

**Lesson Plan**  
**Connecting *The Great Gatsby***  
To the  
**"The Jazz Age"**  
Coined by F. Scott Fitzgerald

**Lesson Overview:**

In order to gain a greater appreciation of *The Great Gatsby* as it relates to the time period when it was written, the students will investigate several unique characteristics of the Jazz Age. Teachers may introduce the novel with this lesson, or use it during the unit. The party project extension activity is an excellent way to conclude the unit.

**Objectives:**

The students will be able to:

- Locate and evaluate primary sources from the Library of Congress.
- Develop and defend a thesis statement in a mini-research paper utilizing MLA guidelines.
- Present the information in the form of a presentation and a class party.

**Standards: HSCEs (In student friendly language)**

**1.3.2** I can write a well-composed and purposeful essay with an engaging intro, well-constructed paragraphs, purposeful transitions, and a powerful conclusion

**1.4.2** I can select and use appropriate primary and secondary resources when I do research. When writing a research paper, I can use a system for gathering, organizing, paraphrasing, and summarizing information.

**1.4.3** I can develop an appropriate thesis that will be supported by evidence.

I can develop and refine a thesis or hypothesis. I can explore and support a thesis or hypothesis by analyzing different perspectives, resolving inconsistencies, and I can write about my thesis or hypothesis in a structure appropriate for the audience.

**1.4.7** I understand that even research done by students can contribute to the knowledge of the audience.

**1.5.1** I can express myself through writing, speaking, and images.

**1.5.4** I can use technology to produce polished written and presented pieces.

**2.1.2** I can infer and draw conclusions from informational text and multimedia.

I can explain how I organized a piece to add depth to the message and influence the audience.

**3.1.10** I can understand how themes in literature connect to historical and contemporary society.

**3.4.4** I can understand how media is influenced by the political and commercial slant of the producers and publishers.

**Time Required:** 3-4 class periods.

**Recommended Grade Level(s):** 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Topic(s):** Arts and Culture

**Era:** The Jazz Age

**Preparation:** Printing and Copying Handouts

**Materials:** Computers with Internet Access

**Resources:** Resource Table, Handouts, and Rubrics

[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary\\_Source\\_Analysis\\_Tool.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf) (primary source analysis)

<http://www.actstudent.org/writing/scores/guidelines.html> (ACT guidelines)

Additional Websites:

<http://www.dinnerandmurder.com/themes/1920s.htm> (all 1920's party suggestions)

[http://www.lapl.org/resources/en/menu\\_collection.html](http://www.lapl.org/resources/en/menu_collection.html) (food site)

[www.loc.gov/jukebox](http://www.loc.gov/jukebox) (music)

**Procedure:**

**Anticipatory Set-** Explain and discuss the difference between primary and secondary sources. Use the telephone game to explore the difference. Whisper a 4-5 sentence message to the first student then ask them to whisper to the next and so on around the room. Discuss how it changes each time and use that to explain why primary sources are so important.

**Main Activity-** Introduce topic and ask students to brainstorm about the Jazz Age-first independently and then collaboratively. What is their prior knowledge? Discuss the music, dance, food, and political issues. The teacher will list the characteristics on the board. Connect these findings to *The Great Gatsby* and Fitzgerald himself through whole class discussion. Divide the class into four groups and have each group focus on one of the websites listed on the resource table. Pass out the primary source analysis worksheet and have each student use it on at least one primary source from their group's website. Have each group discuss their discoveries and choose two or three of the best ones to share with the class and relate them to *The Great Gatsby*.

**Assign** a mini-research essay (using MLA guidelines) where each student must use at least three sources including at least one primary source to support a thesis statement on his/her topic. (See topic handout). Allow time in class for students to

work on the assignment and the teacher to monitor/ provide assistance. Have the students peer edit rough drafts within their small group. Revise individually.

After receiving teacher feedback, the students will make any necessary revisions and receive further assistance if needed.

The students will use the mini-research essays to plan a *Great Gatsby*/ Jazz Age culmination project--a party similar to *Gatsby's* parties depicted in the novel. Students will provide the invitations, food, decorations, costumes, music and entertainment, teach popular dances, and perform a skit on 1920's headlines or handout a student generated newspaper for party-goers to discuss 1920's politically relevant topics.

**Extension:**

Have the students plan and execute a Jazz Age party utilizing research where each group of students is responsible for one of the following characteristics of the Jazz Age: food/decoration (provide food and decoration), dance/ music (provide music and teach popular dances), fashion/ films (aid in finding appropriate attire and entertainment), and political/ social climate (present a skit or provide a newspaper of the time).

**Evaluation:**

**Primary Source Analyzing Tool (loc.gov)**  
**Group presentation**  
**Research Essay (ACT Rubric)**

## The Great Gatsby/ Jazz Age Resource Table

Image	Description	Citation	URL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The height of fashion rules at the Ascot races, held at Ascot Heath, near Windsor [...]</li> <li>• Date Created/Published: [1926]</li> <li>• Summary: Fashionably dressed couple walking.</li> </ul>	Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA	<a href="http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/00650761/">http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/00650761/</a>
	New-York tribune., June 10, 1922, Image 1  Use this paper to research/discuss current political and social issues of the 1920s.	<b>New-York tribune., June 10, 1922, Image 1</b>  About <a href="#">New-York tribune. (New York [N.Y.] 1866-1924</a>	<b>Link</b> <a href="http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1922-06-10/ed-1/seq-1/">http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1922-06-10/ed-1/seq-1/</a>
 <p><b>A Really National Food</b>  <i>Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed and Evaporated Milk Are Two Products That Have Found Their Way into Nearly Every Family in the Country</i></p> <p>It was pity—the source of more than one important invention—that first made Gail Borden resolve to find some way of preserving milk.</p> <p>Returning from a trip to England in 1871, he was greatly distressed to see how hundreds of poor immigrants suffered—and their babies sickened and died—from lack of fresh milk on the long sea voyage. At that time the only way to provide milk at sea was to carry cows on the ship, but even then there was no ice for keeping the milk, no means of protecting it against contamination. Mr. Borden was quick to recognize the urgent need of putting this essential, but highly perishable, food in a safe form for people everywhere—in large cities, in</p>	<b>Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921-1929</b> The story of a pantry shelf, an outline history of grocery specialties. Use as a sample of 1920s food. The story of a pantry shelf, an outline history of grocery specialties.	<b>The Library of Congress</b> Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Access to the materials in <i>Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy 1922 - 1929</i> , strictly for noncommercial educational and research purposes.	<a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=amrlg&amp;fileName=lg05page.db&amp;recNum=37">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=amrlg&amp;fileName=lg05page.db&amp;recNum=37</a>  <b>Content Page:</b> <a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field(DOCID+@lit(lg05T000))::bibLink=D?coolbib%3A2%3A./temp/~ammem_VbIM%3A%3A">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field(DOCID+@lit(lg05T000))::bibLink=D?coolbib%3A2%3A./temp/~ammem_VbIM%3A%3A</a>
<b>National Jukebox</b>  <b>Hey! hey! and hee! hee! (I'm Charleston crazy)</b>	All That Jazz ... and Humor, Opera, Dance Music Streams 10,000 recordings. Use this site as source of 1920s music.	1094 songs from 1920-1929 Source of original recording: Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library,	<a href="http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/">www.loc.gov/jukebox/</a>

		University of California, Santa Barbara. Inclusion of the recording in the National Jukebox, courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment	
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## The Great Gatsby/ Jazz Age Mini-Research Assignment Topics

As a group, choose a category from the following list and then individually, choose a topic from that category to research. Use MLA guidelines to write a mini-research essay with a clear thesis statement. In the end of the unit, you will present your information to the class and also use it to plan the *Great Gatsby* party.

Food/ Decoration (Responsible for decorating and making sure 1920's style food is brought in for the party.)

- Party Food (Appetizers & Hors d'oeuvres)
- Famous Cookbooks
- Restaurant Menus (Waldorf-Astoria)
- Art Deco

Dance/ Music (Responsible for providing music and teaching others to do 1920's dances)

- Jitterbug/ Charleston
- The Lindy Hop/ The Black Bottom
- Speakeasy Bars/ "21Club"/ Cotton Club
- Duke Ellington/ Fanny Brice

Fashion/ Films (Responsible for finding appropriate 1920s attire for party-goers and advertise a popular film)

- Fedoras/ Gangster Dress
- Flappers/ Day Dresses
- Hairstyles/ Accessories (Long Pearl Necklaces/ Feathers)
- Films (Gangster)

Political/ Social Climate (Responsible for entertainment—either a skit or providing a 1920's newspaper to fuel political discussions/ debates.)

Prohibition/ Bathtub Gin

Tabloid Newspapers

Popular Newspapers of the day

Gangster/ Mob