



Yale-New Haven
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2015 Volume II: American Culture in the Long 20th Century

Understanding Ourselves from the Past

Guide for Curriculum Unit 15.02.05
by Susan Hansen

As children learn and grow in elementary school, goals mainly relate to the future. Unfortunately, history may be viewed merely as facts to memorize and only discussed during special anniversaries or monthly commemorations. Social studies is an often neglected subject due to our needed focus on the development of literacy skills. Most of my students come from Latin and Hispanic cultures from around the world and bring a rich background of diversity to the classroom, as well as great curiosity. Yet many lack historical knowledge. Students will examine our present culture as it relates to the 1930s by comparing and contrasting in order to analyze “who” we are now as a result of “who” we were in the past. Students will also analyze patterns and changes over time. The goal of this unit is to expose students to the 1930s in order to engage student historical curiosity, discourse, reading and writing.

(Recommended for English Language Arts and Social Studies, grades 3-5)

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