

Social Studies Content Themes for Middle/High School
From
“The Making of Milwaukee Curriculum”

1920’s:

Teaching about the 1920’s in Milwaukee

The following activities are from “The Making of Milwaukee” on-line curriculum.

- **Creating Our Own Milwaukee Textbook**
- **A Travel Guide to Fun in Milwaukee (Creating a Travel Guide)**
- **Singing the Blues in Milwaukee (Writing Songs)**
- **Interviews with Milwaukeeans who Lived War and Peace**
- **Who Am I? (Trivia Activity)**
- **What Am I? (Trivia Activity)**
- **Which Event Am I? (Timeline Activity)**
- **Ranking Time (Timeline Activity)**

CREATING OUR OWN MILWAUKEE TEXTBOOK

1. Imagine that your students have been asked by a local publishing company to write a textbook chapter or chapters explaining the history of Milwaukee from 1914 – 1945, which includes Milwaukee during World War I, the Roaring 20’s, the Great Depression, and World War II (You may select any or all of these topics based on what video clips you show in this unit. You may also assign different topics to different groups). Students will use information from the video or other sources to create a textbook for other students on these topics. However, just as the people who make textbooks have limited space to describe events, students will only get to create a limited number of pages. (Use your own discretion based on the topic(s) for each chapter. For example, 3 might be a good limit).
2. Divide the students into groups (or you may assign students to do this individually) and ask them to discuss the following questions first:
 - Which individuals, groups, or events should be included in the textbook chapter(s)?
 - Why should these individuals, groups, or events be included?
 - Which individuals, groups, or events should receive the most attention and focus?
 - Why should these individuals, groups, or events receive the most focus?
 - What makes some information more important than other information?
3. If students cannot come to some agreement on the general content of the textbook chapter(s), this might be a good time for a class discussion on these same questions.

4. After students have discussed these questions have them list specific individuals, events, groups, and information related to these topics that they will include in their textbook page(s). They should also discuss where and how they will place any text, photographs, captions, graphs, quotes from primary sources, or other elements of a textbook page. If students are working in groups, they might want to assign roles like text writer, graphic designer, editor, and an individual to select photographs (see archives).

Students can find images for their textbook pages by going to the “Image Library” of the “In the Classroom” section of The Making of Milwaukee website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com. Use the “search” tool to locate images and photographs under the various pull down categories.

5. After students have completed their pages, have each group or individual present their textbook pages.
6. Then, return to the discussion questions listed above and have individuals or groups compare how their newly created textbook pages answered those questions.
7. Finally, this is a great opportunity to discuss how textbooks contain limited and missing perspectives from the past and the way some perspectives get attention over others. The activity should end with a discussion about the perspectives missing from the textbook pages. In fact, the teacher might have each group (or student if they are working on this individually) include a note with their textbook pages describing the missing perspectives and defending why these perspectives are missing.

Follow-up Learning Activity:

The teacher could ask students to look at their own textbooks that they use for the class and discuss the same issues about representation and which individuals, groups, and events get the most attention in relationship to the people, events, and ideas that are left out of the textbook.

A TRAVEL GUIDE TO FUN IN MILWAUKEE

Milwaukee has its share of fun filled places for people to visit that have developed and expanded over the course of its history. During the Roaring 20's, movie theaters, dance clubs, and parks were places where people could enjoy spending their time in the city. During the 1930's and 1940's, in spite of Depression and war, people also found places and ways to have a good time in Milwaukee.

1. Have students select places and activities related to spending leisure time in Milwaukee in the video chapters from this unit. Students will probably find the majority of descriptions of leisure in Chapter 13, *The Roaring Twenties*, and

Video Chapter 14, *Hard Times and War Times*. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 of the accompanying book, *The Making of Milwaukee*, by John Gurda, also offer ideas for this activity as well.

2. Then have them create a travel guide dedicated to having fun in Milwaukee during this period of time. Before they begin, the teacher might want to have them answer the following questions:
 - What places allowed people to relax, spend leisure time, and have fun in Milwaukee during this period of time?
 - What was fun, entertaining, or relaxing about these places?
 - How and why might these places appeal to a person who already lives in Milwaukee? To a person who lives near Milwaukee but only visits the city on occasion? To a person who has never been to Milwaukee?
 - How might these places appeal to people of different ages and with different interests?
 - Is there a particular time of year or day when it might be best to visit these locations?
3. After students have answered these questions have them select places or sites they want to include in their travel guide and think of ways they want to attract people to visit these places. Students could design their guides by including a 3-5 day itinerary for people to follow to have fun in Milwaukee. They could also design the guide thematically by various locations (e.g. Fun Indoors vs. Fun Outdoors.) Students might even want to design their guides on a seasonal basis highlighting locations that can be enjoyed during each season of the year. They could also design a guide book that includes tours for children in Milwaukee led by children from Milwaukee.
4. Once students have decided on a format, they can create the guide using images, text, charts, or other elements that would interest people in traveling to Milwaukee for fun during the 1920's, 30's, and/or 40's.

Students can find images for their travel guides by going to the "Image Library" of the "In the Classroom" section of The Making of Milwaukee website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com. Use the "search" tool to locate images and photographs under the various pull down categories.

5. The following websites offer ideas from commonly used travel guides that even include current guides to Milwaukee. These might serve as references for students to create their own guides:

<http://www.fodors.com/>

<http://www.frommers.com/>

SINGING THE BLUES IN MILWAUKEE

During times of war and peace a number of Milwaukeeans faced discrimination, insult, and even violence. Groups and individuals were hated and unaccepted in Milwaukee for a variety of reasons. Historically, one outlet for dealing with oppression has been music. During the early and into the mid-1900's musical forms like the blues became increasingly widespread and well known across the United States.

1. Have students create a blues song that addresses the discrimination and cruelty that different groups in Milwaukee faced during this period of time (e.g. African Americans, Hispanics, German Americans, Catholics, Jewish Americans, etc.). As students watch any of the video chapters from this unit they should pay close attention to groups who experienced discrimination and the ways they were victimized. Students should also consider the ways individuals in these groups may have been affected by this intolerance. The following questions can serve to help guide their thoughts about discrimination against various groups in Milwaukee during this time.
 - Why did this particular group face discrimination?
 - In what ways did this group, as a whole, face discrimination?
 - How were individuals in this group possibly affected by discrimination in different ways?
 - How could or did this group try to fight against discrimination?
 - What lasting impact do you think this discrimination has on the city of Milwaukee today?
2. After students answer or discuss these questions, they can begin to think about writing their blues song.
 - a. If the teacher has a fairly strong understanding of music, the following websites can assist him or her with helping students write a truly unique blues song:

<http://www.wpsweb.com/performingarts/BrownBagJazz/blues.htm>
<http://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/essays12bar.html>
 - b. If the teacher is new to the blues, the following website offers clips of blues songs that students could possibly use to create their own songs:

<http://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/cd.html>
 - c. If neither of the above options works well, simply have students choose one of their favorite sad, slow or moving songs (it does not have to be a blues song) and use the rhythm or melody to write their own song lyrics.

- d. A final option might be to work with the school's music teacher to help students create these songs.
3. After students have written their songs, ask them to perform them for the rest of the class or simply have them discuss the lyrics with the rest of the class. Focus discussion on the multiple ways people faced discrimination during this period of time and the multiple ways people dealt with intolerance.
4. The teacher might want to end the discussion by asking students if they think music is as an effective way to deal with discrimination. Students can also consider how any music today tries to address discrimination.

Follow-up Learning Activity:

- If the school or community has a variety show or talent competition, the teacher might want to encourage students to use their songs and performances as an entry in this activity.

INTERVIEWS WITH MILWAUKEEANS WHO LIVED DURING WAR AND PEACE

1. Have students find people who grew up in Milwaukee during this time period (1914 – 1945) and do an interview with them about their experiences of growing up in Milwaukee. Students might want to ask questions specifically related to topics discussed in the video such as the Roaring 20's, Great Depression, World War I, or World War II. Although it is increasingly difficult to find people who lived in Milwaukee during this time nursing homes, VFW Posts and organizations, and even relatives or neighbors might be a place for students to begin searching.
2. Have students use their interviews to write up brief biographies of these people and share them with the rest of the class. (Note: Students should get permission from the people they interview before sharing their biographies with the rest of the class)
3. After listening to these stories, have a class discussion on topics like: 1) why people made such sacrifices for their city and country during this period of time 2) the similarities and differences between the challenges that different generations in Milwaukee and America have faced over time 3) how the lives of "ordinary" Americans who lived through time periods like this sometimes receive little attention in history books and 4) the need to record and remember the stories of all people, not just famous ones, who lived through our city's past.

Follow-up Learning Activity:

- Invite people who students interview to class and have them share their stories in person in addition to having students read the biographies. Invite other classes, the whole school, community members, and/or parents to the event to honor those who made sacrifices for their country during this time in history.

WHO AM I?

1. In the following activity students will be given 3 clues about a person who was famous during this time period (1914 – 1945) in Milwaukee’s history. The teacher should read the first clue to students and ask them to guess who the person is. If no students guess correctly, the teacher should then read the second clue to students to see if someone guesses correctly. Finally, if no students guess correctly, the teacher should read the third clue to students to see if someone guesses correctly. If no student guesses correctly after the third clue, the teacher should read the answer. The first person to guess correctly wins. The teacher could assign point values for each clue given. For example, a correct guess after the first clue could be worth 25 points, a correct guess after the second clue could be worth 10 points, and a correct guess after the third clue could be worth 5 points.

An interactive version of this activity can also be found on-line by going to the homepage of The Making of Milwaukee website, www.themakingofmilwaukee.com. Choose the “In the Classroom” section and click on “Interactive Lessons.” Or, to go directly to this on-line activity, click here now:

http://www.themakingofmilwaukee.com/classroom/who_am_i/index.cfm

On-line directions are also given.

CLUE #1 : I was a welcome distraction to Milwaukee’s worries during World War II

CLUE #2 : My story inspired a widely read children’s book in the U.S.

CLUE #3 : I laid a clutch of eggs on a piling next to the Wisconsin Avenue Bridge

ANSWER : Gertie the Duck

CLUE #1 : My grandfather was known to some as “Alexander the Great” in Milwaukee

CLUE #2 : I was placed in charge of the entire Allied Air Service during World War I.

CLUE #3 : Milwaukee’s airport is currently named after me

ANSWER : Billy Mitchell

CLUE #1 : I issued a very strong warning against the Ku Klux Klan in Milwaukee during the 1920's

CLUE #2 : I was on the cover of Time magazine for being one of the nation's best public servants in 1936.

CLUE #3 : I served as Milwaukee's mayor during the Great Depression

ANSWER : Daniel Hoan

CLUE #1 : I ran the *Milwaukee Leader*, a socialist newspaper in Milwaukee

CLUE #2 : I was convicted for speaking out against the government when my paper ran anti-war editorials during World War I

CLUE #3 : Congress refused to offer me my seat when Milwaukee elected me to the House of Representatives in 1918

ANSWER : Victor Berger

CLUE #1 : I was an assistant city attorney, a stirring singer, and a gifted speaker

CLUE #2 : I defeated Daniel Hoan to become mayor in 1940

CLUE #3 : I quit my job to join the Navy during World War II and declared, "My life is not my own. It belongs to my country."

ANSWER : Carl Zeidler

WHAT AM I?

1. In the following activity students will be given 3 clues about a place that became famous during this time period (1914 – 1945) in Milwaukee's history. The teacher should read the first clue to students and ask them to guess what the place is. If no students guess correctly, the teacher should then read the second clue to students to see if someone guesses correctly. Finally, if no students guess correctly, the teacher should read the third clue to students to see if someone guesses correctly. If no student guesses correctly after the third clue, the teacher should read the answer. The first person to guess correctly wins. The teacher could assign point values for each clue given. For example, a correct guess after the first clue could be worth 25 points, a correct guess after the second clue could be worth 10 points, and a correct guess after the third clue could be worth 5 points.

CLUE #1 : I was Milwaukee's biggest defense contractor during World War II

CLUE #2 : I became part of a top secret project to build the first atomic bomb

CLUE #3 : Nearly 20,000 people, enough to fill a small city, worked in my place at the peak of World War II

ANSWER : The Allis Chalmers Company

CLUE #1 : I am a planned community built for working class families during the Depression

CLUE #2 : There are 2 other communities just like me in Ohio and Maryland

CLUE #3 : I was completed in 1938 to surround workers with nature

ANSWER : Greendale

CLUE #1 : I am currently located next to the downtown Milwaukee Public Library

CLUE #2 : I was initially the mansion of Alexander Mitchell

CLUE #3 : I used to house the Deustcher Club before it changed its name during World War I

ANSWER : The Wisconsin Club

CLUE #1 : I am located on Milwaukee's Northwest side, and I became the quintessential 1920's neighborhood

CLUE #2 : My orderly streetscapes reflected the influence of zoning – a 1920's innovation

CLUE #3 : The bungalow became the signature house in my neighborhood during the 1920's

ANSWER : Sherman Park

CLUE #1 : I am Milwaukee County's largest green space

CLUE #2 : A botanical garden was built inside me with funds from the New Deal

CLUE #3 : I am named after a person who created a master plan for Milwaukee County's Park System

ANSWER : Whitnall Park

WHICH EVENT AM I?

1. Have students choose one event from the timeline and write down 3 clues about this event. Then have each student read their clues to the class. The rest of the class should try to guess the event after each clue. The first person who guesses the event earns points. The teacher could assign point values for each clue given. For example, a correct guess after the first clue could be worth 25 points, a correct guess after the second clue could be worth 10 points, and a correct guess after the third clue could be worth 5 points.

RANKING TIME

1. The teacher should select 10 events in the timeline and ask students to rank them in order from the most significant to the least significant.
- 2.. The teacher should then lead a discussion on the events that students chose as the most and least significant.