

Going Ape and Having a Cow: Television

For a brief history of WCIA, go to:

<http://www.dougquick.com/wciachampaign2.html>

*November 14, 1953 was WCIA's Inaugural Day; prime time hours included *The Jackie Gleason Show*, *Two for the Money*, and *Amos & Andy*. For the purpose of this lesson, students will watch episodes of *Amos 'n Andy* and *The Honeymooners*. The character of Ralph Kramden originated on the *Jackie Gleason Show* as a recurring sketch comedy character. The *Jackie Gleason Show* is no longer readily available on VHS or DVD, so students will watch an episode of *The Honeymooners* in its stead.

Activity #1

4. Hand out Television Analysis Worksheet to students and go over it together in class, focusing particularly on the gender, realism, and race/class questions of the Post-viewing section as they may require an explanation.
5. Students could watch either *The Adoption* or *Leroy's Suits* episode of *Amos 'n Andy*, as those are closest to the episode that may have been aired on November 14, 1953, completing the analysis worksheet as they view.
6. Refer to the Amos 'n Andy Episode Guide if another episode from the DVD is chosen.

Activity #2

1. Students repeat the above activity, only watching one of the episodes of *The Honeymooners* and completing a Television Analysis Worksheet.
2. Refer to The Honeymooners Episode Guide to choose viewing episode.

Activity #3

1. Students can watch a modern television sit-com (either as a class or outside of class on own) to compare/contrast to one of the shows from the 1950s.
2. If students choose to compare/contrast *Amos 'n Andy*, they should choose a modern sit-com that focuses on minority main characters, i.e. *The Hughleys*, *My Wife & Kids*, *George Lopez*, etc...
3. If students choose to compare/contrast *The Honeymooners*, they should choose a modern sit-com that focuses on a married couple (or two) such as *Yes, Dear*, *King of Queens*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, etc...
4. Some of these may be available in DVD from the local library or a local video rental store (Rentertainment, Blockbuster, etc...).
5. Some households have TiVo or DVR devices and perhaps those households could be enlisted to record show episodes for the class/students

to use in their compare/contrast essay.

6. Students will write a compare/contrast essay of their two shows, one modern and one from the 1950s viewed in class, the length and focus of which are to be determined by the teacher.

Alternative Writing Assignment

(Used with permission from *Ten Television Analysis Writing Projects* by Traci Gardner at <http://www.tengrrl.com/tens/022.shtml>)

Imagine that the program you've watched from the 1950s is all that has survived to tell future generations about America in the 1950s. Imagine that a video recording of this program has been discovered 500 years from now. Miraculously, the discoverers have found a way to watch the program. What would they think of us and our world in the 1950s? Take on the role of one of the discoverers, and write a report to your home office explaining what you've learned about your ancestors based on the program. Be sure that your report draws clear connections between the details of the program and the conclusions about your ancestors.

Going Ape and Having a Cow: School

For this first activity, ask your school's yearbook sponsor for multiple copies of your high school's yearbooks from the 1950s—most yearbook clubs have an "archive" somewhere in the school building. Getting multiple years from the 1950s can add an interesting component to the activity. Also ask the yearbook sponsor for multiple copies (if available) of the most current yearbook. If you choose to do this activity in class, you will need the yearbooks for multiple days.

If no yearbooks are available from the 1950s from your school, there is one Champaign Central High School 1950 yearbook in the EAM 1950s Discovery Kit.

Activity #1

Activity can be done individually or in small groups, dependent on yearbook availability and time

1. Give each group/duo/individual a 1950s yearbook and a recent yearbook from your high school.
2. Hand out the Yearbook Analysis Worksheet and go over it together as a class.
3. Allow students time in class to complete yearbook analysis worksheet (*calculators may be helpful in determining the number of students in the school at the time*).
4. Once yearbook analysis is complete, have students write a timed in-class essay on how school has changed since the 1950s, citing three (3) pieces of specific evidence from the yearbooks.

Activity #2

- 1 pair of Lady's gloves (white) (would be worn when "dressing up")
- 1 pair of nylon stockings (Karlene) (would be worn when "dressing up")
- 1 woman's pink feathered hat with mod hat box (would be worn when "dressing up")
- 1 man's grey fedora w/ black band and red feather (would be worn when "dressing up")
- 1 purple & white plaid women's dress w/ matching belt
- 1 men's shirt, size M, blue/grey mod pattern

1. Divide students into 6 groups.
2. Give each group 6 Artifact Analysis Worksheets and go over the worksheet together as a class.

3. Give one item from the above list to each group for them to analyze. The group will complete one analysis worksheet as a group per item.
4. When one group is finished analyzing an item, they should trade their item with another group for an item they have yet to analyze.
5. Each group will complete one analysis worksheet for each item.
6. Trading will continue until all the groups have analyzed all the items.
7. Each group should then complete a Clothing Compare/Contrast graphic organizer.
8. Each group will then produce a poster, illustrating the differences in teenage clothing between the 1950s and today.

Going Ape and Having a Cow: **Leisure**

The following activity can be done individually but small groups are recommended. Students can be placed in groups or form a group of their own choosing of 2-4 students to divide the research, which can be time-consuming. Time should also be scheduled in the school's computer lab to allow groups to work together on creating the final PowerPoint presentation.

Activity #1

1. Students will conduct research on teen leisure activities in Champaign County in the 1950s and put together a PowerPoint presentation for their classmates.
2. The students will need to conduct a fair amount of research outside of class as well as in class. Consult with your school's librarian about resources available in the school library.

3. Direct students to outside community research facilities:

Early American Museum

Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve

Mahomet, IL

217.586.2612

Champaign County Historical Museum

102 East University Avenue

Champaign, IL

217.356.1010

Champaign County Historical Archives

Urbana Free Library

210 West Green Street

Urbana, IL

217.367.4057

Champaign County Cultural Memory

University of Illinois

<http://images.library.uiuc.edu/projects/gcm/ccm/database.htm>

4. Show students Waterslide PowerPoint as a rough example of the information needed in their presentations: brief history, use then and use now.
5. Each group will most likely need access to a digital camera and some type of data storage device (i.e. flash drive). This should be taken into consideration if groups are teacher-chosen. Most families have access to such technology, but not all will. The teacher may need to help student groups with access to such technologies.
6. Research topics include but are by no means limited to: bowling, movies, board games, school dances, sports, theatre, drive-in movies, soda shops, comic books, etc...

Going Ape and Having a Cow: Music

The below activities can be done in conjunction with each other or independently as time allows.

Activity #1

1. Have students choose one song from the early 1950s (1953 or earlier) from the CD provided in the discovery kit.
2. Students should analyze the song using Music Analysis Worksheet, focusing on the sentiment (theme) and lyrics of the song.
3. Lyrics for all the songs on the CD can be found in the Song Lyrics of the 1950s guide
4. Students should then choose a song from the later 1950s (1957 or later) either from the CD or other billboard hits:
http://www.billboard.com/bbcom/charts/yearend_chart_index.jsp
<http://www.lyricsdownload.com/> (for lyrics)
5. Students should analyze later song using Music Analysis Worksheet.
6. Upon completion of analysis, have students write an in-class timed essay noting how music changed from the beginning of the decade. Students should provide evidence from the songs in the form of lyrics, instrumentation, and theme.

Activity #2

1. Have students choose a song from the 1950s (can be from the CD provided or of own choosing):
http://www.billboard.com/bbcom/charts/yearend_chart_index.jsp
2. Students should analyze song using Music Analysis Worksheet, focusing on the sentiment (theme) behind the song.
3. Students then choose a song written/produced within the last five years that shares the same sentiment (theme) as the song chosen from the 1950s.
4. Students should analyze the modern song using the Music Analysis Worksheet.
5. Students can access lyrics at <http://www.lyricsdownload.com/> for most popular songs as well as other websites.
6. Using the Music Compare/Contrast Graphic Organizer, have students brainstorm differences/similarities in instrumentation, lyrics, etc... between their two chosen songs.
7. Have students write a one-two page compare/contrast essay of their two songs.