

Grade: **History 12**

Topic: **The Great Depression – Field Trip**

Prescribed Learning Outcomes:

-A2: Assess significant historical events in relation to social, political, economic, technological, cultural, and geographic factors

-A3: Demonstrate historical empathy

-C6: Describe social, economic, and political developments in the United States in the 1920's including urbanization, mass production, and consumerism; isolationism and laissez-faire policies.

-D1: Assess the causes of and responses to the Great Depression. Identify a range of conditions that led to the Great Depression, such as over-production, stock market speculation and collapse, buying on margin, unregulated banking practices, tariffs.

Rationale:

Students will be told that we are going downtown to walk through West Hastings into East Hastings, to look if we see any examples of some of these causes of the Great Depression, or of consequences and responses to the Depression, which we will expand on in the third lesson. This lesson will help students make connections to a contemporary example of the extreme inequalities and unsustainable economic patterns that led to the Great Depression. I also believe that it will provide students with a closer understanding of contemporary poverty and class divisions, which will enhance their historical empathy and perspective taking. This lesson will help students grasp the material realities of extreme inequality and poverty, and will prime them for the upcoming units where they will learn about the development of and necessity for social welfare programs.

The overarching rationale for History 12 states that "The study of the history of the 20th century opens to students events of particular relevance and immediacy in their lives. By examining the choices and decisions of the 20th century, students can evaluate current events and challenges with a deeper awareness of alternatives." (IRP, 3) It is also stated under "Addressing Local Contexts" that teachers are able to teach by "using topics and examples that are relevant to their local contexts" (9). Seeing real poverty would facilitate students meeting the PLO of being able to "demonstrate historical empathy" by giving them more understanding of what it was like to live during the Depression.

Prior Knowledge:

In the previous class, we will have discussed the economic and social climate of the 1920's leading up to the Great Depression. Students will have been introduced to the meaning and significance of the following terms and concepts: Laissez-faire economics, Isolationism and Tariffs, Boom-bust cycles, Mass production, over production, Consumerism (rise of advertising/marketing), Buying on margin (credit), Stock speculation and collapse. We will also have briefly discussed parallels to the 2007-2008 economic crisis.

Resources:

- Handouts of questions to answer, things to look for during field trip.
- Field trip forms, bus fare – to be collected in advance.
- Print-outs of a map of Hastings street.

*<http://pasttensevancouver.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/unemployed-being-dispersed-july-1932-cva-re-n2-2.jpg>

British Columbia Ministry of Education, History 12 IRP,
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social_studies/2006history12.pdf

Field Trip plan:

The trip will start from West Hastings at Burrard, and go down to at least Cambie. (How far we go will depend on students and school permission. West Hastings provides the examples we need of the 1920's topics. We could come back in class to talk about statistics about East Hastings/the Downtown Eastside, or watch a short film on it, or see some pictures.)

Examples of what students might look for, and find on West Hastings (photographs I took on October 10th): <http://sarahgordon.imgur.com/all/>

One place we would stop is Victory Square Park, at the beginning of East Hastings (Cambie Street intersection). This park has been a gathering place of drug trade, as well as a site of anti-poverty protests (such as Pivot's red tent campaign to address housing and homelessness). In July 1932 there was a protest about unemployment at this location* (we will discuss this in the next lesson).

The monument (a WWI memorial) says on one side "All ye who pass by" and on the other "Is it nothing to you". The monument is not designed in reference to poverty, inequality, or homelessness – however, ask students what it makes them think about

given its location at the intersection between the very wealthy section of downtown and an area with some of the worst living conditions in North America?

As students walk, we will have a worksheet with guiding questions, things to look for, and space to make notes. (See final page of lesson plan).

Students would also be asked to make note of their general observations and any feelings that come up for them at varying points in the walk.

Debrief and Expansion in the following lesson:

This lesson will be for students to share their insights from the trip, to debrief as a class, to finalize our understanding of the 1920's and the causes of the Depression, and to move on to learning about the responses to the Depression and the 1930's.

1. *10 minutes.* Think-Pair-Share on students' insights from the trip, based on the notes they made on the worksheet.

2. *20 minutes.* Put students in groups of four or five. Give each group one of the following terms or concepts: consumerism, buying on margin/credit, mass production and over-production, laissez-faire economics (de-regulation of banking), economic inequality.

Have students work together to define the term, describe its significance and role in the Depression, give examples of it, and the relevance to the present day (things they saw yesterday, or otherwise know about current events). Students will do so by making notes on a poster paper. They can use their textbooks as a reference for finding examples.

3. *5 minutes.* Students will do a "gallery walk" looking at the posters produced by other students. They will bring pens with them to make notes on the posters of additional ideas and examples. Come back to their seats, ask for volunteers to describe anything that they found particularly interesting or contentious from their own group or others' posters.

4. *20 minutes.* Lesson on the responses to the Great Depression, and how it affected different groups within Canada. Show examples of posters and newsletters created by political and social organizations. Public responses: include discussion of conflict and protest, show photographs of 1932 protest at Victory Square*. Government responses, including a comparison between the types of social supports available for the poor and unemployed in the 30's to what exists today.

5. *10 minutes.* Conclude by making comparisons to current consequences of and responses to economic crises, as well as to unemployment and poverty in general (such as Occupy Wall Street).

Assessment:

Formative:

- Completion of handout of questions during the field trip. Responses to be handed in next class. Expectation of at least two points or sentences per question.
- Contribution to group work in debrief activity.

Summative and Formative:

Great Depression project, due in one week/four lessons.

Students could choose to do either option:

A) You are an expert (economist, sociologist, psychologist, social worker – choose one as a guiding framework) that the Federal Government has consulted to help come up with a plan for how to prevent future economic collapses, and/or how to respond to economic crises and deal with poverty. Write a one-page summary of what you would advise them to do.

B) Imagine you are living during the Great Depression. You have been laid off, cannot find a new job, and your family is struggling to afford food and shelter. Write a letter to the Premier or Prime Minister. Argue for what you think the government should do to respond to the crisis and deal with unemployment and poverty. Justify why these actions should be taken.

These project options will help students to think about the big concepts in this unit, demonstrate what they know, make connections, and demonstrate the PLO of “historical empathy”.

West – East Hastings Field Trip – Handout of Questions

Name:

- Do you see anything (stores or ads) that suggests buying on margin, on credit?
- Do you see any examples of consumerism and marketing?
- Do you see any examples of mass production over-production?
- What evidence of laissez-faire economics do you see in this region or the disparities between the two?
- What factors of the 1920's are still present today – what lessons have we not learned?
- What are the consequences of a widening gap between rich and poor? What have the consequences been in the past?
- How and why is there such extreme wealth and unnecessary consumption beside such extreme poverty and lack of basic resources? How is this accepted, justified, perpetuated?
- What do the people living in these areas feel about it? What do they tell themselves about why it is this way?
- How have the boundaries between these neighbourhoods been constructed, how are they changing, what forces shape that process, who has power and influence and who does not?
- How did the Depression affect people differently dependent on their race, class, gender, ability?
- What were the lived experiences of Canadians during the Depression, and how is it similar to and different from the experiences of Canadians living in poverty today?