

## American Identity and the Automobile

### The Basics

**Subject Area and/or Course Title:**

US History II

**Targeted Grade Level:**

11th

**Time Required:**

3 Blocks

**Related Standards:**

NJ CCCS 6.1.12.D.6.a

**Author:**

Jaime Sia

### The Lesson

**Introductory Narrative to Lesson:**

United States History II spans from Gilded Age to present day. This lesson focuses on life in the 1920s. Students will read their textbook and analyze primary and secondary sources to understand that in the 1920s the ownership of automobiles, radios, and other innovations changed how Americans lived. These specific lessons focus on the automobile, specifically the Ford. Using song in this lesson will enhance the cultural analysis in an engaging way. The songs chosen for this lesson support the essential question by focusing their attention on how automobiles became status symbols as well as a becoming an integral part of reshaping the American landscape and culture. Using song in this unit is an engaging way to involve students in learning, by listening to songs about automobiles students can better relate to how important they became to the American identity and relate that present day since songs are still written about automobiles.

Prior to this lesson students will know how the industrial revolution as a whole changed life in America, this lesson will focus on how automobiles changed individual lives. Using primary sources such as song and artifacts will engage the students and make turn them from passive to active learners by fostering genuine interested in the content. After the lessons included in this synopsis, we will move onto other evolving modern conveniences and the effects of disposable income. At the end of the unit, students will create a crankie box that tells the story of how innovations in the 1920s changed the American way of life.

**Instructional Goals or Objectives:**

Summarize how the car changed American culture by evaluating primary and secondary

sources

### **Procedures/Lesson Activities:**

#### Day 1

Song “The Little Old Ford Rambled Right Along” ~ Byron Gay & C.R. Foster 1914

1. Listen to song as a class while reading the lyrics
2. Ask basic questions (Only a few questions will be asked since students will be analyzing in detail in the next step of the lesson):
  - What is this song about?
  - What “little old ford” might the singer be talking about?
  - What does “rambled right along” mean?

#### We Do (Modeling)

Evaluate “The Little Old Ford Rambled Right Along”

1. In pairs, students will analyze one verse and answer the guiding question
  - How does this verse portray the Ford? Site evidence from the song to support your answer

#### Day 2

Songs: “Henry’s Made a Lady out of Lizzie” (1928) and “You Can’t Afford to Marry If You Can’t Afford A Ford” by Jack Frost

1. Prepare an explanation that answers how Ford’s image was changing
2. A spokesperson from each group should describe their source and their analysis of how Ford’s image was changing from reliable and tough to desirable and fancy. Also make sure they see how making a new model drives consumerism and the desire to have the latest and greatest.
3. Teacher will play song, lead students in song, or project advertisements depending on the each group’s primary source.

### **Assessment and Evaluation:**

- Students will write an analysis of songs about cars in the 1920s to songs about cars today and ways are culture involving them has changed as well as stayed the same.
- Students will present the song they chose to the class and share their analysis

### **Closure/Reflection:**

#### REFLECTION

The Voices Across Time Institute has inspired me to use music in a more meaningful way and more often. Prior to the institute, I would play a song as a primary source and we would break the lyrics down as we would any other primary source document. Now, I have an arsenal full of new ideas on how to use music in the classroom. I will encourage them to sing along, do dance

moves to cross the midline, record their own verses of songs, and lay beats down the go under summaries of historical events.

### **Resources/Materials:**

"The Little Ford Rambled Right Along" (1915). By C. R. Foster and Byron Gay. Perf. Billy Murray. Youtube. N.p., 5 Jan. 2008. Web. 20 July 2015.

<[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gs\\_wqA8W\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gs_wqA8W_U)>.

Foster, C. R., and Byron Gay. "The Little Old Ford Rambled Right Along." Authentic History. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 July 2015. <[http://www.authentichistory.com/1898-1913/1-industrialization/5-automobile/3-music/19150303\\_The\\_Little\\_Ford\\_Rambled\\_Right\\_Along-Billy\\_Murray-lyrics.html](http://www.authentichistory.com/1898-1913/1-industrialization/5-automobile/3-music/19150303_The_Little_Ford_Rambled_Right_Along-Billy_Murray-lyrics.html)>.

"Benson Ford Research Center." The Henry Ford. The Henry Ford Museum, n.d. Web. 15 July 2015. <<http://www.thehenryford.org/index.aspx>>.

Frost, Jack. "You Can't Afford To Marry, If You Can't Afford A Ford." Levy Sheet Music Collection. JScholarship, n.d. Web. 10 July 2015.

<<https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/14057>>.

"35 Best Songs About Cars." Digital Trends. N.p., 31 July 2014. Web. 25 July 2015.

<<http%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitaltrends.com%2Fcars%2Fbest-songs-about-cars%2F>>.

Walter O'Keefe. "Henry's Made a Lady Out of Lizzie." (New York: De Sylva, Brown, and Henderson, 1928)

"Henry's Made a Lady Out of Lizzie" performed by Happiness Boys on *Come Josephine in My Flying Machine*, New York: New World Records [NW233], © 1977.