

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS – Comparison... *Roaring Twenties & Fabulous Fifties*

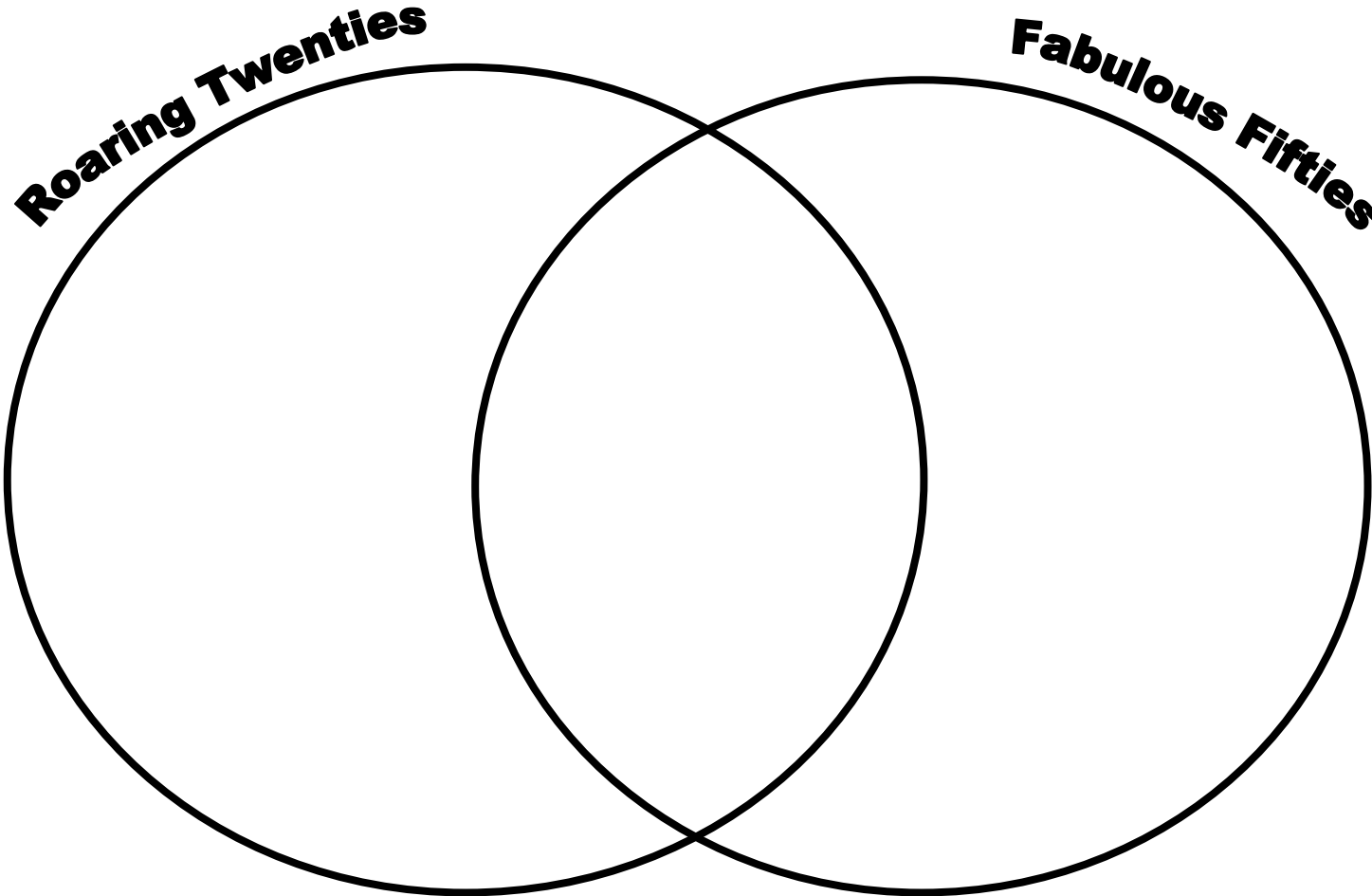
The purpose of this activity is to reinforce comparison, argumentation, and document analysis /interpretation skills.

From the 2015 Revised Framework:

Students will...COMPARE & CONTRAST...

1. Compare diverse perspectives represented in primary and secondary sources in order to draw conclusions about one or more historical events.
2. Compare different historical individuals, events, developments, and/ or processes, analyzing both similarities and differences in order to draw historically valid conclusions. Comparisons can be made across different time periods, across different geographical locations, and between different historical events or developments within the same time period and/ or geographical location.

Prompt: Compare and contrast American society in the 1920's with that of the 1950's. To what extent were these two decades similar?



Directions: Using your prior knowledge, new knowledge gained from the reading assignment and additional information provided in the additional notes, complete the Venn diagram. When your Venn is complete, proceed to the questions below.

Are there more similarities or differences?

Why? (list two reasons)

- 1.
- 2.

Write a thesis using your thesis formula:

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS – Comparing and Contrasting 1920s and 1950s

DIRECTIONS: Read/Review the notes provided, highlight main ideas about the 1920s yellow, main ideas about the 1950s green, and main ideas addressing both blue. Consider how you would use at least three specific items and at least three generalities to help you develop and defend a thesis comparing the 1920s and the 1950s. Is there anything you would add? What’s missing?

TECHNOLOGY	INTOLERANCE	LITERARY MOVEMENTS
<p>Many aspects of mass culture that surface in the 1920s would be magnified in the 1950s along with new technologies of production and distribution.</p> <p>Breakthroughs in medicine were matched by breakthroughs in the technology of war.</p> <p>The 1920s saw advances in silent and sound movies, phonographs, automobiles, airplanes, home appliances, the telephone, mass circulation of magazines, and an emphasis on consumer products and consumer buying on credit: refrigerators, washing machines, electric irons, vacuum cleaners, and the introduction of auto service stations, grocery stores, and new techniques of advertising.</p> <p>The 1920s marked the beginning of the radio age, as the 1950s would be the beginning of the age of television. The decade also saw the extensive electrification of the United States along with the beginning of highway construction and the enormous impact of the automobile on American life and manners.</p> <p>Symbolizing the advances and its identification with American character and culture was Charles Lindbergh’s solo flight to Europe.</p> <p>The 1950s witnessed innovations in televisions (setting the decade as the era of television and its immense cultural impact), continued mass production of mainstream magazines that influenced American culture as did TV sitcoms, jet planes, faster means of travel and federal funding of interstate highways (contributing to a resurgence of movement to the suburbs), improved kitchen appliances, mass production of houses (Levittown), along with other life-saving innovations such as the polio vaccine and other antibiotics.</p> <p>Technology represented the potential destructiveness of nuclear war and the environmental consequences of technological advances, but also the promise of a better world, represented by the growth of electronics and the introduction of computers, and scientific advancements, symbolized by Sputnik.</p>	<p>The intolerance so widespread during the 1920s had not entirely died out by the 1950s, but entrenched opponents to reform now found major changes taking place nonetheless, with a number of minority groups now better prepared to fight for change.</p> <p>The 1920s were marked by the extremes of the Ku Klux Klan at its political peak, the pervasiveness of Jim Crow laws in the South, violence against African Americans and continued lynchings, as well as heightened concerns and dissatisfaction with southern and eastern European immigrants, especially those tied to homelands or espousing left-wing political ideas. Anti-radicalism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-Semitism contributed to the concerns fueling the movement to restrict immigration.</p> <p>Fundamentalism expanded and gained notoriety with the Scopes trial. Reactions to the Scopes trial and the trial of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, executed on the basis of insubstantial evidence despite strong protests, revealed the climate of intolerance of the decade, as did the anti-Catholicism that contributed to Al Smith’s defeat in the 1928 presidential election. Additionally, the Catholic Church displayed intolerance of Mexicans in the Southwest because of cultural differences in their Catholicism.</p> <p>The Roaring Twenties masked considerable prejudice against minority races and immigrants. The 1950s continued to see racial violence and lynchings and racial murders (including that of Emmett Till), a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, and the formation of the Citizens Councils. However, the United States also began to see desegregation in the military, in baseball, and in schools (as a result of <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>), followed by boycotts against segregated public transportation (Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr.), Little Rock High School, and the 1957 Civil Rights Act.</p> <p>Practices that were widespread in the 1920s began to come under attack, with a new generation more willing to fight prejudice, particularly among African Americans and Mexican Americans. There was also a marked decline in anti-Semitism and wider acceptance of the United States as a nation of Judeo-Christian traditions—that is, an America based on toleration of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Ethnic identities were muted; religious ones were celebrated.</p> <p>There was a renewed fear of communism, and many leftists were seen as communists. The latter were compelled to testify or were forced out of jobs. The Julius and Ethel Rosenberg case and their execution for spying reinforced apprehensions. McCarthyism prevailed for a time, and political dissent was viewed with much fear, as shown in the passage of the McCarran Internal Security and Immigration Acts. The official adoption of “One Nation Under God” as a national motto to be included on currency and elsewhere and “under God” in the pledge of allegiance also could be a sign of intolerance to atheists.</p>	<p>The literature of the 1920s expressed the outburst of African American culture as well as the works of many other American authors analyzing, questioning, critiquing elements of American life.</p> <p>While the resurgence of black culture would actually take place in the 1960s, there was an array of minority/ethnic writers who were depicting life and culture in their groups, while here, too, an array of other American authors were analyzing and dissecting American society as their forebears had done in the 1920s.</p> <p>Literature in the 1920s included two important streams: one associated with the Harlem Renaissance, including Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Zora Neale Hurston; and a second stream that included those taking a more critical view of American society and the superficiality of the 1920s, or trying to capture the radical cultural changes associated with Prohibition and the Roaring Twenties. The latter included William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, H. L. Mencken, Walter Lippmann, Eugene O’Neill, Sinclair Lewis, and Ernest Hemingway. Some of the writers were included among those known as the Lost Generation.</p> <p>Another significant development roughly associated with literature in the 1920s was the emergence of the mass circulation magazines, including Saturday Evening Post, Look, Life, Reader’s Digest, and Lady’s Home Journal.</p> <p>The 1950s saw important works that challenged the postwar United States and the conformity that reflected the banality of the decade. Some works were beginning to challenge the pressures toward consensus, such as Jack Kerouac’s <i>On the Road</i>, David Reisman’s <i>The Lonely Crowd</i>, Vance Packard’s <i>The Hidden Persuaders</i>, and William Whyte’s <i>The Organization Man</i>. Other works, such as those by Norman Mailer, portrayed Second World War experiences. As James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison expressed much of the African American experiences, Philip Roth and Bernard Malamud depicted Jewish American life, and Alan Ginsberg portrayed the Beat fringe and an emerging counterculture. While such signs of change were just beginning and a new era of literature would soon flourish in the 1960s, especially in reaction to the 1950s, the movies, television, and magazine mass media captured the emphases on religion and family, symbolized by the massive sales of Benjamin Spock’s <i>Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care</i>.</p>

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS – Comparing *and* Contrasting 1920s and 1950s

Analyze each document using your three step strategy.

Prompt: Compare and contrast American society in the 1920’s with that of the 1950’s. To what extent were these two decades similar?

Document 1

Source: Photograph, Public Domain, Charles Lindbergh, and Mary B. Mullett, "The Biggest Thing That Lindbergh Has Done," The American Magazine, October, 1927



“... When, because of what we believe him to be, we gave Lindbergh the greatest ovation in history, we convicted ourselves of having told a lie about ourselves. For we proved that the "things of good report" are the same today as they were nineteen hundred years ago. We shouted ourselves hoarse. Not because a man had flown across the Atlantic! Not even because he was an American! But because he was as clean in character as he was strong and fine in body; because he put "ethics" above any desire for wealth; because he was as modest as he was courageous; and because-as we now know, beyond any shadow of doubt-these are the things which we honor most in life. To have shown us the truth about ourselves is the biggest thing Charles Lindbergh has done.”

REMINDERS ABOUT USING DOCUMENTS EFFECTIVELY...

--First of all... make sure you understand the prompt! Your response to the prompt is the PURPOSE of your essay, and your essay’s purpose is to **defend an argument using your analysis of the documents as well as your own historical knowledge.**

--Second of all... don’t let analysis and writing of the documents EAT YOUR TIME! Only three of seven points come from the documents, and that third point is hard to earn. So, **keep it simple.**

--Thirdly... make sure you understand what you are NOT doing! You are **NOT describing just to describe. You are describing in order to explain how the document relates! You are not quoting documents or stating the obvious. You are analyzing purpose, POV, audience, or context. You are NOT stringing together descriptions. You are defending an argument!**

How does the context of this document compare with the opposing decade?

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Document 2

Source: "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," F. Scott Fitzgerald, short story published in the *Saturday Evening Post* story (1 May 1920)

...An eternity of minutes later, riding down-town through the late afternoon beside Warren, the others following in Roberta's car close behind, Bernice had all the sensations of Marie Antoinette bound for the guillotine in a tumbrel. Vaguely she wondered why she did not cry out that it was all a mistake. It was all she could do to keep from clutching her hair with both hands to protect it from the suddenly hostile world. Yet she did neither. Even the thought of her mother was no deterrent now. This was the test supreme of her sportsmanship; her right to walk unchallenged in the starry heaven of popular girls.

How would you compare the context of this document to the opposing decade?

Document 3

Source: Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," *The Nation*, 1926

Jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America: the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul-the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains, and work, work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile. Yet the Philadelphia clubwoman. . . turns up her nose at jazz and all its manifestations-likewise almost anything else distinctly racial. . . . She wants the artist to flatter her, to make the white world believe that all Negroes are as smug and as near white in soul as she wants to be. But, to my mind, it is the duty of the younger Negro artist . . . to change through the force of his art that old whispering "I want to be white," hidden in the aspirations of his people, to "Why should I want to be white? I am Negro-and beautiful."

How would you compare the context of this document to the opposing decade?

Document 4

Source: 1959 Cadillac Advertisement



How would you compare the context of this document to the opposing decade?

Document 5

Source: Jan. 17, 1961, excerpts from President Dwight Eisenhower’s Farewell Address

"Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of ploughshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions."

"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist."

“This world of ours... must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect.”

“Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.”

How would you compare the context of this document to the opposing decade?

Extension: On a separate sheet of paper, write a full contextualization for this topic and a full paragraph with one piece of outside evidence not mentioned in any document. In your outside evidence paragraph, include two or three sentences explaining how your evidence corroborates or contradicts one of the documents.