

Northwest History Consortium

Prohibition and Its Influence on Politics

Amy Caldeira
8th Grade

National Standard

Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930) / Standard 3A

Standard 3A: The student understands social tensions and their consequences in the postwar era.

[Examine the rise of religious fundamentalism and the clash between traditional moral values and changing ideas as exemplified in the controversy over Prohibition and the Scopes trial.]

Washington State Social Studies Content Standards

Standard 1: Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.

Standard 2: Students analyze how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance to understand the operation of government and to demonstrate civic responsibility.

Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

Standard 5: Students make informed decisions based on an understanding of the economic principles of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption.

Standard 6: Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies.

BACKGROUND

Prior to this PBL, students will have spent 4-5 weeks on the Constitution's development and the process of amending it. Students will also have chronologically covered American history through the early 20th century, including the religious, social, and political influence of the American people and interest groups upon presidential hopefuls.

Information for the Instructor:

Excerpt from "Temperance and Prohibition: Why Prohibition?"

"The prohibition movement's strength grew, especially after the formation of the Anti-Saloon League in 1893. The League, and other organizations that supported prohibition such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, soon began to succeed in enacting local prohibition laws. Eventually the prohibition campaign was a national effort."

"During this time, the brewing industry was the most prosperous of the beverage alcohol industries. Because of the competitive nature of brewing, the brewers entered the retail business. Americans called retail businesses selling beer and whiskey by the glass saloons. To expand the sale of beer, brewers expanded the number of saloons. Saloons proliferated. It was not uncommon to find one saloon for every 150 or 200 Americans, including those who did not drink. Hard-pressed to earn profits, saloonkeepers sometimes introduced vices such as gambling and prostitution into their establishments in an attempt to earn profits. Many Americans considered saloons offensive, noxious institutions."

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"The prohibition leaders believed that once license to do business was removed from the liquor traffic, the churches and reform organizations would enjoy an opportunity to persuade Americans to give up drink. This opportunity would occur unchallenged by the drink businesses ("the liquor traffic") in whose interests it was to urge more Americans to drink, and to drink more beverage alcohol. The blight of saloons would disappear from the landscape, and saloonkeepers no longer allowed to encourage people, including children, to drink beverage alcohol."

"Some prohibition leaders looked forward to an educational campaign that would greatly expand once the drink businesses became illegal, and would eventually, in about thirty years, lead to a sober nation. Other prohibition leaders looked forward to vigorous enforcement of prohibition in order to eliminate supplies of beverage alcohol. After 1920, neither group of leaders was especially successful. The educators never received the support for the campaign that they dreamed about; and the law enforcers were never able to persuade government officials to mount a wholehearted enforcement campaign against illegal suppliers of beverage alcohol."

Kerr, Austin. "Excerpt from "Temperance and Prohibition: Why Prohibition?" 1996. The Ohio State University. ©2003 - 2011 by the Department of History, The College of Arts and Sciences and The Ohio State University. Columbus, OH. 8 March 2011 <http://prohibition.osu.edu/content/why_prohibition.cfm>.

Excerpt from "The Consumers Union Report on Licit and Illicit Drugs"

"In contrast to the many logical arguments in favor of alcohol prohibition, the one decisive argument *against* such a measure is purely pragmatic: prohibition doesn't work. It should work, but it doesn't."

"The evidence, of course, was accumulated during the thirteen-year period 1920-1933. The arguments in favor of prohibition before 1920 were overwhelming. The Eighteenth (Prohibition) Amendment passed both houses of Congress by the required two-thirds majority in December 1917, and was ratified by the required three-fourths of the forty-eight state legislatures a bare thirteen months later. After experiencing alcohol prohibition for thirteen years, however, the nation rebelled. The Twenty first (Prohibition Repeal) Amendment passed both houses of Congress by the required two-thirds majority in February 1933-and this time it took less than ten months to secure ratification by three-fourths of the forty eight state legislatures."

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"Alcohol prohibition was not repealed because people decided that alcohol was a harmless drug. On the contrary, the United States learned during Prohibition, even more than in prior decades, the true horrors of the drug. What brought about Repeal was the slowly dawning awareness that alcohol prohibition wasn't working."

"Alcohol remained available during Prohibition. People still got drunk, still became alcoholics, still suffered delirium tremens. Drunken drivers remained a frequent menace on the highways. Drunks continued to commit suicide, to kill others, and to be killed by others. They continued to beat their own children, sometimes fatally. The courts, jails, hospitals, and mental hospitals were still filled with drunks, In some respects and in some parts of the country, perhaps, the situation was a little better during Prohibition-but in other respects it was unquestionably worse."

"Instead of consuming alcoholic beverages manufactured under the safeguards of state and federal standards, for example, people now drank 'rotgut,' some of it adulterated, some of it contaminated. The use of methyl alcohol, a poison, because ethyl alcohol was unavailable or too costly, led to blindness and death; 'ginger jake,' an adulterant found in bootleg beverages, produced paralysis and death. The disreputable saloon was replaced by the even less savory speakeasy. There was a shift from relatively mild light wines and beers to hard liquors-less bulky and therefore less hazardous to manufacture, transport, and sell on the black market. Young people-and especially respectable young women, who rarely got drunk in public before 1920—now staggered out of speakeasies and reeled down the streets. There were legal closing hours for saloons; the speakeasies stayed open night and day. Organized crime syndicates took control of alcohol distribution, establishing power bases that (it is alleged) still survive. Marijuana, a drug previously little used in the United States, was first popularized during the period of alcohol Prohibition, and ether was also imbibed."

"During the early years of alcohol Prohibition, it was argued that all that was wrong was lack of effective law enforcement. So enforcement budgets were increased, more Prohibition agents were hired, arrests were facilitated by giving agents more power, penalties were escalated. Prohibition still didn't work."

Brecher, Edward M. and the Editors of *Consumer Reports Magazine*. "Excerpt from "The Consumers Report on Licit and Illicit Drugs." *Consumer Reports Magazine*. 1972: Chapter 33. [United Kingdom Web Archive Project](http://www.ukcia.org/research/cunior/cu33.htm). 2004 - 2011. London, England. 9 March 2011 <<http://www.ukcia.org/research/cunior/cu33.htm>>.

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PROBLEM

"Nothing is more destructive of respect for the government and the law of the land than passing laws which cannot be enforced."

-Albert Einstein, 1921

"Once, during Prohibition, I was forced to live for days on nothing, but food and water."

-W.C. Fields

What motivated the inception of the 18th Amendment? How was prohibition a reflection of the polarization of the country at this time and how did the amendment's ratification change American society? What made this amendment different than all others, as it is the only amendment to be repealed?

SCENARIO

The year is 1932. You are the campaign manager/speech writer for a favorite presidential candidate, James Beam. Beam has not made a public stance on the topic of prohibition and the possible recall of the 18th Amendment, but the public is demanding to know his platform on the volatile topic. Mr. Beam has assigned you with the task of researching both sides of the argument determining what opinion would best increase public support for his election.

TASKS

Students will develop and present two products: A speech for the presidential hopeful to establish his stance on the 18th Amendment, and a pamphlet or election poster that will clearly communicate whether he supports or opposes prohibition and why. The poster/pamphlet and speech will include supporting details and facts, as well as his plan either to enforce the law or to repeal the amendment.

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RESOURCES

Journals/Periodicals

Bailey, Richard, "American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform." Journal of American History 76.4 (March 1990): 1237-1238.

Baumohl, Jim. "Inebriate Institutions in North America, 1840-1920." British Journal of Addiction 85.9 (September 1990): 1187-1204.

Blocker, Jr., Jack S. "Did Prohibition Really Work?" American Journal of Public Health 96.2 (February 2006): 233-243.

Parsons, Elaine Frantz. "Temperance and Prohibition/Alcohol, Temperance, and Prohibition." Journal of American History 94.3 (December 2007): 1046-1047.

Tyrrell, Ian. "The US Prohibition Experiment: Myths, History, and Implications." Addiction 92.11 (November 1997): 1405-1409.

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ASSESSMENT

BROCHURE

CATEGORY	4 - Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards
Historical Accuracy	All facts in the brochure are accurate and are cited appropriately.	99-90% of the facts in the brochure are accurate and are cited appropriately.	89-80% of the facts in the brochure are accurate and are cited appropriately.	Fewer than 80% of the facts in the brochure are accurate and are cited appropriately.
Supporting Details	Supporting details are all relevant and compelling to the topic.	Supporting details are 90-99% relevant and compelling to the topic.	Supporting details are 89-80% relevant and compelling to the topic.	Fewer than 80% of the supporting details are relevant and compelling to the topic.
Understanding of Content	All students in the group can accurately answer all questions related to facts in the brochure and to technical processes used to create the brochure.	All students in the group can accurately answer most questions related to facts in the brochure and to technical processes used to create the brochure.	Most students in the group can accurately answer most questions related to facts in the brochure and to technical processes used to create the brochure.	Several students in the group appear to have little knowledge about the facts or technical processes used in the brochure.
Presentation and Organization	The brochure has exceptionally attractive formatting and well-organized information.	The brochure has attractive formatting and well-organized information.	The brochure has well-organized information.	The brochure's formatting and organization of material are confusing to the reader.

ALTEC. "Rubistar: Brochure." [4Teachers.org](http://4teachers.org). 2009. Lawrence, KS. Advanced Learning Technologies Consortia (ALTEC) at the University of Kansas. 9 March 2011 <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=CustomizeTemplate&bank_rubric_id=4§ion_id=>.

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SPEECH WRITING

CATEGORY	4 - Above Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards
Attention Grabber	The introductory paragraph has a strong hook or attention grabber that is appropriate for the audience. This could be a strong statement, a relevant quotation, statistic, or question addressed to the reader.	The introductory paragraph has a hook or attention grabber, but it is weak, rambling, or inappropriate for the audience.	The author has an interesting introductory paragraph, but the connection to the topic is not clear.	The introductory paragraph is not interesting AND is not relevant to the topic.
Focus or Thesis Statement	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed, but it does not name the topic.	The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed.
Evidence and Examples	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant, and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.
Accuracy	All supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Almost all supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Most supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately.	Most supportive facts and statistics were inaccurately reported.

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Audience	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the potential reader and uses appropriate vocabulary and arguments. Anticipates reader's questions and provides thorough answers appropriate for that audience.	Demonstrates a general understanding of the potential reader and uses vocabulary and arguments appropriate for that audience.	Demonstrates some understanding of the potential reader and uses arguments appropriate for that audience.	It is not clear who the author is writing for.
Writing Conventions	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.
Citations	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes, statistics and facts are credible and cited correctly.	Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly.

ALTEC. "Rubistar: Taking a Stand: Writing a Persuasive Essay." [4Teachers.org](http://rubistar.4teachers.org). 2009. Lawrence, KS. Advanced Learning Technologies Consortia (ALTEC) at the University of Kansas. 9 March 2011 <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=ShowRubric&module=Rubistar&rubric_id=1141406>. Adapted by Amy Caldeira for the Northwest History Consortium with permission.

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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

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- ALTEC. "Rubistar: Taking a Stand: Writing a Persuasive Essay." [4Teachers.org](http://4teachers.org). 2009. Lawrence, KS. Advanced Learning Technologies Consortia (ALTEC) at the University of Kansas. 9 March 2011 <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen>ShowRubric&module=Rubistar&rubric_id=1141406&>. Adapted by Amy Caldeira for the Northwest History Consortium with permission.
- Brecher, Edward M. and the Editors of *Consumer Reports Magazine*. "Excerpt from 'The Consumers Report on Licit and Illicit Drugs.'" [Consumer Reports Magazine](http://www.ukcia.org/research/cunion/cu33.htm), 1972: Chapter 33. [United Kingdom Web Archive Project](http://www.ukcia.org/research/cunion/cu33.htm). 2004 - 2011. London, England. 9 March 2011 <<http://www.ukcia.org/research/cunion/cu33.htm>>.
- Caldeira, Amy. "Prohibition and Its Influence on Politics" [NWESD Organization](http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/7.3A3_Prohibition.Politics.Caldeira.8.pdf). 2008. Anacortes, WA. 9 March 2011 <http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/7.3A3_Prohibition.Politics.Caldeira.8.pdf>.
- History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." [UCLA National Center for History in the Schools](http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html). 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 9 March 2011 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html>>.
- Kerr, Austin. "Excerpt from 'Temperance and Prohibition: Why Prohibition?'" 1996. [The Ohio State University](http://prohibition.osu.edu/content/why_prohibition.cfm). ©2003 - 2011 by the Department of History, The College of Arts and Sciences and The Ohio State University. Columbus, OH. 8 March 2011 <http://prohibition.osu.edu/content/why_prohibition.cfm>.
- OSPI. "Social Studies Essential Learning Requirements: Recommended Grade-by-Grade Sequence for Grade Level Expectations – K-12." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](http://www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/pubdocs/SocialStudiesStandards.pdf). 2009. Olympia, WA. 9 March 2011 <<http://www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/pubdocs/SocialStudiesStandards.pdf>>.