Sophie:

Today I'm stealing coal for fires
Who knew I could steal?

Men:

I used to winter in the tropics

Women:

I spent my summers at the shore

Fred:

I used to throw away the papers

All:

He don't any more
We'd like to thank you: Herbert Hoover
For really showing us the way
We'd like to thank you: Herbert Hoover
You made us what we are today
Prosperity was 'round the corner
The cozy cottage built for two
In this blue heaven that you gave us
Yes! We're turning blue!

Source: Lyrics by Martin Charnin for the 1977 Broadway musical *Annie*. This song, dripping with sarcasm, was sung in a Hooverville. Incidentally, the film version *Annie* (1982) omitted this song.

Document E

Hoover Defends His Actions as President

Exhausted and anxious to distance himself from what was popularly called the "Hoover depression" and despite dire predictions that he would be defeated by a wide margin in the upcoming election, Hoover spoke these words late during the campaign of 1932, in defense of his actions during his presidency to combat the economic downturn.

> [W]e have fought an unending war against the effect of these calamities upon our people. . . . We have fought the good fight to protect our people in a thousand cities from hunger and cold.
>
> We have carried on an unceasing campaign to protect the Nation from that unhealing class bitterness which arises from strikes and lockouts and industrial conflict. We have accomplished this through the willing agreement of employer and labor, which placed humanity before money through the sacrifice of profits and dividends before wages.
>
> We have defended millions from the tragic result of droughts.
>
> We have mobilized a vast expansion of public construction to make work for the unemployed.
>
> We fought the battle to balance the budget.
>
> We have defended the country from being forced off the gold standard, with its crushing effect upon all who are in debt.
>
> We have battled to provide a supply of credits to merchants and farmers and industries.
>
> We have fought to retard falling prices.
>
> We have struggled to save homes and farms from foreclosure of mortgages; battled to save millions of depositors and borrowers from the ruin caused by the failure of banks; fought to assure the safety of millions of policyholders from failure of their insurance companies. . . .
>
> . . . [W]e have fought to preserve the safety, the principles, and ideals of American life. We have builded [sic] the foundations of recovery. . . .
>
> Thousands of our people in their bitter distress and losses today are saying that "things could not be worse." No person who has any remote understanding of the forces which confronted this country during these last eighteen months ever utters that remark. Had it not been for the immediate and unprecedented actions of our government, things would be infinitely worse today.

Source: Campaign speech by Herbert Hoover as reported in the *New York Times* (October 5, 1932).

Document F

Reassessing Hoover, the Man and the President, on His 75th birthday

> Several of the basic reforms Americans have come to associate with the New Deal were established or foreshadowed in legislation of the much-derided "Hoover era." Let's look at the record, as Herbert Hoover's great adversary, the late Alfred E. Smith, used to say. On Mr. Hoover's initiative, a GOP Congress enacted in 1929 the first agricultural marketing act. He was responsible for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, sometimes erroneously attributed to FDR—as was another Hoover creation, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. In 1932, safeguards to organized labor in the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 were reinforced by legislation, prohibiting injunctions against unions and affirming the technique of collective bargaining. This law, sponsored by GOP Senator George W. Norris and GOP Congressman Fiorello La Guardia, was signed by GOP President Hoover. Of the general period climaxed by Mr. Hoover's Presidency, Charles A. and Mary R. Beard note in their "Basic History of the United States" that "the so-called age of reaction and disillusionment was in many respects an age of progress, not of retreat."
>
> He is . . . a bit stodgy, somewhat too conservative for his times; given to fundamental principles and abstract expression rather than to quick-witted extemporization and easy affability. But put him in an appointive rather than an elective job, give him work to do of the sort that can benefit everybody, and Herbert Hoover shows up at his best. As Americans have begun to realize on this occasion of his 75th birthday, Herbert Hoover at his best is an authentically great American.

Source: The Democratic–Independent Springfield (Ohio) *Sun,* published by James M. Cox, Democratic nominee for president in 1920 (August 10, 1949), as quoted in David Hinshaw, *Herbert Hoover: American Quaker* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1950).

Document G

Two Historians Answer the Hoover Critics

Does Hoover's record as president need a second look, a reassessment from the vantage point of 70 years? Historians Richard Norton Smith and Timothy Walch attempt to balance the scales after decades of blame and abuse placed on Hoover in the history books.

Few Americans have known greater acclaim or more bitter criticism than Herbert Hoover. . . .

Usually cast as a President defined by his failure to contain the Great Depression, Hoover's story is far more complex and more interesting. To begin with, Hoover was an activist reformer, albeit one without the political skills needed to sell himself and his programs to Congress and the public. A shy man, he insisted on keeping much of his life and good deeds out of the public eye. Only in politics is this a character flaw, yet it prevented those around Hoover from portraying him as a compassionate leader, or warding off portrayals of him as a cold, uncaring figure responsible for nearly everything that was going wrong in the American economy.

As a result, Hoover's presidency remains largely an untold story. . . .

True to his instincts, Hoover's first months in office were a whirlwind of reform. . . .

A Hoover-appointed commission paved the way for an additional 3 million acres of national parks and 2.3 million acres in national forests. In the summer of 1929 the President convinced a special session of Congress to establish a Federal Farm Board to support farm prices. He pressed ahead with plans for a series of dams in the Tennessee Valley and in central California and tax cuts graduated to favor low-income Americans. . . .

. . . He proposed a federal Department of Education as well as fifty-dollar-a-month pensions for Americans over sixty-five—the last proposal falling by the wayside after Wall Street crashed. In November 1930, Hoover presided over pioneering White House conferences on child health and protection and home building and home ownership. . . .

Refusing to accept the "natural" economic cycle in which a market crash was followed by cuts in business investment, production, and wages, Hoover summoned industrialists to the White House on November 21, part of a round-robin of conferences with business, labor, and farm leaders, and secured a promise to hold the line on wages. . . .

The President ordered federal departments to speed up construction projects. He contacted all forty-eight state governors to make a similar appeal for expanded public works. He went to Congress with a $160 million tax cut, coupled with a doubling of resources for public buildings and dams, highways, and harbors. . . .

No American President entered office with greater expectations, or left with more bitter disappointments, than Herbert Hoover. "I only wish I could say what is in my heart," he remarked as hard times engulfed the nation and his popularity evaporated. Herbert Hoover's heart never could subdue his head.

Source: Richard Norton Smith and Timothy Walch, "The Ordeal of Herbert Hoover," *Prologue Magazine* 36, no. 2 (Summer, 2004). Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration. Both historians are former directors of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum in West Branch, Iowa, and have written books on Hoover.

Radio Shows 1938

Lesson Plan

Overview

This Activator will involve your students in creating a popular radio program of the 1930s and then performing it with sound effects much in the same manner radio shows were done in that difficult decade. The 1930s are considered to be the Golden Age of Radio, an era of hard times when the American people needed cheap entertainment and information to allow them to "escape" from the harsh realities of life during The Great Depression. As your students produce such a radio show, they will appreciate the collaborative effort as well as understand how their grandparents and great-grandparents spent a considerable amount of their leisure time.

Setup

1. **Duplication**

    - Consider duplicating both the **Background Essay** and the **Postscript** as handouts; however, you may choose to give the information in both as brief lectures if you have capable students and are teaching note-taking.
    - Duplicate one copy of each **Radio Show Format Sheet**, one for each of your script groups. (See **Roles** below about dividing your class into these groups.)

Teaching tip
Perhaps you could bring in items suggested on the **Sound Effects Experts** page (rain for example) and demonstrate what can be done to create reality.

2. **Schematic, props, costumes:** Study the **Schematic** and **Sound Effects Experts** carefully. Find and bring to your classroom—possibly with students' help—any props and sound effects devises, gizmos, or gadgets. Your students should be very helpful in bringing to class all kinds of potentially effective sound effects items.

3. **Roles**

    - In this activator you need to divide your class into 5–6 groups consisting of students who will cooperate and get the job done.
    - Radio of the 1930s often did perpetuate racist and sexist stereotypes. Point out such stereotypes to your students and discuss. Caution against including discriminatory dialog in their scripts.
    - If you have some students who have special skills or who would love to be sound effects experts, make sure they have this opportunity within their groups.

4. **Narrator(s):** Unlike many of the other Activators, there are no narrators in this Activator. Instead, Announcers within each group serve a similar function as they set the scene and mood for their group's radio script.

Directions

1. Use the **Background Essay** as a handout. Hand it out either the day before as homework or pass it out now. If you have given it as homework, conduct an informal discussion of its main points right away.

2. If you are passing it out now, allow your students time to read the essay and then conduct your discussion. Depending on your students' reading level, you may wish to help your students read it aloud prior to the discussion.

3. Have students take notes on your lecture on the **Background Essay's** content prior to a check for understanding discussion in which students use their lecture notes.

4. Display the **Schematic**, explain it, assign students to the various groups, and then assign each group its specific duplicated **Radio Show Format Sheet**.

5. Provide time for groups to write their scripts. Emphasize the importance of sound effects on radio listeners and how much fun they'll have creating and presenting these sound effects during their script presentation.

6. Students will no doubt need one class period to work on their scripts. To inspire them, locate a recording of an old radio show. Play for the class an oldie such as *The Shadow, The Lone Ranger*, or some other program which exhibits clearly how effective sound effects can be. Encourage them to write a clear, simple, and brief script.

7. Be sure your students practice the lines they've written and then devise some simple sound effects before they tell you they are ready to perform. After one day of writing the scripts, practicing their lines, and locating devices/gadgets to utilize as sound effects, group after group will come forward and upon the signal—an "On the Air" sign?—each group will present its specific radio program. The rest of the class will, of course, want to watch as an audience. For the old-time radio experience, have the audience close their eyes and imagine the pictures painted by the voices and sounds. Or, have the production done behind voting booths, or some kind of partition.

Teaching tip
Encourage students to use a script format while preparing their work. Example:

- Lone Ranger: "Tonto, here's a trail."
- Tonto: "I see, Kemosabe, it is marked well."

Teaching tip
Students who perform comedy scripts may want to record laughter to play at appropriate times.

8. All six (or less) groups should take no more than six to eight minutes each, with one to two minutes to set up.

9. You may want to record each program to play back during the debriefing.

Debriefing

Decide whether you want to use a short or long debriefing. Here are possible ways to make meaningful the uniqueness of radio programs several decades ago:

Short debriefing

1. If you have duplicated it, pass out the **Postscript** and have students read it. Of course, you may wish to simply tell students this information.

2. Ask students to discuss what they learned and what they felt as they performed their roles in radio programming.

3. Consider having students write a Learning Log entry following this short debriefing.

Teaching tip

If you are old enough to remember radio before the impact of television, share some personal memories of that unique experience. Perhaps instead you could have students close their eyes as you read a short, colorful story. Afterward, discuss imagination. That was radio!

Long debriefing

Use one or more of the following activities:

1. If you have duplicated it, pass out the **Postscript** and have students read it. Of course, you may wish to simply tell students this information.

2. Ask students questions such as these: How many of you listen to radio each day? How many hours compared with television? What if there were no TV, how different would radio be today?

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each medium? How are they similar and different? (You may wish to have your students—individually or in study pairs—fill out a Venn Diagram showing similarities and differences.)

4. Which medium has had a greater impact and why?

5. If televisions were suddenly banned and people could listen only to radio, what changes in American life would occur?

6. Do you think radio could convey the same images, deal with the same issues, and in general inform and entertain the American people as well (or as poorly) as TV? What qualities were required to be a radio actor then? What attributes does it take to be a successful film or TV star today that are different from a radio celebrity's necessary attributes then?

7. Television has been called the "opiate of the masses," ''the idiot box," ''the boob tube," and ''the light that failed!" It is, "a medium because it is never well done or rare." Do any of these phrases also fit radio?

8. Show Ken Burns' documentary "*Radio: Empire of the Air."* Select only a snippet or two to show if you cannot afford to spend two hours' time. There is a brief section on sound effects. Most fascinating is the running story of Edwin Armstrong and Lee de Forest, battling for "inventor" recognition.

9. Show all or part of Woody Allen's *Radio Days,* a delightful story of radio's impact on everyday life in the 1930s and 1940s.

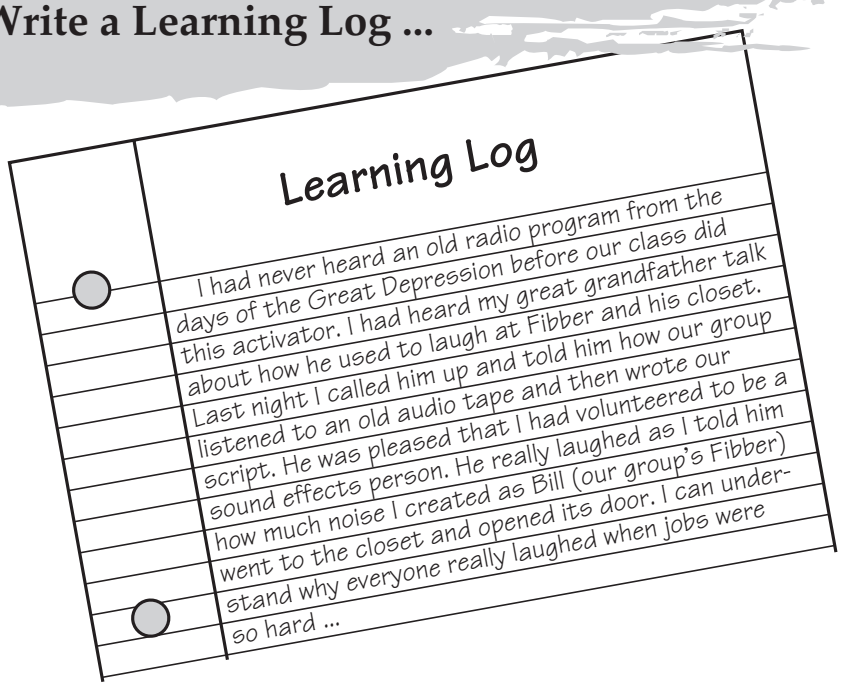
10. Ask students to express some feelings about whether they would like to listen to *The Lone Ranger*, or *One Man's Family*, or *The Shadow* if they were broadcast over radio today? Or would they prefer to listen to radio's version of some current TV hit. Would they laugh, or be touched in the same way?

11. Finally, have students write a Learning Log entry in which they discuss what they learned and felt during this activator.

Teaching tip

An observer once said that television forced you to sit down and watch. Radio allowed you the freedom to do something else at the same time. Ask students to agree or disagree with this observation.

Write a Learning Log ...



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Wertheim, Arthur F. *Radio Comedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Teaching tip
Students will really enjoy viewing some of the early history of radio and hearing audio recordings of some actual shows.

Visual/audio history

Documentary: *Radio: Empire of the Air*, 1992 (PBS; two hours).

Feature Film: *Radio Days*. This Woody Allen film from 1987 has several scenes showing how radio shows were performed decades ago.

Audio: There are many audio recordings and old radio shows from the golden age. Search for them online or at a large music store.

Visuals are important and often essential. And while there are countless visuals to use in the classroom for this particular activator (films and documentaries), most of these might be difficult to find and then show. Instead, it is recommended that you as a teacher in the 21st century might find it easier to go online to locate exactly the kind of visuals most appropriate. As of 2016, Crash Course with John Green has been extensively utilized by teachers.

Background Essay

Place: New York City
Time: May 1938

Imagination!

Visualize if you can a family of four dressed in nondescript clothes of the Great Depression years staring at a polished wooden cabinet. There is no movement, save the change of expressions on each of the faces intently listening to the voices coming out of the cabinet. Their imaginations paint-brush scenes of adventure in exotic places, romance, comedic situations, and even of another family's living room where familiar problems were discussed. This was radio, and its grip on Americans was incalculable at a time—the 1930s—when some brief diversion from reality was essential.

"... the Golden Age of Radio ..."

1930s

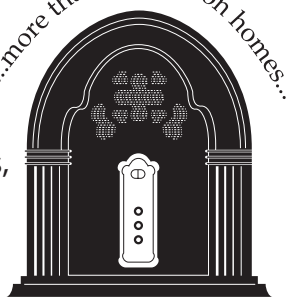
Early radio

Radio's popularity in the 1930s wouldn't have been possible without communications inventions by Samuel F. B. Morse, Alexander Graham Bell, Guglielmo Marconi, Edwin Armstrong, and Lee de Forest. Their work made radio (sound waves that radiate out = radio) a universal reality. Until the 1920s, however, radio was not available to the masses. During World War I, radio had gained some respect when it was used for sea rescues and for exchanging messages over long distances. Yet few saw radio as an entertainment medium. One who did, David Sarnoff, founded the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), in 1919. He and his company would play an important role in radio's phenomenal growth during the 1920s.

The 1920s

Only visionaries like Sarnoff could have accurately predicted radio's explosion in the "Golden Twenties." Progressing from primitive crystal-set receivers broadcasting the returns of the 1920 presidential election over the static airwaves of Pittsburgh's KDKA, radio eventually entered more than 10 million homes by the end of the decade. Programming was varied: Paul Whiteman's Jazz Band, Rudy Vallee's singing, the comic antics of Fibber McGee, news broadcasts from fledgling networks National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and Columbia Broadcasting Station (CBS). Soon radio became part of each American's day, making America of the 1920s "a nation of listeners." At the same time, the new medium helped create a national culture by making Americans aware of the same issues, trends, fads, and sports heroes. It blurred the regional differences common before the 1920s. Radio also advanced the techniques of Madison Avenue advertising. Americans, mostly through radio, billboards, and magazines, began to wear the same clothes, drink and eat the same foods, and feel pressured to use the same mouthwash. The growing impact of radio in the 1920s was clearly obvious: it was refining and redefining American tastes.

"...more than ten million homes..."



The Golden Age

If the 1920s was radio's infancy, then the 1930s through the late 1940s was its adolescence, some say its Golden Age. Along with movies, radio served countless millions during the Great Depression and World War II. In these

years, radio's spellbinding voices were heard everywhere. The wide variety of programming we associate with radio now became standard in this era. Soon advertisers, producers, and stars began to see the power and influence of radio. Those "stars" who broke from movies or the stage to try radio comedy or drama were soon earning salaries rivaling those who stayed. Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, Jack Benny, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Bob Hope, and Fred Allen became popular radio personalities. Most parlayed this success into television stardom in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

A box in every home

When the stock market crashed in 1929, signaling the start of difficult economic times, there were 10 million households with at least one radio. By 1939 that figure had soared to 30 million. In fact, this "box in every home" was like a religious altar before which the family worshipped. The radio was the family's link to the outside world; it provided no-cost entertainment during long winter months and enhanced otherwise monotonous hours of frequent idleness endured by the unemployed. Radio sets were constant companions in the home, and they truly enriched owners' lives.

"... Dad listened to the news as world events propelled the U.S. toward global war ..."

Radio's variety

The families who owned and coveted their Zenith, General Electric, or RCA model radios usually listened together, but each member had special reasons to look forward to its diverse weekly programming. Dad listened to the news as world events propelled the U.S. toward global war, but he laughed at the famous ''feud" between comedians Jack Benny and Fred Allen. Mom listened to soap operas such as *Ma Perkins* and *One Man's Family*. Not left out by any means, the kids always had *Jack Armstrong—All-American Boy, Terry and the Pirates,* and the dangerous streets of *Gangbusters* to learn lessons of morality in exotic places, or to experience how the FBI snagged Public Enemy No. 1. Favorite mystery shows such as *The Shadow* were enjoyed by every age group. Usually with only one radio, each family gathered around ''the box," which served as the entertainment and social focus after dinner and before the kids went off to bed.

The realities of radio

Although it sometimes appeared that this little box of miracles was a perfect medium in the 1930s, the actual record indicates that it wasn't. Radio, like its contemporary, the movies, and later, television, was seriously flawed. For example, it perpetuated vicious stereotypes of minorities and women. Further, radio programming, once it was successful, became monotonously standardized without much originality. Demagogues, homegrown and overseas, came to use the airwaves to spew radical and religious intolerance. Most importantly, radio, many believe, became a tool for commercial hucksterism at the expense of potentially high-quality drama and comedy productions. Critics at the height of radio popularity attacked its policy of catering to the tastes of the masses.

Sound effects

Another kind of reality came from the uniqueness of radio—sound effects. To make radio programs seem realistic with authentic sounds, sound-effects experts used ingenious devices to convince listeners that, indeed, a door did close, a dead body did drop, and junk really fell on Fibber McGee when he opened up his hall closet. So skilled were they at what they did, sound effects men in 1938 made people panic all over the Eastern coast as "Martians" invaded New Jersey during a CBS broadcast of H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*.

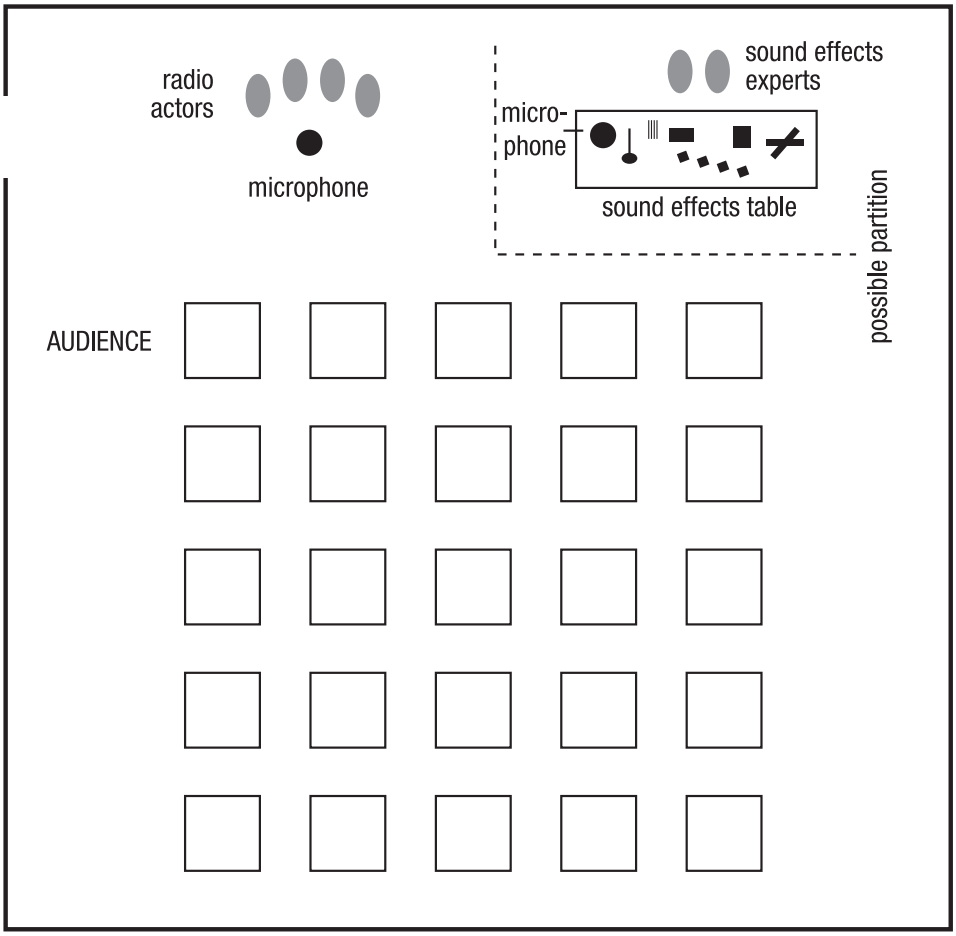
Radio days

It is now time for you and your classmates to write a brief radio script and then perform it with sound effects. This is radio . . . and listening to—not seeing—the action requires cleverness and skill. There's an old saying about radio in the age of television: ''The pictures are better." So, use your imagination and create some mental pictures as you go back to the glory days of American radio history.

Promotional photograph of sound effects team for *The March of Time* radio series, CBS Radio, circa 1931. Left to right: Phonograph record of airplane sonics, machine gun imitator, marching troops, heavy artillery.

Image Source: Culver Pictures Inc. Public domain via, Wikimedia Commons

Schematic



Suggestions

- Play at least one recording of an old radio show to inspire.
- Check all scripts to see if they are appropriate.
- Keep scripts brief, clear, and simple.
- Try to have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Reminder: This is radio! Voices of readers must "paint" all visual pictures and communicate all action.

Radio programs/actors needed

- *The Lone Ranger*
- *The Shadow*
- *Jack Armstrong*
- *One Man's Family*
- *Fibber McGee and Molly*
- *The Jack Benny Program*

Sound Effects Experts

Many in radio programming considered the sound-effects experts to be the unsung heroes. Few would disagree that these talented and clever individuals—more technicians than performers—enhanced to a great degree the success and listening pleasure of the shows upon which they worked. Mostly unappreciated but always necessary, they did their best work if they were undetected—because the sound effects fit the scripts' action. These experts could easily change a scene or a mood with clever and often strange devices. Chirping crickets made the listener think it was a rural setting; traffic noises meant it was a city. Likewise, your job will be to use such clever deceptions to convey setting and action over the radio.

Most all sounds were artificially created, even footsteps, which, by the way, could be made to discriminate between a man and a woman's walk. Many of the sound effects were common on almost all shows, and audiences became used to and expected to hear certain representative sounds for wind, thunder, ocean roar, lapping water, horses' hoof beats, coyote howls, gunfire, footsteps, doors opening and closing, bodies falling, sirens, fire, rain, cars backfiring, and chairs pulled out from a table. All sounds had to deceive the listener into thinking the noise was real. Without actually seeing the action, the listener had to imagine it—with the help of some brilliant sound effects masters, of course.

If the sound couldn't be duplicated vocally, these methods were often used:

Sound	Simulated by
Body falling	Sand bags, heavy objects
Rain	BBs in tin pan
Fire	Wax paper/cellophane
Hoof beats	Half coconut shells pounded into box of dirt
Echo	Voice in jar
Fistfight	Pounding into sand bag, pillow
Thunder	BBs inside balloon and shaken
Footsteps	Shoes on linoleum

Radio Show Format Sheets

Jack Armstrong
Adventure Serial

Characters:

- *Jack Armstrong*: the All-American Boy.
- *Billy Fairchild:* young boy who helps Armstrong, whom he idolizes.
- *Betty Fairchild:* young girl who helps Armstrong, whom she idolizes.
- *Babu:* Armstrong's friend in Asia; helps Jack solve mysteries.
- *Weissoul, the spy:* steals secrets and sells to highest bidder.

Announcer's introduction: Voice: "Jack Armstrong! Jack Armstrong! Jack Armstrong—the All-American boy . . . brought to you by Wheaties with the taste of whole grain. (*Pause*) When we last saw Jack, he was with Billy, Betty, and Babu near the Tibetan village of Wat-U. As they enter the cave of the eternal winds, they see Weissoul, the famous international spy, as he darts farther into the dark, deep cave. Jack believes Weissoul has stolen vital U.S. Army documents about the building of a new kind of rocket."

Plot synopsis: Since the announcer sets the scene above, your story should start with the heroes climbing up the mountain to the cave only to see Weissoul deep inside the cave. They then follow him into the cave. The chase continues through recesses of the cave until Weissoul runs into a tunnel dead end. A shouting match is followed by a scuffle, before the spy escapes only to fall down a hole and disappear with the secrets still on his person.

Suggested sound effects: winds outside the cave; inside of cave—footsteps, voices, scuffling, falling down a hole.

Commercial interruption: Wheaties song—"Won't you try Wheaties? / for wheat is the best food of man / they're crispy and crunchy the whole year through / Jack Armstrong never tires of them / and neither will you. So buy Wheaties / the best breakfast food in the land and the breakfast of champions! (*Pause)* Now back to Jack Armstrong—the All-American Boy."

The Shadow

Mystery Drama

Characters:

- *Lamont Cranston—the Shadow:* a crime fighter who becomes invisible as he fights injustice and gets into strange, forbidden places.
- *Margo Lane:* dutiful and lovely, she knows Cranston's secret identity and helps him in his important work.
- *Danny Malloy:* prisoner in a cell who claims he is innocent of setting fire to a downtown slum.
- *Warden:* a bureaucrat, but he is open-minded.

Announcer's introduction: Music theme. Shadow's voice (*filtered and spooky)*: "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows." *(wicked laugh and music)* **Announcer:** "Once again your neighborhood Blue Coal dealer brings you the thrilling adventures of *The Shadow* . . . the hard and relentless fight of one man against the forces of evil. This dramatization is designed to demonstrate forcibly to old and young alike that crime doesn't pay!" Music. **Announcer:** "The Shadow, a mysterious character who aids the forces of law and order, is in reality Lamont Cranston, wealthy young man-about-town. Several years ago in the Orient, Cranston learned a strange and mysterious secret—the hypnotic power to cloud men's minds so they cannot see him. Cranston's friend and companion, the lovely Margo Lane, is the only person who knows to whom the voice of the Shadow belongs. *(Pause)* Today's drama . . . 'Death Stalks the Young.'"

Closing: "The characters, names, places, and plot of *The Shadow* are fictitious. Any similarity to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. Again next week the Shadow will demonstrate that . . . " Shadow: "Crime does not pay. The Shadow knows!" *(wicked laugh and music)*

Plot synopsis: Start with Cranston in the prison warden's office discussing Danny Malloy's case. Even the warden has doubts, but since a jury has convicted the young man, nothing can be done. Next, have Lamont and Margo talking about what the Shadow must do to help Danny and bring the real culprit to justice. The Shadow goes invisible and shows up in Danny's cell to hear his story of what happened—land developer Howard Tanner sold Danny on a life of crime with a lure of $50 to set the fires. The last scene should have Cranston and the warden discussing a new trial.

Suggested sound effects: Doors opening and closing; restaurant sounds—glasses tinkling, background conversations; filtering voice when the Shadow speaks to give listener sense of invisibility; background sounds of jail cell; footsteps.

Commercial interruption: "Don't be cold and uncomfortable when winter hits your town. Call your neighborhood Blue Coal dealer and compare his low prices with any competitor. You'll soon find out that Blue Coal can't be beat. So this winter, do the right thing, like the Shadow would. Buy from Blue Coal! Now back to the Shadow!"

The Jack Benny Program

Comedy

Characters:

- *Jack Benny:* the fall guy, has his ego deflated often, target for jokes, violin-player, frugal to the degree of being a tightwad/skinflint.
- *Mary Livingstone:* wisecracking, pragmatic friend (actually Benny's real-life wife).
- *Rochester:* valet/chauffeur, with a raspy voice, calls Benny "Boss," and frequently outwits him.
- *Don Wilson:* the suave announcer, trades jokes with Benny and finds clever ways of introducing commercials.

Announcer's introduction: "It's the Jack Benny program . . . with Jack, Mary Livingstone, Rochester, Dennis Day, and Phil Harris. I'm your announcer Don Wilson. Here's our star . . . Jack Benny!" Benny: "Jell-O again." Brief exchange of jokes between Benny and Wilson usually follow leading into the plot below.

Plot synopsis: Jack and Mary talk about the high cost of living; Mary tries to convince Jack that his money would be safer in a bank downtown, rather than in his vault hidden deep below his house. Jack decides to make sure his money is still in the vault, so, accompanied by Mary and valet Rochester, he ventures down, down, down into the recesses of his home to visit his money. As the trio goes down, they encounter strange and funny things, including creaky vault doors, alarms, alligators splashing in a moat, an old soldier guarding the vault, a polar bear named Carmichael who eats handymen and tradesmen as they get lost in Benny's basement.

Suggested sound effects: walking down stairs, echoes, alarms, bells, creaky vault doors, bear growls, water splashing in a moat, combination lock noises, etc. Use catch phrases common on Benny's show: "Now, cut that out." ''Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" ''Well!" (*sigh).*

Commercial Interruption: Jell-O sponsored the Golden Years of Benny's radio program. Don Wilson, Benny's longtime announcer, worked Jell-O smoothly into the show. "Jell-O has six delicious flavors. I shopped around until I found half a dozen neckties, each one corresponding in color to a different flavor of Jell-O. You know strawberry, raspberry, lime, lemon, cherry, and orange." Commercial ended with Wilson and xylophone together, slowly harmonizing: "J-E-L-L-O!"

The Lone Ranger

Western Drama

Characters:

- *The Lone Ranger:* strong, forceful, decisive, deep voice
- *Tonto:* sidekick to the Lone Ranger, assists in every way, frequently calls the Lone Ranger "Kemosabe" (faithful friend)
- *Martha:* sheriff's daughter
- *Sheriff Willoughby*
- *Jake Cannon:* kidnapper
- *Men in saloon*

Announcer's introduction: Voice: "The Lone Ranger!" (*music: Rossini's "William Tell Overture"*). Hoof beats of galloping horse. Lone Ranger's Voice: "Hi-Yo-Silver!" Gunshots and hoof beats and announcer's voice: "A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust, and a hearty Hi-Yo-Silver! The Lone Ranger! With his faithful Indian companion, Tonto, the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains led the fight for law and order in the early western United States. Nowhere in the pages of history can one find a greater champion of justice. Return with us now to those thrilling hoof beats of the great horse Silver. The Lone Ranger rides again!" Lone Ranger: "Come on, Silver! Let's go, big fellow! Hi-Yo-Silver . . . away!" *Music.*

Plot synopsis: Develop a brief script about the Lone Ranger and Tonto on the trail of a man who kidnapped the sheriff's daughter, Martha. Have the two analyzing horse prints, riding through a storm looking for the kidnapper's camp, shooting it out with the kidnapper, rescuing Martha, and returning her to her father in a saloon, and riding off. End with someone saying, ''Who was that masked man?" Another: "Don't you know? That was the Lone Ranger!" Theme music (*Rossini's "William Tell Overture").*

Suggested sound effects: hoof beats of galloping horse, gunfire, wind, thunder (*a storm)*, scuffling *(fight/fists)*, crackling campfire, howls of wolves, chirps of crickets, background sounds in saloon.

Commercial Interruption: Wheat Chex cereal from Ralston—"Ralston, proud makers of Wheat Chex Cereal, presents *The Lone Ranger.* Kids, eat a bowl of Wheat Chex every day and you'll be getting all the nutrients for a strong, active body. Hi-Yo-Silver to you and eat Wheat Chex!"

Fibber McGee and Molly

Comedy

Characters:

- *Fibber McGee:* stubborn, exaggerates, brags, wild imagination, a wind bag, a laughingstock.
- *Molly McGee:* practical, usually plays along with husband's schemes and bravado.
- *"Sis":* neighbor child who harasses McGee with incessant ''why'' questions.

Announcer's introduction: "It's time to wander down to 79 Wistful Vista and see what's going on with Fibber McGee and Molly, a visit brought to you each Tuesday night on NBC by the people at Johnson Wax. For bright, shiny, and clean floors, use Johnson Wax Products. The McGee's do, and so should you. Let's now find out what Fibber is up to this time . . ."

Plot synopsis: Fibber and Molly are out in their garden. McGee is digging a hole to "plant" a scarecrow consisting of his old hat and Molly's red sweater, the latter purported to scare scavenger birds. She makes fun of Fibber's experiment. Sis, the little girl from next door, comes into their garden and harasses McGee with "why" questions and tells him that bright yellow, not red, is more effective. McGee and Molly go into the house to search for an old yellow shirt he's sure is in the closet. The famous closet is opened and the contents come tumbling out. Use catchphrases familiar to a national audience: Fibber—"Of all the dirty breaks," "Dat-rat-it," "Doggone it," "Kiddo," "Hot dog," and famous lines after closest junk fell: "Gotta straighten out that closet one of these days." Lots of tongue-twisters, too. Molly—"Heavenly days!," ''Taint funny, McGee!" She refers to Fibber as "deary" or "lover."

Suggested sound effects: Garden sounds—birds chirping, wind blowing, digging a hole with a shovel—Sis' voice coming closer; door opening and shutting, walking down hallway to closet, door latch on closets opening, tons of junk cascading on McGee, ending with a small bell sound.

Commercial interruption: Johnson Wax sponsored "Fibber McGee and Molly" from 1935 on. Create a short commercial about how easy and effective the product is for a typical housewife of that time to use. Another commercial, if you have time: Lava Soap bass voice (*to drum accompaniment)*: "L-A-V-A, L-A-V-A, L-A-V-A, Lava Soap for those really dirty jobs, it's the clean-up soap."

One Man's Family

Serial Drama (Soap Opera)

Characters:

- *Henry Barbour:* father of five children, leader of the clan.
- *Fanny Barbour:* wife and mother.
- *Paul Barbour:* oldest son, a vet from World War I, problem-solver, good listener, fair-minded, a writer.
- *Hazel Barbour:* daughter, married dairy farmer later, greedy, unfulfilled.
- *Cliff Barbour:* younger son, a ne'er-do-well, indecisive, unfocused.

Announcer's introduction: *Organ music—theme.* Announcer: "One Man's Family is dedicated to the mothers and fathers of the younger generation and to their bewildering offspring. Tonight we present chapter three of book eight, entitled 'The Inheritance.' As we look in on the Barbours, they have finished dinner and are discussing current problems, including the arrival of a letter that will alter the family's destiny. Fanny's uncle, Philip Sampson, was killed in a plane crash, and his wife's sister, Laura Dumont, is contesting the will. Laura's son, Lance, has been arrested for bank robbery, and Lance's wife Peggy has filed for divorce. Peggy went to high school with Hazel Barbour. Assuming the money will come to the Barbours, Cliff Barbour expects the inheritance to cover his gambling debts, but Henry has earmarked the money to carry his business through a rough year. Mother Barbour serves coffee . . ."

Plot synopsis: The announcer has set the scene. Now develop a brief script around the family's discussion of the imminent arrival of the letter from a law firm and ongoing family problems. Make a convoluted plot. Exaggerate what happens to everyone just like a TV soap today. (Soap summaries can be found online to look at for ideas). Not too far into the family's discussion, the mailman should arrive, and the contents of the much-anticipated missive regarding the inheritance should be revealed. End of program. Announcer: "We now leave the Barbours for today . . ."

Suggested sound effects: Living room sounds (chairs moving, etc.), coffee cups and saucers tinkling, spoons stirring coffee, footsteps, doorbell ringing, door opening and closing, letter opening (*rip).*

Commercial interruption: Two separate sponsors: 1. Lifebuoy Soap—Announcer: "Lifebuoy really stops . . . (*foghorn effect)* beeeeeeeeeohhhhhhh!" 2. Gillette Razor Blades—Announcer: "Look sharp! *(bell)* Feel sharp! *(bell)* Be sharp! *(bell)* Use Gillette Blue Blades . . . with the sharpest edges ever honed."

Postscript

Ironically, as radio reached its zenith in the late 1920s and 1930s, its decline was already looming. For in 1926 the first true television picture had flickered across a screen in Britain. By the 1930s, broadcasting forecasters were convinced commercial TV was imminent. In 1938 the Empire State building was wired with an antenna to receive television signals. Like a beacon, it seemingly signaled the death of radio. A year later, a small number of viewers saw President Franklin Roosevelt open up the New York World's Fair.

Vintage Zenith Console Radio, Model 12S-568, With the Zenith Robot (or Shutter) Dial, Circa 1941.

TV's ascendancy, however, was temporarily suspended during the war years (1941–1945) only to explode, as radio had 25 years before, on the American scene in the late 1940s. This phenomenal growth of "radio with pictures" was accompanied by a switch of sponsors from one medium to the other. But in fact, the eulogy was never given because a loyal radio audience did not abandon broadcast radio. True, the age of the large console Zenith or RCA radio, "furniture that talked," was over, but after 1960 the medium reemerged in different and usually smaller and more compact forms. Radio in the postwar era spread into automobiles, workshops, kitchens, and bedrooms (to wake us up!) and eventually to small earphones to use as people worked in offices or jogged on high school track ovals. Radio had found its niche, and continued to remain vital with more specialized programming—mostly sports, all news, talk shows, classical and oldies music, and the latest musical trend for teenagers.

Hardly dead or even ill by almost any standard, radio still attracts local and well-known national advertisers who continue to promote their products with jingles and sales pitches over the airwaves. In fact, Americans now spend more hours daily listening to radio than watching TV. Perhaps the undiminished strength and impact of radio is best illustrated by the fact that television, the medium which had supposedly replaced radio, became a copycat of what earlier generations usually heard on radio: variety, comedy, drama, game shows, on-the-spot reporting, or soap operas. Nevertheless, those radio days of Jack Benny, *The Shadow, Ma Perkins, Gangbusters,* and *Charlie McCarthy* are only memories of a simpler time when radio was king and Americans listened to what has been called the "Theater of the Mind."

Historical Investigation Activity

Radio Shows (1938)

Focus Question

The 1938 radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds:* Did it actually produce widespread panic and hysteria among its listeners?

Materials Needed for This Historical Investigation

- **Documents A–I**—*class set*
- **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**—*class set*

Lesson Plan

1. Getting Started

   - Ask students, "Does anybody listen to dramas on radio anymore? In the 1930s, movies and radio dominated the ways we were entertained. And one particular radio show really released our imaginations into overdrive. What can you tell me about an Orson Welles radio dramatization of a spooky H. G. Well's science fiction novel, *War of the Worlds?* Have any of you seen either of the film versions (1953 and 2005)?" Discuss responses before actually writing these responses on the board as spokes emanating from a "hub" circle. Once done, proceed to give additional data about the radio play that made such a stir and the man most responsible, Orson Welles.

2. Backstory to Use as Instruction

   - Maybe it was the continually dramatic and tense news coming out of a Europe preparing for another world war, or the fear of desperate Americans trying to survive after eight years of the Depression's "hard times," or maybe it was the widely accepted view that the *War of the Worlds* radio drama was realistically and brilliantly performed—whatever it was that caused panic and hysteria on the eve of Halloween, Sunday, October 30, 1938, it was real for many radio listeners who tuned in. And the one person everyone seemed to blame for the broadcast and its effect was a 23-year-old named Orson Welles.

   - His name today may not resonate with younger generations but from 1938, the year—the moment—of the radio broadcast through the 1970s, Orson Welles was famous. His enduring fame over the years rests on his brilliance as a fine actor, screenwriter, director, and T.V. personality/raconteur. His 1941 film *Citizen Kane* (based on the controversial newspaper mogul, William Randolph Hearst), is considered to be, with

little argument, one of the best movies ever made, ranking over the years as one of the top 3 or 4 greatest of all time. His glittering career reached its height before he turned 30.

- Before the broadcast, Welles was relatively unknown outside Broadway's bright lights in New York City. From 1937 through 1938, Welles' efforts were focused on acting, writing, directing, and producing plays as part of the Mercury Theatre, a repertory company he and John Houseman founded.
- As noted, his sudden leap to international fame came from his peerless adaption of the H. G. Well's novel, which, in Welles' version, tells the story of a Martian landing and invasion around Grover's Mill, New Jersey, and New York City.
- No one was prepared for the reaction that came from the program's listeners that Sunday evening on CBS. After all, the popular NBC music-variety-comedy series, *Chase and Sanborn Hour*, was broadcast at the same time. How many would be listening? For years after the historic broadcast, newspapers, magazines, scholarly works, and interestingly, school textbooks assumed the panic and hysteria was widespread across the nation, as it was initially and "truthfully" portrayed in the headlines of contemporary newspapers in the days following the "invasion" broadcast.
- But key questions remain for us: Was there actual panic? Did widespread hysteria from the "attack" occur? Did frightened mobs rove the streets? Did listeners fear impending doom from deadly heat-rays fired by creatures of the planet Mars? If no, why was the whole affair exaggerated to the point of becoming a myth? Why does the general population—and why did/do school textbooks—continue to perpetuate the myth of panic and hysteria?

3. Ask students, "From this backstory and in your opinion, before we look at the documents provided, could an event falsely dramatized over radio, TV, or the Internet turn Americans into panicky, hysterical, mindless, and frightened people?" Pass out the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**, answer any questions, and encourage students to think first and then write on realistic possibilities. Have students take 5 minutes to write their responses for #1. Allow students time to write creatively before leading a discussion of their responses, which should be based on general fears, frustrations from real events of our current time: drought, immigration, foreign policy, international terrorism, nuclear weapons in the hands of rogue nations, etc.

4. Say, "So it appears that you believe panic and hysteria could/could not happen today. Let me now pass out the document packages and in groups

of two, three, or four have you analyze the *War of the Worlds* broadcast of October, 1938, to see if we today are indeed less/more gullible and why the story (and the myth) continues to this day."

5. Perhaps a wise choice would be for you to play an excerpt from the original broadcast that can be found online.

6. Before turning them loose to work, read the **Document A** textbook versions of the event and discuss how textbooks over the decades have portrayed the broadcast and reaction.

7. Once done, allow 35–40 minutes for students to read and analyze the document packages. Afterward, discuss the gist of each and what caused the so-called panic and hysteria. (**Note:** The documents are in sequence; they are to be analyzed in order.)

8. Make sure students have time to write on the **focus question** at the end of the **Response Sheet**. Have students read their answers and discuss.

Option for Lesson Plan

If you . . .

- Have students whose abilities may make it difficult to analyze all the documents in this package . . .

Or

- Have limited time in class during any particular unit to implement the full package of documents . . .

Consider carefully pulling out 2–3 documents to use that will still help students think like historians. Using this strategy would mean selecting only those tasks and questions on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** that directly apply to the documents you have chosen to use. Whatever the case, these investigations, even in an abbreviated format, can still be effective and fulfill your objectives.

Handout

Name: _____ Date: _____

Points to Ponder Response Sheet

Focus Question: The 1938 radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds*: Did it actually produce widespread panic and hysteria among its listeners?

1. Could a falsely dramatized story on TV, radio, or the Internet today turn Americans into frightened, panicky, and hysterical people? What kind of news could possibly have this effect?

_____

_____

2. **Document A:** What parts of the *War of the Worlds* script are the most realistic and scary and might really have frightened listeners on October 30, 1938? *(certain words or phrases)*

_____

_____

3. **Document B:** Finish the sentence. "In my opinion, this story would/would not deserve space in my U.S. History textbook because. . . .

_____

_____

4. **Document C:** What words come to mind to describe the reactions of the letter writers in these documents?

_____

_____

5. Do you think these excerpts represent the reactions of the majority of listeners? Why or why not?

_____

_____

6. **Document D:** What 5 words would you use to describe the general reaction of newspapers the day after the broadcast?

_____

_____

7. **Document E:** What 3–4 major points do Pooley and Socolow make in their assessment of what caused the "panic?" (Who is to blame?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. **Document F (and Document E):** Professor Cantril's quantitative methods have been under attack recently. What reasons can you think of that might explain the credibility given him and his work in the years since 1940?

_____

_____

_____

9. **Document G:** Schwartz is another Cantril critic. What points does he make in criticizing the Harvard sociology professor's work?

_____

_____

_____

What might Cantril say to his critics, in this case, Brad Schwartz, if he could? (Cantril died in 1969.) Is that the nature of research—to have future generations of historians/scholars overturn and criticize the theories and work of earlier scholars?

_____

_____

10. **Document H:** Rewrite Dorothy Thompson's thoughts in your own words. (She wrote these words 3 days after the broadcast—and 2 days after the "dust settled.")

_____

_____

11. **Document I:** Describe Orson Welles' feelings and thoughts about his role in the broadcast's impact.

_____

_____

12. If you could ask Orson Welles one question, what would it be and how might he answer?

Q. _____

A. _____

13. In one lengthy paragraph of about four sentences, answer the **Focus Question**, using references from the document package to support your point of view.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Document A

War of the Worlds Script (excerpted)

Mercury Theatre on the Air

Sunday, 8:00 EST, CBS

Announcer: The Columbia Broadcasting System and its affiliated stations present Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air in *War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells.

Synopsis: As the program opens, narrator Orson Welles explains, from an undetermined year in the future, that the smug people of the early 20th century did not know about the existence of "superior intelligences" on other planets. They learned, he says, on the evening of October 30, 1938, as they were listening to their radios.

Announcer: . . . We now return you to the music of Ramon Raquello . . . (Music plays for a few moments until piece ends . . . sound of applause)

Ladies and gentlemen . . . the Government Meteorological Bureau has requested the large observatories of the country to keep an astronomical watch on any further disturbances occurring on the planet Mars. . . .

Synopsis: Now nearer home, comes a special announcement from Trenton, New Jersey. It is reported that at 8:50 p.m. a huge, flaming object, believed to be a meteorite, fell on a farm in the neighborhood of Grover's Mill, New Jersey, twenty-two miles from Trenton. The flash in the sky was visible within a radius of several hundred miles. . . .

Announcer: We have dispatched a special mobile unit to the scene. . . . We take you now to Grovers Mill, New Jersey. (Crowd noises . . . police sirens)

Phillips: . . . I wish I could convey the atmosphere . . . the background of this . . . fantastic scene. Hundreds of cars are parked in a field in back of us. . . . Their headlights throw an enormous spot on the pit where the object's half-buried. Some of the more daring souls are venturing near the edge. Their silhouettes stand out. . . . (Faint humming sound)

One man wants to touch the thing . . . he's having an argument with a policeman. The policeman wins. . . . Now, ladies and gentlemen . . . Do you hear it? It's a curious humming sound that seems to come from inside the object. I'll move the microphone nearer. Here. (Pause) Now we're not more than twenty-five feet away. Can you hear it now? Oh, Professor Pierson!

Pierson: Yes, Mr. Phillips?

Phillips: Can you tell us the meaning of that scraping noise inside the thing?

Pierson: Possibly the unequal cooling of its surface.

Phillips: Do you still think it's a meteor, Professor?

Pierson: I don't know what to think. The metal casing is definitely extra-terrestrial. . . . This thing is smooth and, as you can see, of cylindrical shape.

Phillips: Just a minute! Something's happening! Ladies and gentlemen, this is terrific! This end of the thing is beginning to flake off! The top is beginning to rotate like a screw! The thing must be hollow!

Voices: She's a movin'!

Look, the darn thing's unscrewing!

Keep back, there! Keep back, I tell you.

Maybe there's men in it trying to escape!

It's red hot, they'll burn to a cinder! . . .

(Suddenly the clanking sound of a huge piece of falling metal)

Voices: She's off! The top's loose! . . . Stand back!

Phillips: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the most terrifying thing I have ever witnessed. . . . Wait a minute! Someone's crawling out of the hollow top. . . . I can see peering out of that black hole two luminous disks . . . are they eyes? It might be a face. It might be . . . (Shout of awe from the crowd)

Good heavens, something's wriggling out of the shadow like a grey snake. Now it's another one, and another. They look like tentacles to me. . . . It's large as a bear and it glistens like wet leather. But that face. It . . . it's indescribable. . . . The eyes are black and gleam like a serpent. The mouth is V-shaped with saliva dripping from its rimless lips that seem to quiver and pulsate. . . . It seems weighed down by . . . The thing's raising up. The crowd falls back. . . . This is the most extraordinary experience. I can't find words. . . . I'm pulling this microphone with me as I talk. I'll have to stop the description until . . . (Fade into piano)

Source: Time-Life Books, *Hard Times: The 1930s* (Alexandria, VA: 1998).

Document B

U.S. History Textbooks Showcase the Broadcast

Recent U.S. History textbooks either ignore or give little space to the radio broadcast. Excerpt 1 is from a very popular 1964 textbook and features the "Invasion" as a sidebar, as does excerpt 2 from a 2006 textbook. This second text has some teaching suggestions in the wrap-around edition.

Excerpt 1—INVASION FROM MARS

> At eight o'clock on the evening of October 30, 1938, millions of radio listeners throughout the country heard the following announcement: "The Columbia Broadcasting System and its affiliated stations present Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater of the Air in The War of the Worlds, by H. G. Wells."
>
> There was a brief pause, followed by a weather report. Then an announcer declared that the program would be continued from a New York hotel. A jazz band came on the air. Suddenly the music stopped. An announcer, his voice tense and anxious, broke in to declare that a professor had just observed a series of explosions on Mars. Other announcements followed in rapid order. A meteor had landed near Princeton, New Jersey. Fifteen hundred people had been killed. No, it wasn't a meteor. It was a spaceship from Mars. Martian creatures were emerging. They were armed with death rays. They had come to wage war against the people living on earth.
>
> An untold number of listeners were seized with panic. Some fell to their knees and began to pray. Others gathered their families, rushed from their homes, and fled on foot or by car into the night.
>
> And yet it was only a radio play. CBS stated this fact clearly four different times during the hour-long program. Numerous explanations were advanced for this outburst of mass hysteria. But one thing was clear—the extraordinary power of radio broadcasting.

Source: Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1964; originally published in 1950).

Excerpt 2—Historical Spotlight

WAR OF THE WORLDS

On October 30, 1938, radio listeners were stunned by a special announcement: Martians had invaded Earth! Panic set in as many Americans became convinced that the world was coming to an end. Of course, the story wasn't true; it was a radio drama based on H.G. Wells's novel *The War of the Worlds*.

In his book, Wells describes the canisters of gas fired by the Martians as releasing "an enormous volume of heavy, inky vapour . . . and the touch of that vapour, the inhaling of its pungent wisps, was death to all that breathes." The broadcast, narrated by Orson Welles . . . revealed the power of radio at a time when Americans received fast-breaking news over the airwaves.

Source: Gerald A. Danzer and others, *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21st Century* (Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2006).

Document C

Listeners React with Letters

The exact numbers of letters fired off by listeners is less important than the range of emotions that infuse their letters sent to the Mercury Theatre, to government officials, and to the FCC. Keep in mind that these letters were written within hours or days of the broadcast. In truth, of the 1,974 letters sent, nearly 1,500 admitted they were untouched by fright or panic. Researchers later admitted that the letters were written after the next morning's newspapers sensationalized the broadcast story, a fact that would probably influence letter writers.

- "I felt the catastrophe was *an attack by the Germans. . . .*"
- "The announcer said a meteor had fallen from Mars and I was sure he thought that, but in *back of my head I had the idea that the meteor was just a camouflage.* It was really an airplane like a Zeppelin that looked like a meteor and *the Germans were attacking us* with gas bombs.
- "When the monsters were wading across the Hudson River and coming into New York, I wanted to run up on my roof to see what they looked like, but I could not leave my radio while it was telling me of their whereabouts."
- "I thought the best thing to do was go away, so I took $3.25 out of my savings and bought a ticket. After I had gone 60 miles I heard it was a play. Now I don't have any money left for the shoes I was saving up for. Would you please have someone send me a pair of black shoes, size 9-B."
- "I was writing a history theme. The girl from upstairs came and made me go up to her place. Everybody was excited. I felt as if I was going crazy and kept on saying, 'what can we do, *what difference does it make* whether we die sooner or later?' We were holding each other."
- "I knew it was something terrible and I was frightened. . . . But I didn't know just what it was. I couldn't make myself believe it was the end of the world. I've always heard that when the world would come to an end, it would come so fast nobody would know—so why should God get in touch with this announcer?"
- "I kept believing and disbelieving at the same time. *I believed in the possible parts according to my knowledge*, but disbelieved as soon as I heard about monsters and tentacles."
- "Before 30 seconds, of course, the nature of the program is obvious. . . . I am not convinced that the entire land forces of the American army in the East here can be mobilized in a few seconds, much less wiped out."
- ". . . I was really hysterical. My two girl friends and I were crying and holding each other and everything seemed so unimportant in face of death. We felt it was terrible we should die so young. . . . The boy from downstairs threatened to knock me out

if I didn't stop acting so hysterical. We tried another small station which had some program on that confirmed our fears. I was sure the end of the world was coming."

- ". . . What we need is education, not prohibitions, and I believe this broadcast will prove to have been beneficial in that it will, for a time at least, make people a little more careful of the source and nature of their information."
- "Of course, with an elementary knowledge of science I knew the story couldn't be true . . . but you must realize that the overwhelming majority of the American people do not have even an elementary knowledge of science."
- ". . . To me, it was so real that I ran across the street, burst in on the [church] service and warned the people to proceed in all available cars to the highlands of New Jersey along route 23. Before I had complited [sic] my excited speech the church had cleared and everyone was on their way home to gather their loved ones to safety. . . . [After the panic] I now feel that I'll never be able to show my face outside my door again. . . ."

Source: Letters from listeners as printed in A. Brad Schwartz, *Broadcast Hysteria* (2015) and Harley Cantril, *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* (1940).

Document D

Headlines the Day After

FAKE RADIO 'WAR' STIRS TERROR THROUGH U.S.

—Daily Mail

INVASION PLAY ON RADIO SENDS U.S. INTO PANIC

—BALTIMORE SUN

NATION-WIDE PANIC CAUSED BY RADIO PLAY

—San Francisco Examiner

Radio Story Of Mars Raid Creates Panic

—Los Angeles Times

Radio Play Terrifies Nation

—Boston Globe

Mass Hysteria Seizes East Coast...

—Detroit Free Press

Document E

What *Really* Caused the Panic?

Few historians today would deny that there was panic and maybe some hysteria. What would be challenged is the actual numbers of people who listened and the ones who were panicky enough to call relatives and write letters to Welles.

> The supposed panic was so tiny as to be practically immeasurable on the night of the broadcast. . . . almost nobody was fooled by Welles' broadcast.
>
> How did the story of panicked listeners begin? Blame America's newspapers. Radio had siphoned off advertising revenue from print during the Depression, badly damaging the newspaper industry. So the papers seized the opportunity presented by Welles' program to discredit radio as a source of news. The newspaper industry sensationalized the panic to prove to advertisers, and regulators, that radio management was irresponsible and not to be trusted. . . .
>
> . . . As the show receded in time and became more infamous, more and more people claimed to have heard it.
>
> Far fewer people heard the broadcast—and fewer still panicked—than most people believe today. How do we know? The night the program aired, the C.E. Hooper ratings service telephoned 5,000 households for its national ratings survey. "To what program are you listening?" the service asked respondents. Only 2 percent answered a radio "play" or "the Orson Welles program," or something similar indicating CBS. None said a "news broadcast," according to a summary published in *Broadcasting*. In other words, 98 percent of those surveyed were listening to something else, or nothing at all, on Oct. 30, 1938. . . .
>
> Why is this myth so alluring—why does it persist? The answer is complicated. . . .
>
> Some portion of the blame must also go to Hadley Cantril. His scholarly book validated the popular memory of the event. He gave academic credence to the panic and attached real numbers to it…. Without this validation, the myth likely would not be in . . . textbooks, as it still is today—pretty much every high schooler and liberal arts undergraduate runs across it at some point. . . . Though you may have never heard of Cantril, the War of the Worlds myth is very much his legacy.

Source: Jefferson Pooley and Michael J. Socolow, "The Myth of the War of the Worlds Panic," *Slate*. Both authors are professors of media and communications.

Document F

How Many and Who Listened?

Within months after the historic broadcast, professor Hadley Cantril of Harvard published (April 1940) results of how and why the panic and hysteria occurred. The book remains a scholarly—if rushed to judgment—scientific account of the nation's reaction. Of the 6 million listeners that night, Cantril estimated that 1.7 million of them believed the broadcast and 1.2 million were frightened or disturbed by it.

> Twelve per cent of this number [75,000,000 persons of voting age] would indicate that about 9,000,000 adults heard the broadcast. If we consider all persons over ten years of age, then, according to the 1930 census we shall have 12 per cent of 99,000,000 people, or, almost 12,000,000. It is undoubtedly true that many children even under ten years of age listen to the radio after eight o'clock on Sunday evening, especially when we remember that for more than half of the country this broadcast was at least an hour earlier than eight p.m. In addition to these young listeners, a large number of youngsters must have been wakened by frightened parents preparing to flee for their lives.
>
> The AIPO [American Institute of Public Opinion] figure is over 100 per cent higher than any other known measure of this audience. However, since the Institute reaches many small communities and non-telephone homes not regularly sampled by radio research organizations, its result is probably the most accurate. C.E. Hooper, Inc., a commercial research organization making continuous checks on program popularity, indicates a listening audience of about 4,000,000 to the Mercury Theatre broadcast on October 30, 1938. If we pool the AIPO and Hooper results, a final estimate of 6,000,000 listeners is conservative. Had the program enjoyed greater popularity, the panic might have been more widespread.

Source: Hadley Cantril, *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966; originally published in 1940).

Document G

Cantril's 1940 Study Is Challenged

For years Hadley Cantril's 1940 work was the standard for explaining the "panic" and "hysteria." A 2015 book by A. Brad Schwartz challenges Cantril's methods and the numbers of Americans who panicked. Schwartz's book started out as a master's thesis at the University of Michigan.

> [A]fter decades of accepting the mass-hysteria story at face value, scholars around the turn of the twenty-first century began to question whether the panic was really as large as [Hadley] Cantril and others suggested. A close reading of *The Invasion from Mars* reveals that Cantril's team deliberately oversampled people frightened by the broadcast, ignored survey data from listeners who knew it was fiction, and only interviewed listeners in New Jersey—where all accounts agree that the panic was most intense. Other researchers have called those very news articles into question, arguing that they were poorly sourced, highly repetitive, and largely inaccurate. These reports and the book they inspired present an extraordinary claim: that a "tidal wave of terror . . . swept the nation" on the evening of October 30, 1938. But they present little hard evidence to back it up.
>
> In 2013, media coverage of the broadcast's seventy-fifth anniversary put the growing gap between the conventional wisdom and the more skeptical view on full display, with little hope of a consensus. Most news articles at least paid lip service to the idea that the media had exaggerated the panic, but Cantril's theory of widespread hysteria remained immensely popular—a cultural touchstone, frequently embellished.

Source: A. Brad Schwartz, *Broadcast Hysteria: Orson Welles's War of the Worlds and the Art of Fake News* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015). Search online for a video of Schwartz's summary of his findings.

Document H

Journalist Dorothy Thompson on Gullibility

> "Nothing whatever about the dramatization was in the least credible, no matter at what point the listener might have tuned in."

Source: Dorothy Thompson, "On the Record," *New York Herald Tribune* (November 2, 1938).

Dorothy Thompson (9 July 1894 – 30 January 1961), American journalist.

Image Source: Unknown. Public Domain via, Wikimedia Commons.

Document 1

The Words of Orson Welles

Whatever Welles thought privately, he was publicly contrite [repentant] and apologetic about causing the uproar. He also realized that the broadcast was a "magnificent fluke" and a boon to his career.

- [His last words of the broadcast.] "So goodbye everybody . . . and remember, please, for the next day or so, the terrible lesson you learned tonight. That grinning, glowing, globular invader of your living room is an inhabitant of the pumpkin patch, and if your doorbell rings and nobody's there, that was no Martian . . . it's Halloween."
- "When you cause pain, you can't laugh about it. . . . Ordinarily I might be indignant with people for their gullibility, but as the unwitting agent of the suffering, I feel a little like one accused of murder."
- "You can never tell how a thing will catch on, can you?"
- "If I'd planned to wreck my career, I couldn't have gone about it better."
- "We weren't as innocent as we meant to be, when we did the Martian broadcast. We were fed up with the way in which everything that came over this new magic box, the radio, was being swallowed. People, you know, do suspect what they read in the newspapers and what people tell them, but when the radio came, and I suppose now television, anything that came through the new machine was believed. So in a way our broadcast was an assault on the credibility of that machine; we wanted people to understand that they shouldn't take any opinion pre-digested, and they shouldn't swallow everything that came through the tap, whether it was radio or not."

Source: Welles' own words as quoted in A. Brad Schwartz, *Broadcast Hysteria: Orson Welles's War of the Worlds and the Art of Fake News* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015).

- What a night. . . . It wasn't long after the initial shock that whatever public panic and outrage there was vanished. But, the newspapers for days continued to feign fury.

—Orson Welles to friend and mentor Roger Hill, February 22, 1983

Source: Todd Tarbox, *Orson Welles and Roger Hill: A Friendship in Three Acts* (Albany, GA: Bear Manor Media, 2013).

Welles was operating on 3 hours of sleep as he met reporters the next morning, when this exchange took place:

Question: Were you aware of the terror such a broadcast would stir up?

Welles: Definitely not. The technique I used was not original with me. It was not even new. I anticipated nothing unusual. . . .

Question: Should you have toned down the language of the drama?

Welles: No, you don't play murder in soft words.

Question: Why was the story changed to put in names of American cities and government officers?

Welles: H. G. Wells used real cities in Europe, and to make the play more acceptable to American listeners we used real cities in America. Of course, I'm terribly sorry now.

Source: Frank Brady, *Citizen Welles: A Biography of Orson Welles* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989).

Building Levittown
1949

Lesson Plan

Overview

This Activator will involve your students in constructing houses in one of America's earliest suburban developments—Levittown. After learning about suburbia and William Levitt, the man who became "the Henry Ford of home building," your students will actually simulate the manner in which workers built homes on Long Island in the late 1940s.

Setup

1. **Duplication:** Duplicate class sets of both the **Background Essay** and the **Postscript**. Also duplicate the **Narration sheet** for student narrator(s), if using Option A.

2. **Schematic, props, costumes:** Study the **Schematic** carefully. Find and bring into your classroom any props (hammers, tape measures, yardsticks, etc.) and costumes (hardhat, workman's apron, goggles, etc.) that will help create the mood. (Your students can help you find and bring in such props.)

3. **Roles**

   a. In this Activator, you need to divide your students into 8 (possibly 10) groups (work clusters) that will "build" 4–6 houses. These groups work in separate areas around the classroom, moving in sequence to the construction site in the center of the room. (See the **Schematic**.)

   b. Here are the eight basic roles (work clusters): 1. plumbers; 2. concrete slab men; 3. framers; 4. drywallers; 5. chimney masons; 6. window-door installers; 7. flooring installers; 8. roofers; and as optional groups—9. carpenters; and 10. landscapers. (You may wish to have only 8 groups. In such a case, give the carpenter and landscaper tasks to two groups that you think will have the quickest, most capable workers.)

   c. You may assign students into work clusters at random. For example, you might put numbers (1–8 or 1–10) and have students draw them for role assignment. Or you may wish to ensure that each group is balanced in ability, leadership, and attitude.

   d. You or a student(s) should read the narration. Pass out **Narration sheet** the day before and have students prepare.

4. **Materials with which to build Levittown:** Unlike most Activators in this series, this one requires the use of actual materials. Here is what you will need *for each class participating* in the Activator:

   - at least 50 5 x 8 cards (index plain)
   - at least 30 4 x 6 cards (index plain)

Teaching tip

If you have permanent cooperative groups, maintain these for a special esprit de corps.

- 5–10 pairs of scissors *
- several rolls of transparent tape *
- 2 boxes of crayons* (or colored pens)
- 1–2 bottles of rubber cement (or 2 or more glue sticks) *
- 1 box of flexible straws*

*= These items can be used with all classes.

5. Dividing up the building materials: See the **Work Cluster Matrix** page for the specific work clusters, the materials they receive, the work expectations, and the order of the work clusters' participation at the job site.

Directions

1. Hand out the **Background Essay** either the day before this class as homework or pass it out now. If you have handed it out previously as homework, conduct an informal discussion of its main points. If you are passing it out now, have your students read it. In either case, now conduct a brief check-for-understanding discussion in order to cover key points. (If your students lack silent reading ability, you may wish to help them read this essay aloud, pausing to illuminate/discuss key points as you go along.)

2. Display the **Schematic**, explain it, assign roles, and then have students rearrange your room to create the setting.

3. At your command, have students move to their positions before the narrator(s) start. Walk around your classroom with student aides (if you have them) carrying building materials. As you read the **Work Cluster Matrix**, have the aides drop off materials. (Or, if you wish to be more accurate, place all materials near the four "lots" on the center table and let each cluster's members, once they are aware of what they need, come and gather up their own materials to take back for assembly.)

4. If you are not narrating yourself, be sure you have selected student narrators on the previous day to allow them some time for rehearsal. This is necessary only if you are using Option A.

5. You have at least two different ways to conduct this Activator:

Teaching tip
Bill Levitt once remarked that "no man who owns his own home can be a communist. He has too much to do." Discuss, as an opener, how much work is involved in owning and maintaining your own home. Personalize the discourse with your experience as a homeowner.

Option A

1. Assign all roles at random. (See #3c under **Roles**.)

2. Tell all work clusters to go to their work areas as pictured on the **Schematic**.

Teaching tip
Film the activity and play back for students during the debriefing.

Teaching tip
Try Option A in one class and Option B in another to contrast several items: for example, following directions or quality of construction.

Teaching tip
Obviously, some groups have a bit less to do than others. Encourage those groups to strive for perfection in details.

Teaching tip
Note: Before this narration is slowly read, with pauses long enough for construction workers to do their jobs, make sure all roles have been filled, all preparation has taken place, and all students are in their respective places. Refer to the **Schematic**.

Teaching tip
You may have to adjust this time schedule so that each job can be completed.

3. Place all building materials on the center table next to where the houses are to be built.

4. Give each work cluster a copy of the **Work Cluster Matrix** so that members know their tasks and the sequence in which they go to the table to contribute to each house's assembly.

5. Allow 7–10 minutes for all work clusters to "build," assemble, and/or paint what they will contribute to the building/decorating of the houses.

6. When all groups are finished, slowly begin going through the **Narration**. Pause as needed to enable tasks to be completed. *Speed is not a priority. Make adjustments as necessary.*

7. Proceed through the **Narration** at a comfortable pace (10–15 minutes), allowing for improvisation along the way, as well as student comments if they come up.

Option B

1. Assign roles as in Option A.

2. Spend as much time as you need to explain the Activator's construction segment.

3. Hand out materials as in Option A.

4. Put a timeline on the board according to the 45–55 minutes you have for this particular class. Here is an example:

   10:05–10:20 = Build, assemble, and or paint specialties

   10:20–10:22 = Plumbers: coil pipes under foundation.

   10:22–10:24 = Concrete slab poured.

   10:24–10:27 = Exterior walls put up.

   10:27–10:29 = Interior walls put up.

   10:29–10:31 = Chimneys raised.

   10:31–10:35 = Windows/doors installed.

   10:35–10:37 = Flooring installed.

   10:37–10:39 = Toilet/sinks installed.

   10:39–10:41 = Roofing installed.

   10:41–10:42 = Trees planted.

(If not using the narration, call out workers when it's their turn, for example, "plumbers," "concrete slab men," etc.)

5. If a previous work cluster under option B didn't complete its job on time, go over what this meant to groups that followed. (For example—slowed down entire process, cost builder money.)

Teaching tip
Choose a superior-built home from an earlier year or class to model for future years (or the rest of the day).

Debriefing

Decide whether you wish to use a short or long debriefing. Here are possible ways to make meaningful the development of suburban America and the role William J. Levitt played in this historic event:

Short debriefing

1. Pass out the Postscript. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Ask students to discuss what they learned and what they felt as they worked together and built mass housing.

3. Consider having students write a Learning Log entry following the short debriefing.

Teaching tip
The **Postscript** can be used to discuss the quality of life in the suburbs vs. the city vs. the country.

Long debriefing

Use one or more of the following debriefing activities:

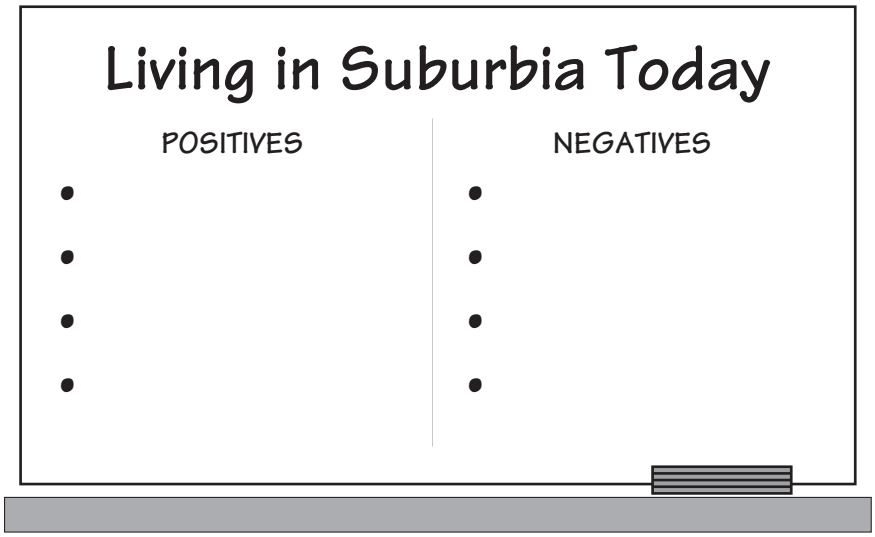
1. Pass out the **Postscript**. Either read this to your students or summarize the main points of each paragraph before going on.

2. Show the Levittown segment from the ABC TV program *Our World, Fall 1949* (1987). While it lasts only about 10 minutes, it encapsulates the entire Levittown experience and provides an interview with its genius, William Levitt.

3. *Discuss with students:*

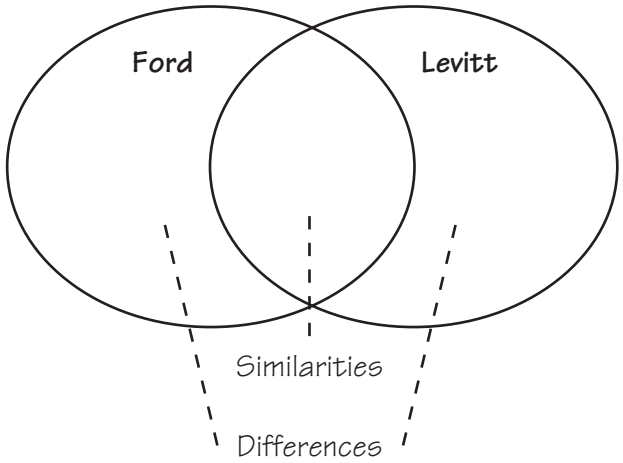
   - Do all the houses look the same?
   - What were the advantages/disadvantages of having houses look identical 1) to the builder?; 2) to the owners?; 3) to the neighbors?
   - What negatives would social critics of the 1950s say or write while evaluating Levitt and his Levittown?
   - Do any of the points made by the above social critics still relate to today's suburban communities?

4. On your whiteboard or chalkboard make an empty positives and negatives chart such as this:



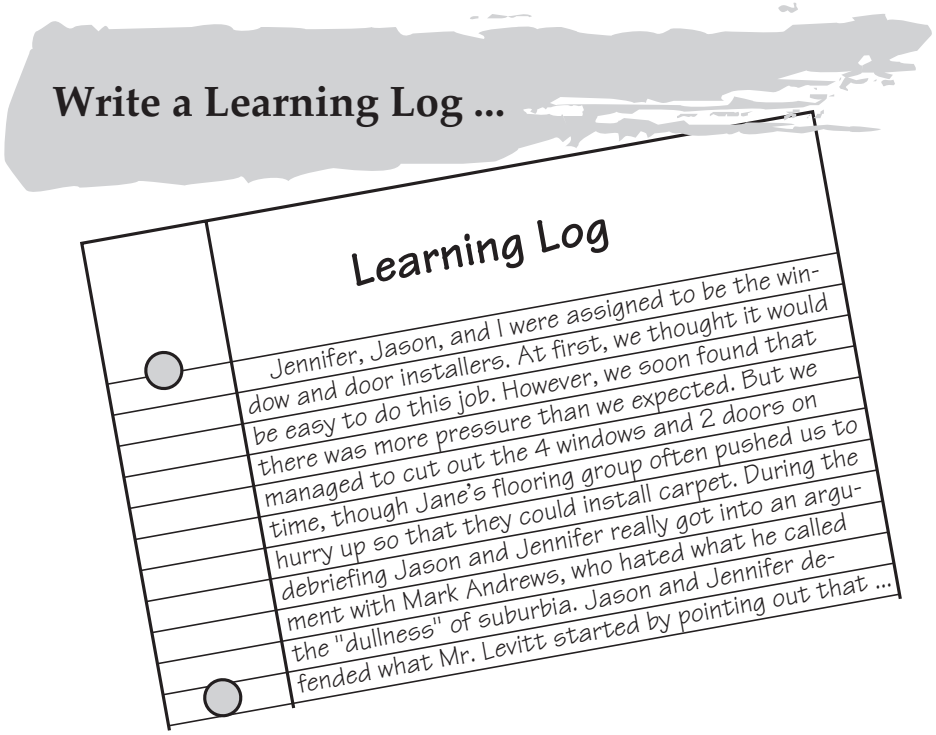
Allow 10–15 minutes for group interaction. Then put the best contributions from the discussion on the whiteboard or chalkboard.

5. In order to compare and contrast Henry Ford and William Levitt, have students do a Venn diagram on their own paper.



6. Interview a suburban family, using questions that students make up.

7. Consider having students write a Learning Log entry following the debriefing.



Resources to consult

Baxandall, Rosalyn, and Elizabeth Ewen. *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened.* New York: Basic Books, 2000.

Boulton, Alexander. "The Buy of the Century." *American Heritage 44, no. 4* (July/August 1993): 62–69.

Gans, Herbert J. *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1967.

Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Kushner, David. *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb.* New York: Walker and Company, 2009.

This Fabulous Century. Vol 6. New York: Time-Life Books, 1970.

"Up from the Potato Fields." *Time* LVI, no. 1 (July 3, 1950): 67–71. (Levitt is on the cover.)

Teaching tip
Find a copy of the *American Heritage* article (see **Resources to Consult** on the left) and scan the pictures and house blueprint. Also utilize pages 154–173 from Time-Life's *This Fabulous Century*, 1950–1960. Once done, display for further discussion.

Visual history

Documentary: *Our World* (1987), Episode: "Fall 1949: Across a Crowded Room." The first segment deals with Levittown's construction. (8–10 minutes)

Teaching tip

This film deals with a family building a custom home, not a tract home, but it captures the enthusiasm of this postwar era and has entertaining scenes of home construction.

Feature Film: *Mr. Blandings Builds his Dream House.* (1948) Starring Cary Grant and Myrna Loy. A light hearted comedy about building a home in the postwar years.

Visuals are important and often essential. And while there are countless visuals to use in the classroom for this particular Activator (films and documentaries), most of these might be difficult to find and then show. Instead, it is recommended that you as a teacher in the 21st century might find it easier to go online to locate exactly the kind of visuals most appropriate. As of 2016, Crash Course with John Green has been extensively utilized by teachers.

Background Essay

Place: Long Island, New York
Time: September 1949

Suburbia

From the perspective of today, it must seem as though suburbia has existed forever. Not so. The phenomenon we call the suburbs—communities just outside or near major cities—developed during the years after World War II (1939–1945). The idea of suburbs, however, probably goes back as far as the city itself, when the desires to retreat from the squalor, noise, and pollution of the cities made people who still wanted to participate in urban life look just outside cities to live.

The idea of a rural retreat with a private single-family house and land around it was advanced during the 1920s when the automobile gave new mobility to Americans and made suburban life possible. However, the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II both halted this trend.

The return to civilian life

In late 1945 when GIs returned after overseas duty in World War II, they soon became part of a generation riding on a wave of tremendous change. With their government honoring them with the GI Bill, servicemen began to pursue what has been called the American Dream. Finding and marrying the perfect woman was the first step in reaching the dream. The next step was locating a place to live. The previous 15 years, however, had produced very little home construction. In fact, post-World War II America experienced a housing crisis—the population had experienced its natural increases, the GIs had returned to start families—but home construction had been stalled for more than a decade.

The Levitts

With the unprecedented demand for housing, the GI Bill of Rights to help service men with home loans, and the U.S. banks bursting with money to loan, just one more factor was needed to set off an explosion in the home building industry—an enterprising builder to lead the way. The emerging firm of Levitt & Sons already had experience in the field when the situation requiring rapid home construction presented itself in 1946–1948. Abraham Levitt and sons William and Alfred followed the basic American formula for success: their family business was in the right place at the right time. Millions of Americans, now marrying and having babies in record numbers (the baby boom), had no place to live.

Bill Levitt

Using the Levitt name and reputation, it was William "Bill" Levitt, who would emerge with ideas that would revolutionize the housing construction business. In 1941, Bill and brother Alfred gained valuable experience by winning a government contract so that they could build 2,350 war workers' homes in Norfolk, Virginia. They made huge mistakes, but the Levitts learned to analyze and improve their construction process. Thus, they would be ready for the opportunity to build the needed homes once the war ended.

During World War II, Bill Levitt served overseas with the Seabees. With timelines, no union restrictions, and few conventional building limitations, Levitt pulled off amazing tasks while building instant navy airfields. As he did, he provided himself with a "magnificent laboratory" to put up low-cost buildings in a short amount of time. Somewhere out in the Pacific, Bill Levitt decided what he wanted to do when he returned to New York after the war—construct mass housing for families of young veterans and

help these same people achieve a part of the American Dream.

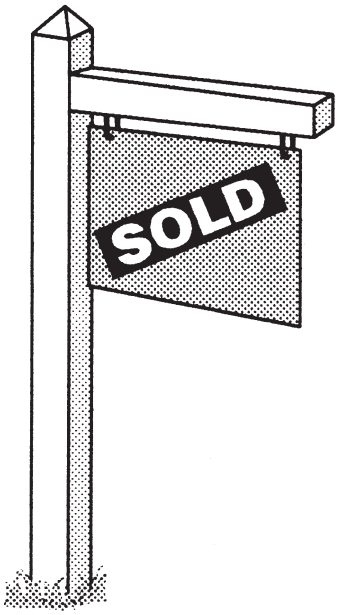
Potato fields of Long Island

Clever, determined, and prepared for a successful future, Bill Levitt had made his goal easier when, even before the war, he and his brother took an option on a thousand acres of inexpensive potato farms on Long Island, near Hempstead. Alfred kept paying the option costs during the war, but he had not envisioned the epic plan brother Bill had for the acreage. In 1946, more land adjacent to the original was purchased, and the brothers planned the most massive housing project in the nation's history.

Only 20 or so miles from Manhattan, the original development was given the name Island Trees, unfitting to the somewhat barren landscape they had chosen. Eventually the community became Levittown, realistically paying tribute to the one man most responsible for the historic project.

This is Levittown!

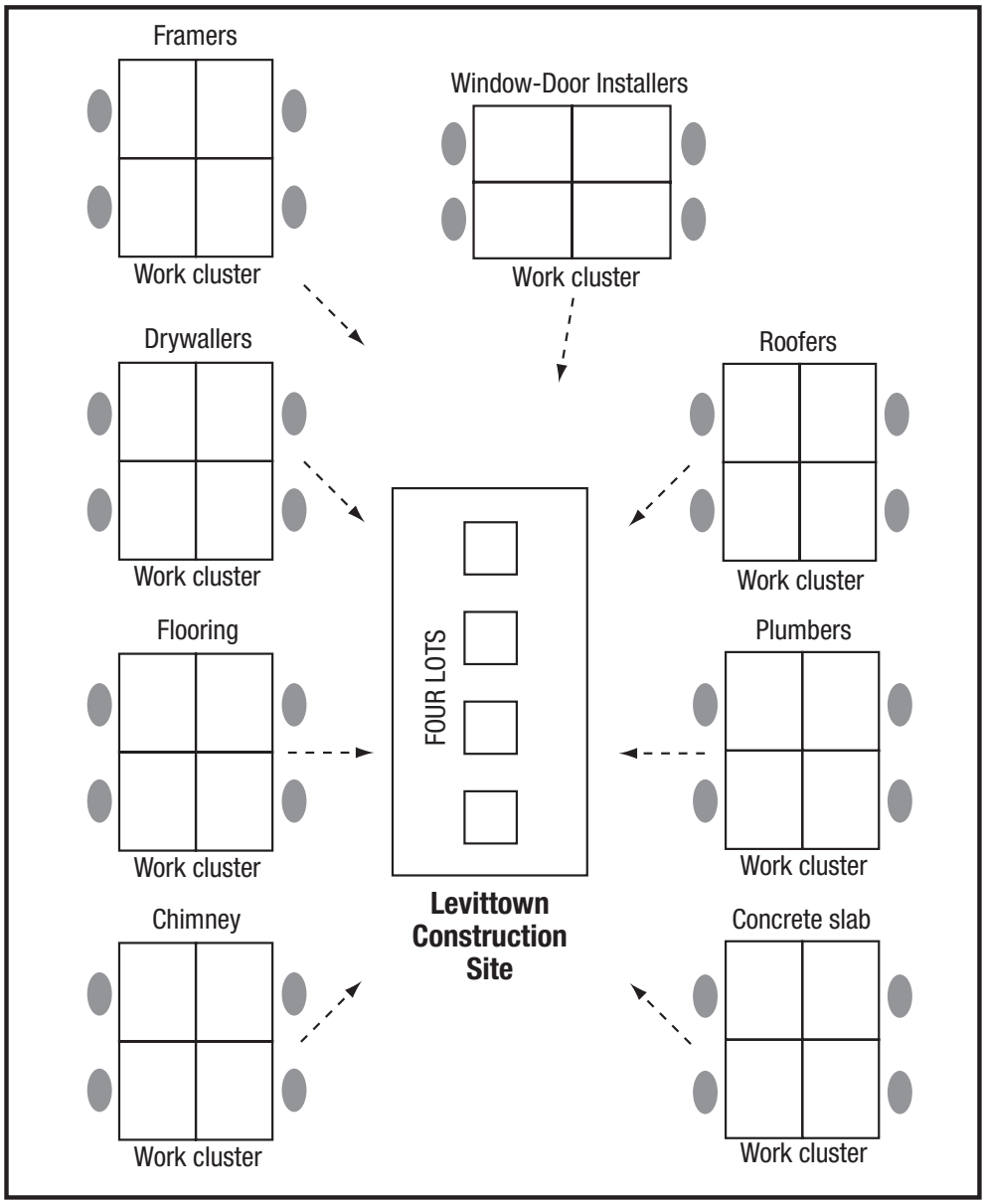
From the initial stage of planning and selling lots in Levittown, it was an unequaled success. As early as the fall of 1948, word spread in the New York area about the unique project near Hempstead. On September 28, 1948, Levitt & Sons sold 53 houses (to be finished in the spring of 1949) for $1,100,000—a record for house selling! On the next day, 47 more homes were sold. By early October, with word of mouth and a simple "This is Levittown!" ad in the *New York Times*, people were jamming the Long Island highways to look at homes not yet built. More than 500 people offered to pay cash immediately for nonexistent homes. By the next weekend, hundreds of buyers were told that there were no homes left to sell. The lure of modestly priced single family homes on 6000-square-foot lots outside of New York for only a monthly payment of $58 made the American Dream seem within reach.



Grab your tools and get ready to build

Bill Levitt knew from experience that the easiest part of his project was planning and selling. The hardest part was building these thousands of homes. But the Levitts were ready. Now Bill Levitt needs you and your classmates to help him construct Levittown and turn it into a suburban community. Pay attention to instructions from your contractor and you'll learn the methods and the contributions of a man whose unique genius ranks with, and has led him to be compared to Henry Ford.

Schematic



Suggestions

- As teacher, be sure you build a prototype a day or so before you have your students build their "houses."
- Assign one student in each cluster to be the ***foreman***.
- Record the sounds of sawing and hammering. Play the recording during construction.

Narration

William J. Levitt has assembled his vast non-union construction crews and is now ready to start building homes for average Americans who want to move out of New York City into a home of their own in the new suburbs. The easy part for Levitt is over. Advertising and selling lots and not-yet-built homes was a piece of cake. The need for affordable housing and the attractive low price ($7,990) has lured thousands into making a contract with Levitt and Sons.

The difficult phase—actually constructing the houses—is next. But years of experience and know-how will make the entire process easier. In all, 27 separate steps will be required to transform the 60′ x 100′ lot into a furnished home with trees. Out of necessity, this Activator will simplify the process with specialized groups of workers. In a larger sense, Levitt duplicated the example of Henry Ford, but in reverse, for the workers come to the product.

Step 1: ***Plumbers***

Step 2: ***Concrete Slab Men***

As expected, the initial step is bulldozing the land, flattening the existing terrain, and making it ready for the street pavers, electricians with light poles, and the men bearing stamped street signs (for example, Lilac Lane). As house lots are marked off at exactly 60′ intervals, first the ***plumbers*** put in under-the-slab plumbing and copper coils for heat radiation. Then the ***concrete slab men*** begin pouring the concrete foundation. *(Pause long enough for the job to be accomplished.)* As a departure from traditional home construction, there will be no basements. Cost and time are factors. Twenty-four hours later, the slabs are dry. *(Pause)*

Step 3: ***Framers***

Step 4: ***Drywallers***

Step 5: ***Chimney Masons***

Next, trucks roll over hardened streets and drop off, at 60′ intervals, all building materials—including prefabricated sidings and lumber. ***Framers*** then nail together the frames and outside walls. (*Pause to finish this job.)* Following the framers come the ***drywallers***; they put up the inside wall frames and sheetrock in standardized 4′ x 8′ pieces. All wood used comes from Levitt's own Oregon acreage and mill. Even the nails come from Levitt's purchase of scrap iron and 13 nail-making machines. Power tools, just coming into vogue, speed up the entire process for nearly every worker involved. *(Pause)* A skilled team of ***chimney masons***, using prefabricated units assembled elsewhere, quickly raise the chimneys. *(Pause)*

Step 6: ***Window-Door Installers***

Step 7: ***Window-Door Installers***

With both inside and outside walls up, ***window-door installers*** next put in eight ready-made windows on the exterior, giving those inside a view of the large backyard and front to the street. The windows will allow the housewife to watch the children as they play with other Levittown youngsters. *(Pause)* Along with the windows, the specialists who make and hang doors put in all the doors including the front door, the latter creating inviting entries to the 30′ x 30′ Levitt dwellings. *(Pause)* There are no garages for cars in the lower-priced home. Thus, no garage doors are needed.

Step 8: ***Flooring Installers***

Step 9: ***Carpenters***

Step 10: ***Plumbers***

As the tilers finish their work in the bath and kitchen and leave the premises, ***carpet layers*** drive up and install into each of the two largest rooms carpet and/or planked wooden flooring, in either subdued but warm colors or rich pieces of pine or oak. *(Pause)* This step makes the home's interior look inviting days before the new residents are scheduled to move in. Before the roofers come on the scene, an Admiral 8-inch television set is built into shelves in the living room by finish ***carpenters***. This flourish will enhance the family's leisure hours at home. A ***plumbing crew*** then enters each house and installs the toilet and sink in the bathroom and a sink, counters, and refrigerator in the kitchen. At the same time, plumbers install a Levitt extra—a Bendix clothes washer, bought by the thousands by the builder and dropped off at each house site, like the earlier building materials. Of the crew, one man does nothing all day but move from house to house to house bolting down the washing machines to the floor. *(Pause)*

Step 11: ***Roofers***

With just about everything inside and the job near completion, the ***roofers*** filter onto the job site, pick up the shingles and other necessary materials left by trucks earlier, and begin a few hours of putting on each Levitt home its crowning glory—a durable, steeply pitched roof. *(Pause)*

Step 12: ***Landscapers***

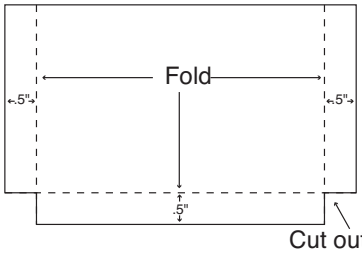
So that the vast construction site of six square miles and 17,000 homes will not remain forever barren and lifeless, Levitt and Sons hires ***landscapers*** to plant cherry and other fruit trees. Instantly, Levittown bursts with life, greenery, and even some birds.

Remembering the buyer's last question when the contract was signed months before—"How soon can we move in?"—Bill Levitt arranges for one more "extra" as the happy but eager tenants walk through the front door: an inspection of the new house while one worker sweeps out the dust and dirt with a broom.

Blueprint Page

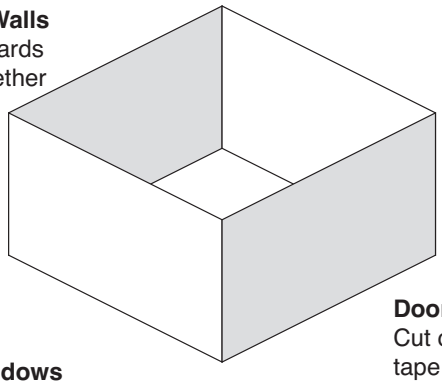
(Note: Specifications below are for one house)

Concrete Slab

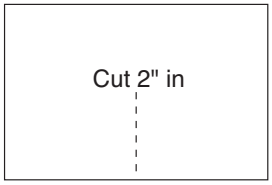


Cut out corners

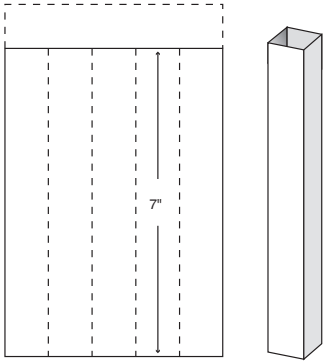
Outside Walls
four 4x6 cards taped together



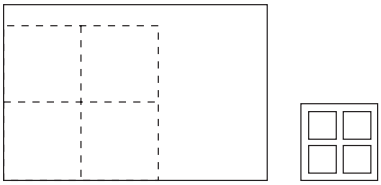
Inside Walls
Cut into two 4x6 cards.
Slide together the two cards at the cut places to form the four rooms.
Place the four rooms inside the house.



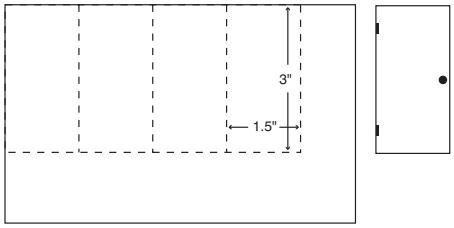
Chimney
Cut, fold, and glue one chimney out of a 5x8 card.



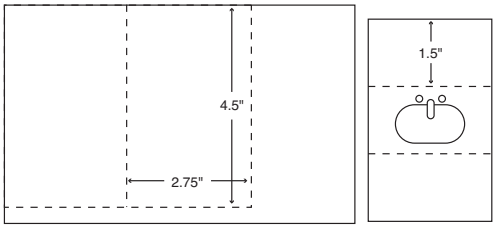
Windows
Cut out four 1.75" squares from one 4x6.



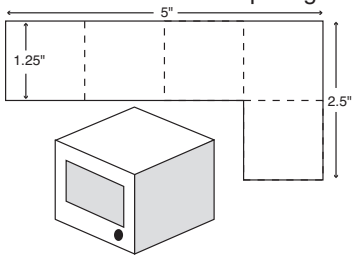
Doors
Cut out four doors from one 5x8 card. Use tape as hinges to attach two doors to each house.



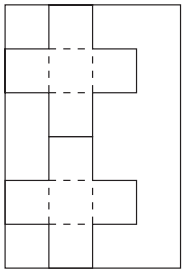
Sinks
Cut out two sinks from one 5x8 card. Fold and glue to wall.

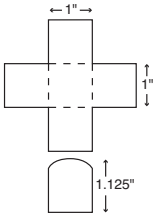


TV Set
Cut out one TV from a 5x8 card. Fold into a cube and tape together.



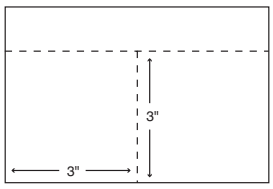
Toilets
Cut out two toilets from one 4x6 card.

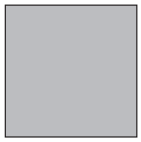




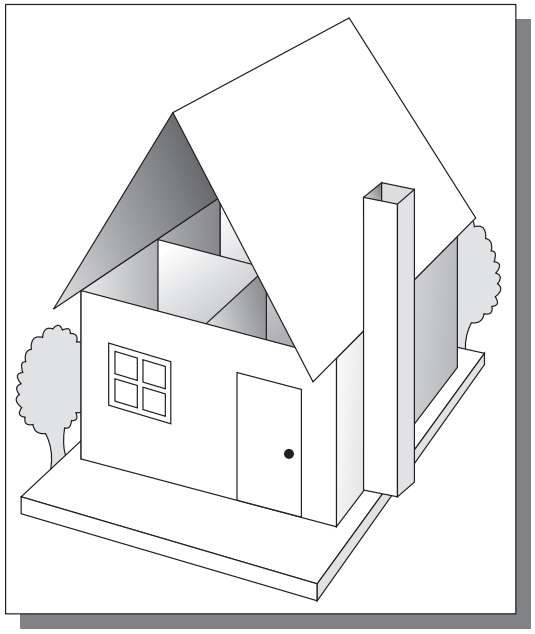
Tape lid on top of toilet

Carpet
Cut out two 3" squares from two 4x6 cards and then decorate/color carpets and wood flooring appropriate for one kitchen, one living room, and two bedrooms.

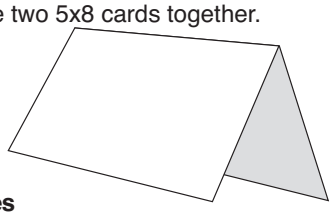




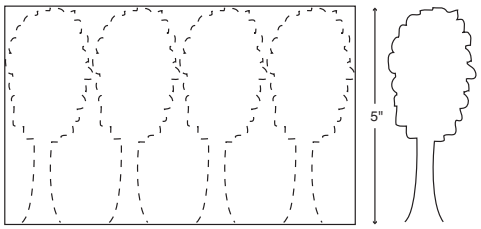
This is what a finished house should look like.



Roof
Tape two 5x8 cards together.



Trees
Cut out four trees from one 5x8 card



Work Cluster Matrix (for 4 houses)

Work cluster	Materials received (for 4 houses)	Work expectations for each house	Work order on job site
Plumbers	• flexible straws (8) • eight 5 x 8 cards • Blueprint Page • scissors	• See Blueprint Page • Put 2 flexible straws under where the concrete foundation will go. This will be the first job done while building each house. • Cut out toilet/sinks from card. Assemble and "bolt down" on job site.	**1/10**
Concrete Slab Men	• Blueprint Page • eight 5 x 8 cards • gray crayons • transparent tape	• See Blueprint Page • Color two 5 x 8 cards gray • Put together concrete slab by taping together two 5x8 gray cards • "Pour" this slab over pipes and heating coils	**2**
Framers (exterior walls)	• Blueprint Page • sixteen 4 x 6 cards • yellow (light) crayons • transparent tape	• See Blueprint Page • Decide upon color and then color four 4 x 6 cards as the exterior "walls" • Tape these cards together to form the exterior walls for each house	**3**
Drywallers (interior walls)	• Blueprint Page • scissors • eight 4 x 6 cards • crayons (any suitable color) • transparent tape	• See Blueprint Page • Color the walls once you have agreed upon the color(s) • Make 4 equally-sized rooms for the interior "walls"	**4**
Chimney Masons	• Blueprint Page • scissors • four 5 x 8 cards • Red/rust crayons • transparent tape	• See Blueprint Page • Color and cut out one chimney per house • Create each chimney	**5**
Window-Door Installers	• Blueprint Page • scissors • four 5 x 8 cards • crayons (match exterior color) • glue • transparent tape	• See Blueprint Page. • Cut out 4 "windows" and 2 "doors" for each house. • Color with agreed-upon color(s) • Glue windows to house; tape doors to house	**6/7**
Flooring Installers	• old towel/wash cloth pieces • two 5 x 8 cards • scissors • glue • transparent tape	• Cut 3 X 3-inch fabric to fit 2 rooms of the house—the rooms opposite the kitchen and bathroom • Tape or glue down the fabric • Option: Use cards to draw, color, and cut out "wood planking"	**8**
Carpenters (Optional)	• Blueprint Page • four 5 x 8 cards • ruler • scissors	• See Blueprint Page. • Draw, cut out, and fold paper into a TV set—built into the bookshelves	**9**
Roofers	• Blueprint Page • eight 5 x 8 cards • brown/dark crayons • transparent tape	• See Blueprint Page • On the 5 x 8 cards draw and color "shingles" • Tape 2 cards in a pitched manner to be the roof for each house	**11**
Landscapers (Optional)	• Blueprint Page • four 5 x 8 cards • brown and green crayons • transparent tape	• See Blueprint Page • Draw, color, and cut out 4 trees for each house	**12**

Postscript

It has been said that the 1950s were full of happy people with happy problems. This may not be true at all, but for those who fulfilled their dreams of owning a family car and living in their own Cape Cod model, two-bedroom home in Levittown, New York, happiness in that decade was greater compared with the preceding years.

Levittown made it possible for the average American to have his own home for a total price under $8,000 and a monthly payment of only $58. The house took up only 12 percent of the 60' x 100' lot and even allowed for expansion up or out. Included as a bonus was an eight-inch built-in television set and a Bendix clothes washer. The development's appearance was improved with all sorts of trees and the streets—with names like Azalea Lane and Hickory Road—were curvilinear, instead of perpendicular. Bill Levitt made sure there were enough swimming pools, village greens, open space, and recreational areas to help residents achieve a sense of community. "Suburbs are the backbone of the nation," Levitt once said.

On the other hand, the suburbia Bill Levitt created had an underside that social critics loved to take shots at. The exodus from the city, they wrote, accelerated the abandonment and decay of the urban centers. Further, they attacked the sameness, the blandness, and the lack of individualism in suburban communities all over the country which Levitt inspired. The typical owner of a Levittown home was middle class and white, thus separating classes and races. It is a fact, that in the early years of Levittown, no home was sold to a black family. Levitts felt he was solving a housing problem, not a racial problem. "We cannot," he said, "combine the two."

Many critics attacked the architecture of a Levitt home. "Is this the American dream, or is it a nightmare?" wrote one. Boxlike and painted with only a few different colors, it was easy to make fun of these "suburban slums." A 1963 song went like this:

Little boxes on the hillside,
Little boxes made of ticky-tacky
Little boxes on the hillside, little boxes all the same.
There's a green one and a pink one
And a blue one and a yellow one
And they're all made out of ticky-tacky
And they all look just the same.

—Malvina Reynolds, 1963

The move to the suburbs, critics noted, had a major impact on women. Watching their husbands leave on the 7:19 commuter train for the city left women with the sole responsibility of raising the children and isolated them from certain economic and social gains they had realized while in World War ll's workplace. Levittown became, for some women, a world of household toil, isolation, confinement, stasis, and a cultural void. To Betty Friedan, in another suburb later in the decade, it was "the problem that has no name." In the early 1960s, she would define it in her watershed book *The Feminine Mystique*.

Time magazine listed Bill Levitt as one of the most important people of the 20th century. He made life better for thousands. His suburb met a need and fulfilled a dream.

Bill Levitt built an empire on 30' x 30' concrete slabs and made a pile of money. It was reported that he undercut the competition by $1,500 on each house and still made a $1,000 profit. As a person he was abrasive, confident, ambitious, and hard working. He remained focused on one goal—to build massive housing for a generation. Despite his success in the 1950s and 1960s, however, he fell on hard times in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Accused of looting money from charity, mishandling millions belonging to the Levitt Foundation, and making illegal political campaign contributions, Levitt spent the last years of his life under a dark cloud. He died at the age of 86 on January 28, 1994.

A fitting epitaph came from Levitt's own mouth: "You have to have nerve. You have to think big," he once said, as if he were answering all his critics.

Historical Investigation Activity

Building Levittown (1949)

Focus Question

Post World War II home builder icon Bill Levitt: Why did he refuse to sell his houses to African Americans?

Materials Needed for This Historical Investigation

- **Documents A–E**—*class set*
- **Points to Ponder Response Sheet**—*class set*

Lesson Plan

1. Getting Started

   - Ask students, "How many of you know what suburbs are? Do you live in the suburbs—the 'burbs? What makes life different in the 'burbs from city or country living? Write down for #1 of your **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** the advantages and disadvantages of living in suburbia." Pass out the Response Sheet and allow 6–8 minutes for students in pairs or trios to write 2 or 3 responses on both sides of the T-chart. Discuss with students what they wrote down.
   - Then say, "Today we're going to look at documents that deal with the growth and problems faced by suburban communities in the 1945–1960 era, specifically about Levittown in Pennsylvania. First, let's get some background."

2. Backstory to Use as Instruction

   - The Activator you have just experienced gave you background on how William J. Levitt's company constructed thousands of houses for home-hungry GIs (and others) who flooded the country after the war and found, to their disappointment, few places to rent or buy to raise a family. Few homes had been built during the Depression and war years.
   - Levitt fulfilled this need in timely fashion and for his efforts became an American hero on the level of Henry Ford, who, like Levitt, did not invent his manufacturing process but perfected it with mass production zeal. As Ford did with cars, Levitt, the ultimate postwar entrepreneur, used mass production methods to make houses affordable.
   - Few in the business world were as successful and wealthy as Bill Levitt. His lavish lifestyle (expensively tailored clothes, chauffeured Cadillacs, trips to the Bahamas and custom-made estates) along with his brash,

flashy personality didn't concern the families—especially veterans—he helped buy new homes. To many, he is the father of modern suburbia, that magical place outside the crowded cities from which Americans were eager to leave for affordable refuge.

- Originally advertised as "the most perfectly planned community in America," Levittowns in New York, Pennsylvania, and later New Jersey promised the fulfillment of the American Dream for its buyers—serenity-seeking couples who wanted to raise kids in a safe, somewhat sanitized, but attractive environment with good schools.
- Yet, there was one glaring flaw: All of Levittown's residents for decades were only white. For years, Levitt intentionally excluded African Americans from purchasing his homes, even after the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to do so. Why would Bill Levitt, a Jew who certainly experienced prejudice in his own life, exclude Black buyers from his Levittowns? Was it personal prejudice—a white Jew denying equality to others who wanted to achieve the American Dream of owning their own homes? Or were there other reasons, some obvious, some not? Interestingly, a *New York Times* article in 2003 reported that the original Levittown on Long Island was still 94.1 percent Caucasian and thus "the most racially segregated suburban region in the country."

3. Say to students, "So we're going to look closely at an American icon, revered for decades as the man who put the struggling middle class, including returning vets, into affordable homes, a man responsible in a small way, for jump-starting the flight to the suburbs after 1945. Personal prejudice against a person's religious creed, race, or gender can obsess some and it can be a factor in negative and undemocratic action. On the lines for #2 on your **Response Sheet**, write down some other reasons, besides personal prejudice, why you think Bill Levitt might have prevented African Americans from buying into his Levittowns."

4. Allow 3–5 minutes for students to write. Then discuss those responses with students.

5. Pass out the packages of **Documents A–E**. It might help to read about the first document and guide students through an analysis of it, with some discussion. Remind students to read the documents carefully.

6. Allow 35–40 minutes for students in pairs or trios to read and analyze the document package.

7. After the students have done this and filled in the Response Sheet, discuss with them the gist of their findings. If there is time, have several students read their answers to the **Focus Question**.

Option for Lesson Plan

If you . . .

- Have students whose abilities may make it difficult to analyze all the documents in this package . . .

Or

- Have limited time in class during any particular unit to implement the full package of documents . . .

Consider carefully pulling out 2-3 documents to use that will still help students think like historians. Using this strategy would mean selecting only those tasks and questions on the **Points to Ponder Response Sheet** that directly apply to the documents you have chosen to use. Whatever the case, these investigations, even in an abbreviated format, can still be effective and fulfill your objectives.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Points to Ponder Response Sheet

Focus Question: Post World War II house builder Bill Levitt: Why did he refuse to sell his houses to African Americans?

1. Suburban Living

Advantages	Disadvantages

2. I think mass housing developer William "Bill" Levitt excluded African Americans from buying houses in his Levittown communities after World War II because

_____

_____

3. **Document A:** In a few (15–20) words summarize this ruling from 1948.
Shelley v. Kraemer:

_____

_____

Which Amendment did the Court use to strike down this race-based housing covenant?

_____

What particular violations were noted in the ruling?

_____

_____

4. **Document B:** From Bill Levitt's words would you say that he is prejudiced against African Americans? Why/why not?

_____

_____

What other reasons did he mention that would prevent his company from selling houses to African Americans?

_____

_____

How does he use the opinions of white residents to support his decision?

_____

_____

Would you say that over the years Bill Levitt was consistent in his views?

_____

_____

Do you think he could have in fact solved both a housing problem and a social-racial problem at the same time?

_____

_____

5. **Document C:** What 5 words would you use to describe Levittown's rules for residents?

_____

_____

6. **Document D:** The 1950s were years of conformity so it was almost heroic for a large city newspaper to take on one of the era's icons, Bill Levitt, and his company's racial-exclusion policy. How do you see a newspaper (or magazine, or television news channel) for attacking inequity, foreign policy disasters, corrupt politicians, etc.? Are there limitations to the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of the press?

_____

_____

What two reasons does the editorial give for Levitt's continued policy? Do you agree with the editorial?

_____

_____

7. **Document E:** Sports and entertainment celebrities have potential influence on social and political issues. Would having Jackie Robinson on your side have an impact in this case? Why are his words so believable?

_____

_____

8. If you could ask Bill Levitt one question, what would that question be and how would you expect him to answer?

   Q. _____

   A. _____

9. Based on the documents you analyzed, write a long paragraph answering the **Focus Question** at the top of this sheet. Make at least 3–4 major points to substantiate (support) your position (claim-evidence connection).

_____

_____

_____

_____

Document A

Shelley v. Kraemer Supreme Court Ruling (1948)

The segregation of neighborhoods was made worse as white families left more mixed urban centers and moved into housing developments that ensured the community would be entirely white. The problem was not economic—many African Americans could afford suburban homes. They simply weren't allowed to buy them. One key Supreme Court decision, *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) should have settled the issue. Sadly, after the Court's 6-0 vote [3 justices abstained] overturned a state court's earlier ruling on race-based covenants [agreements], the widespread practice of discrimination in the housing market continued as the law was almost impossible to enforce.

> The restriction of the covenant in the Michigan case seeks to bar occupancy by persons of the excluded class. It provides that . . . "This property shall not be used or occupied by any person or persons except those of the Caucasian race. . . ."
>
> . . . Equality in the enjoyment of property rights was regarded by the framers of that [14th] Amendment as . . . essential. . . .
>
> . . . Because of the race or color of these petitioners, they have been denied rights of ownership of property or occupancy enjoyed as a matter of course by other citizens of different race or color. The Fourteenth Amendment declares "that all persons, whether colored or white, shall stand equal before the laws of the states . . . that no discrimination shall be made against them by law because of their color. . . ."
>
> For the reasons stated . . . the judgment of the Supreme Court of Michigan must be reversed.

Source: *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) decision rendered by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Document B

The Words of Bill Levitt and Levitt & Sons

Excerpt 1

> Most whites prefer not to live in mixed communities. . . . The responsibility [for this] is society's. . . . It is not reasonable to expect that any one builder could or should undertake to absorb the entire risk and burden of conducting such a vast social experiment.

Source: Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

Excerpt 2

> [Refusing to change company policy, Levitt said,] It was not a matter of prejudice, but one of business. . . . As a Jew, I have no room in my mind or heart for racial prejudice. But, by various means, I have come to know that if we sell one house to a Negro family, then ninety to ninety-five percent of our white customers will not buy into this community. . . .
>
> It is the same policy that all builders in this area have adopted and the elimination of the clause has changed absolutely nothing . . . Levittown has been and is now progressing as a private enterprise job, and it is entirely in the discretion and judgment of Levitt & Sons as to whom it will rent or sell.

Source: Bill Levitt as quoted in David Kushner, *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb* (New York: Walker & Company, 2009).

Excerpt 3

> Our firm is liberal and progressive, but we don't want to be singled out or used as the firm which should start the other builders off. If there is no other builder who can keep Negroes out, we will not do so either; we will go with the group if the state makes us, but we don't want to lose millions by being the first . . . we could not afford to take such losses.

Source: A Levitt & Sons executive as quoted in Herbert J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967).

Excerpt 4

Planning a new Levittown in New Jersey,—Levittown III—Levitt was under fire in 1958 for his company's discrimination policy against African Americans when he faced a packed conference room in Washington, D.C., to respond to the question, "Would the new community be segregated racially?"

> "Our policy on that is unchanged. The other two Levittowns are white communities."

Source: "Third Levittown Gets Underway," *New York Times* (June 6, 1958).

Excerpt 5

> "We can solve a housing problem, or we can try to solve a racial problem. But we cannot combine the two."

Source: Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

Document C

Homeowners' Rules in Levittown (1949)

The company's idea of a model, perfectly planned community included restricted rules all homeowners had to follow. Some of the more draconian [strict, severe] rules are listed below.

- The tenant agrees not to run or park or permit to be run or parked any motor vehicles.
- The tenant agrees to cut or cause to be cut the lawn and remove or cause to be removed tall growing weeds at least once a week between April fifteenth and November fifteenth, upon the tenant's failure the landlord may do so and charge the cost thereof to the tenant as additional rent.
- The tenant agrees not to permit the premises to be used or occupied by any person other than members of the Caucasian race.

Source: David Kushner, *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb* (New York: Walker & Company, 2009).

Document D

A Newspaper Editorial Takes Aim at Levitt's Policy

When a black family secretly purchased a home in Levittown II, outside of Philadelphia, in August 1957, many white residents took action to prevent the Myers family from moving in. A minor riot ensued. This reaction came from the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*.

> Levittown was conceived and built as an all-white community by William Levitt without any concern of the social implication involved. From the beginning all Negro applicants were turned down on the sole basis of color. The builder let it be known that he would not under any circumstances sell a single house to any Negro, regardless of his character or financial status. It is reasonable to assume that Mr. Levitt used racial prejudice against Negroes as one of his chief selling points. . . . Thoughtful citizens pointed out to Levitt the unfairness of his enterprise and disastrous results which would naturally follow from the establishment of such a town in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. But he was not interested in the valiant struggle being made in this State by public officials and civic-minded citizens to improve the relationship between white and colored citizens. His only concern was to make money. . . .
>
> Of course, the hoodlums who stoned the home of the Myers family this week are not blameless and deserve the scorn of all decent people, but the real culprit is Bill Levitt, the architect and builder of this cesspool of hate.

Source: *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* (August 20, 1957) as quoted in David Kushner, *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb* (New York: Walker & Company, 2009).

Document E

Jackie Robinson Goes to Bat against Discrimination in Levittown

In the middle of his historic career, Brooklyn Dodger second-baseman Jackie Robinson, the first African American to break the color barrier in major league baseball, joined in February 1951, the chorus of protesters against Levitt's company. The protest was organized by the National Coalition of Christians and Jews in support of the Ross family in Levittown, New York who hosted an interracial playground for local kids. When Bill Levitt informed the Rosses that he would not renew their lease, many groups and individuals came forward to defend the tenants. Robinson was one who addressed the protesters.

Excerpt 1

> "Our world is changing and today qualified persons of all colors and creeds are being given opportunities as never before in the business, professional, and sports worlds. . . . [I am] wholeheartedly in favor of the actions of any group to blot out discriminatory practices. . . . If Mr. Levitt and other organizations would stop and think whom they are hurting, perhaps things would be different."

[Postscript: Bill Levitt finally gave up his threat and the Ross family remained in their home. Still, Levitt & Sons kept their policy of the exclusion of African Americans intact.]

Source: Speech by Jackie Robinson, February 18, 1952, as quoted in David Kushner, *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb* (New York: Walker & Company, 2009).

Excerpt 2

Seven years later, Robinson himself felt the sting of discrimination in housing—although not in Levittown—and he put that experience into words as he appeared before a Congressional hearing in 1959.

> I read in a page 1 story of the New York Times on January the 28th that—and I quote: 'The Commission has received no complaints from New York about housing bias.' Well, I am sure you learned members of the Commission are not naive, and I am sure you are aware that directly and indirectly discrimination in renting or purchasing apartments and homes does exist in New York, and I guarantee you, gentlemen, that beanballs are still being thrown in the housing field as well as on the ballfield. . . .
>
> When my wife and I decided to move from St. Albans, Long Island [ca. 1956], we were put through the usual bag of tricks right in this state. At first we were told the house we were interested in had been sold just before we inquired, or we would

be invited to make an offer, a sort of sealed bid, and then we'd be told that offers higher than ours had been turned down. Then we tried buying houses on the spot for whatever price was asked. They handled this by telling us the house had been taken off the market. Once we met a broker who told us he would like to help us find a home, but his clients were against selling to Negroes. Whether or not we got a story with the refusal, the results were always the same.

Source: Speech by Jackie Robinson. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, hearing before the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Housing, Vol. I, Hearings Held in New York, February 2-3, 1959 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959) as reprinted in Becky M. Nicolaides and Andrew Wiese, Eds. *The Suburb Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

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