

APUSH SPEAKEASY ASSIGNMENT

The 1920 census reported that for the first time, more than half of the American population lived in cities. City-dwellers embraced modernity in a manner increasingly at odds with the strict religious and moral beliefs held by their rural counterparts. Speakeasies, secret clubs where patrons engaged in illegal drinking and other taboo activities, were symbols of this cultural conflict. We will convert our classroom into a (dry) speakeasy in order to explore this conflict further.

In preparation, students will research two topics in depth. These topics will form the basis for their conversations at the speakeasy. These conversations must fulfill the following requirements:

- Students should discuss their assigned topics like they care about them and like they want others to agree with their point of view
- Students must convey common beliefs held by like-minded people during the 1920s and may not reference information discovered after that time period.
- Conversations must reflect research from either the textbook, the suggested resources listed below or other legitimate, academic resources.

Suggested Resources:

- <http://www.authentichistory.com/>
- <http://vlib.iue.it/history/USA/ERAS/20TH/1920s.html>
- http://www.historyteacher.net/AHAP/Wedlinks/AHAP_Weblinks22.htm

Extra Credit:

Students may earn 5 points of extra credit if they do any ONE of the following (students will not be able to earn more than 5 points):

- Dress in full costume (a hat or necklace will not be enough)
- Bring 1920s-themed snacks for the class
- Create a 3-5 song 1920s-themed playlist to play during class
- Learn and perform a 1920s-style dance during the speakeasy

Speakeasy Procedure:

Like all speakeasies, you will have to know the password in order to gain access to the club. You will be asked a question at the door, a question related to past topics in American History. You will have to answer the question correctly in order to be allowed in.

Once you enter, you will mingle throughout the crowd. You will be “that person” at the club, the one who is obsessed with a single topic and insists on talking with everyone that they meet about it. You will be required to speak with at least 6 people about your topic and to listen to at least 6 people about theirs. You will have a worksheet on which to take notes about all of the topics discussed.

There will be two “rounds” of discussion, so that you will have an opportunity to discuss both topics that you researched and to hear about at least 12 topics researched by others.

Topics:

- Prohibition
 1. Convince people that Prohibition is good for the country
 2. Convince people that Prohibition is bad for the country
 3. Recruit people at the speakeasy to join your gangster posse
- Immigration
 4. Convince people that there should be limits on immigration
 5. Convince people that the immigration limits already passed are wrong for the country
 6. Convince people that Sacco and Vanzetti were wrongfully convicted of robbery and murder
- Return to Normalcy
 7. Convince people of the need for a “return to normalcy” after WWI, explaining what that phrase means
- First Red Scare
 8. Convince people that they should be afraid of Communists infiltrating the country
 9. Convince people that the Palmer Raids were an overreaction and that Communists are not a threat to the country.
- Flappers
 10. Sell people on the new women’s fashions of the age and their “modern” messages.
 11. Convince people that the new women’s fashions of the age are deeply damaging to long standing traditions and moral codes.
- Moral Standards
 12. Convince people of the fundamentalist Christian perspective on the harmful changes in society
 13. Convince people of the modern Christian perspective that there is nothing to fear about the modern changes in society.
- Scopes Trial
 14. Convince people of the defense’s position, defending the teaching of evolution in public school.
 15. Convince people of the prosecution’s position, that the states have the right to prohibit the teaching of evolution in public school.
- Automobile
 16. Convince people that they should buy an automobile, including an explanation of all of the benefits to society.

17. Convince people that they should not buy an automobile, including an explanation of all of the detriments to society.

- Entertainment

18. Convince people of all of the benefits to society of the new forms of entertainment, including the radio and the movies.

19. Convince people of all of the evils to society of the new forms of entertainment, including the radio and the movies.

- Consumerism and New Technology

20. Convince people that women need to buy new technologies (like washing machines and vacuum cleaners) and that they should take advantage of the new “purchase on credit” system.

- Jazz and the Harlem Renaissance

21. Convince people that Jazz is the most important music in American history and how it is impacting racial pride in Harlem and other cities.

- “Lost Generation”

22. Convince people that they should read the works of “Lost Generation” authors, like Fitzgerald and Hemmingway, including an explanation of their disillusionment with both the ideals of earlier times and the materialism of the modern day.