

Extended Common Core Social Studies Lesson Plan Template

Lesson Title: Dance and Discourse: Boogie Down with History

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Appropriate for Grade Level(s): 11th Grade

US History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s): W.11-12.2; W.11-12.4; RH.11-12.1; RH.11-12.2

Engagement Strategy: Dance, Socratic Seminar, Essay

Student Readings (list): The Charleston in the 1920s: the Dance, the Composers, and the Recordings. By Albert Haim

Total Time Needed: About 3 days- 70 minute periods

Lesson Outline:

Time Frame (e.g. 15 minutes)	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?
15 minutes	Presenting prompts/facilitating discussion	Responding to writing prompt and discussing
15-20 Minutes	Teach students the dance	Learning the dance/dancing/watching a video of the Charleston.
20-25 Mins	Walking around to verify students are reading/ do reading aloud.	Reading silently and independently/ reading along
5 Mins	Prompting exit ticket	Responding to exit ticket
5 Mins	Review main arguments from the reading	Discuss main arguments from reading
40 Mins	Distribute readings/ walk around	Complete reading questions individually.
30 mins	Providing questions/ Eliciting deeper answers	Socratic Seminar Discussion
5 mins	Presenting prompt	Writing three ways the Charleston reflected the culture of the 1920s.
15-20 Mins	Distribute index cards, review how to write a thesis, display sample essay, describe desired format.	Writing thesis, arguments, quotes, and supporting arguments.
45 Mins	Walking around for clarification	Completing index cards/ essay

Description of Lesson Assessment: The lesson will culminate in an Essay where the students describe how the Charleston reflected the culture of the 1920s.

How will students reflect on the process and their learning? Daily reinforcement/ Index cards/ Completion of assignment

Writing Prompt: According to the reading, how did the Charleston reflect the culture of the 1920s?

The pages that follow the Lesson Plan Template include student readings and reading strategy/questions, source(s), handouts, assignment sheet, and a rubric or grading checklist related to the student assessment of this lesson.

The Charleston in the 1920s: the Dance, the Composers, and the Recordings.

By Albert Haim

The Charleston dance became a world-wide craze in the Roaring Twenties. The dance and the song, composed by James P. Johnson (music) and Cecil Mack (lyrics), were introduced in 1923 in the Broadway musical *Runnin' Wild*, and became the quintessential¹ jazz age symbols: flappers dancing frantically to the Charleston rhythm and drinking prohibition booze. The success of the Charleston was not confined to the U.S.: Europeans and South Americans went wild over it. We will see below that some of the first recordings of *Charleston* were made in Buenos Aires and Berlin. Part of the huge success of the Charleston in Paris was due to Josephine Baker's doing the dance in 1926 at the Folies Bergère...

Of course, the tune that went on to become the "theme song" of the jazz age was *Charleston*. Among the performers on opening night on Broadway were Adelaide Hall and Elizabeth Welsh. The number was sung by Elizabeth Welsh with the male chorus line singing and dancing the Charleston. The reviewer of the show for the October 30, 1923 issue of the New York Times wrote, "Runnin' Wild excels in eccentric² dancing-some of the most exciting steps of the season (steps is not always the word, for knees are used more often than ankles) are now on view at the Colonial."

Charleston, the Dance.

There is evidence that some of the dance steps used in the Charleston number of the *Runnin' Wild* production were danced long before the show opened on Broadway. Golden and Grayton, a couple of white minstrel³ artists performing in blackface, claimed to have danced the Charleston in 1890 in their *Patting Rabbit Hash* dance number. According to Leroi Jones, the Charleston comes from an Anshati ancestor⁴ dance. Noble Sissle recalled learning the dance in Savannah in 1905. Rubberleg Williams stated that "The first contest I ever won was a Charleston contest. It was in Atlanta in 1920." [1] Several productions in theatres and nightclubs had dancers performing some of the steps of the Charleston; examples are *Liza* (1922-1923), *How Come* (1923) and the *Ziegfield Follies of 1923*. One of the numbers in the production of *Liza* was called *Charleston Dancy* [sic]. It was composed by Maceo Pinkard (music) and Nat Vincent (lyrics). *How Come* included two numbers, *Charleston Cut-Out* and *Charleston Finale*. Garvin Bushell [2] traces the roots of the Charleston to a Geechie dance done in the Georgia South Sea Islands. James P. Johnson himself noted, "These people were from South Carolina and Georgia where the cotillion was popular- and the "Charleston" was an offspring of that. It was a dance figure like the "Balmoral." A lot of my music is based on set, cotillion and other southern country dance steps and rhythms." [3] In a letter to the New York Times dated December 19, 1926 and published on December 26, 1926, composer William Marion Cook stated that the Charleston rhythm was introduced by Thomas Morris in his 1923 composition *Charleston Strut*.

Although there may have been some steps similar to those in the Charleston before it was introduced in the production of *Runnin' Wild*, it is clear that the extraordinary popularity of the dance came about as a consequence of the success of the song and the show. Harold Courlander wrote [4] "It is, of course, possible to perceive in the Charleston certain steps or motifs⁵ extracted out of Negro tradition, but overall it was a synthetic⁶ creation, a newly-devised conglomerate⁷ tailored for wide spread popular appeal." ...

Soon after the introduction of the Charleston in *Runnin' Wild*, the dance craze swept the country and the world. People danced the Charleston in dance halls, at the beach, on college campuses, on the roof of a London taxi (filmed by Pathé News), on boardwalks and at home. A headline in the sports section of the March 11, 1926 New York Times declared "(Coach) Bezdek Makes Football

¹ the most perfect or typical example

² something that is unusual, peculiar, or odd

³ typically a show consisting of black American melodies, jokes, and impersonations and usually wearing blackface

⁴ Ancient group

⁵ a recurring subject, theme, idea, etc...

⁶ Not organic, fake

⁷ Combination of things that are not similar

35 Squad Charleston. Penn State Adopts Dance as Exercise.” The Prince of Wales reportedly was a big fan of the Charleston. According
36 to the Modesto News-Herald of November 6, 1926, “The Prince of Wales has mastered the Charleston and dances it with the skill
37 and rhythm that only professional dancers can equal.” ...

38 It is noteworthy that the Charleston was banned in various places around the world for sociological/political/religious/health
39 reasons. Of course, the Charleston and other American dances such as the fox-trot were banned in Russia as symbols of American
40 decadence⁸ and were tagged the “immoral manifestation of bourgeois⁹ luxury.” The archbishops of Rome and Vienna banned the
41 Charleston for their parishioners citing moral reasons. At a world convention of dance teachers in Paris in 1926, a universal boycott
42 of the Charleston was considered because “The negro dance is immoral and not fit for good society.” A plan to “purify” the
43 Charleston was put into effect. [9] Several colleges in the U. S. banned the dance for being too “scandalous” or for lacking “grace and
44 beauty.” According to the New York Times of December 10, 1926, “The Christian Churches of South Africa have declared war on the
45 Charleston on the ground that it is essentially a Kaffir¹⁰ dance and that the performance of it by whites lowers their prestige¹¹ in the
46 native eyes.” On November 6, 1926 (report in the New York Times edition of November 7, 1926), the Prague, Czechoslovakia police
47 chief implemented an order that prohibited the Charleston in all public places. The Minister of the Interior went farther: he forbid
48 dancing of the Charleston in private places where public officials or diplomats were present. Such bans were repeated across Europe
49 and England. One member of the District Council of Dayton (one of the most populous London suburbs) declared that “the man who
50 invented Charleston was a fit candidate for the lunacy asylum and that the fools who attempted to dance it were balmy¹².” A Polish
51 archbishop condemned the Charleston in March 1927 as an “unpardonable sin.” The Charleston was banned in Mexico City in
52 August 1926 because it was likely to cause heart failure. Municipal authorities in Constantinople, Turkey banned the Charleston in
53 November 1926 because it was a “menace to health.”

54 The Charleston was also banned in several cities in the US and around the world ostensibly¹³ because of building safety
55 considerations. After a roof collapsed in the Pickwick Dance Club in Boston, MA on July 4, 1925 during a Charleston dance and killed
56 44 people, dancing to the rhythm of the Charleston was viewed as too dangerous and was banned in several cities. As reported in
57 the New York Times of August 30, 1925, the Charleston dance was banned in halls of Passaic, New Jersey by the Chief of Police with
58 the backing of the Supervisor of the Bureau of Buildings. The supervisor claimed that “old type halls were not strong enough to
59 stand up under the strain of the Charleston.” “The Charleston is all right morally, so far as I know,” added the chief.” In contrast, the
60 Buffalo city inspector justified the ban on the basis of both safety and moral reasons: according to the Schenectady Gazette of
61 November 21, 1925 the chief declared, “The physical being of the young upstarts may be shattered with their morals through the
62 agency of the Charleston.” A ban was also implemented in Concord, NH because the dance halls could not withstand the “strain
63 caused by the Charleston.” An exception to the ban on dancing the Charleston in Berlin was made for a restaurant built 365 feet
64 above ground near the top of the radio tower of a German radio corporation. This was reported in the New York Times of
65 September 8, 1926 with the headline “Charleston Tower to immortalize Charleston.” ...

⁸ luxurious self-indulgence; often used to describe a decline due to an erosion of moral, ethical, or sexual traditions

⁹ a member of the middle class

¹⁰ Word referring to black people in South Africa; Derogatory in nature

¹¹ having or showing success, rank, wealth, etc

¹² crazy; foolish

¹³ Apparently or purportedly, but perhaps not actually

Answer the following questions in complete sentences on a separate sheet of paper. You must cite a line number for each answer.

“The Charleston in the 1920s” Reading Questions

1. According to the reading, how was the dance and the song the Charleston introduced to the public?
2. According to the reading, how did the Charleston represent quintessential Jazz Age symbols?
3. According to the reading, what was part of the huge success of the Charleston in Paris?
 - a. What does this tell us about American and global culture?
4. According to the reading (line 21-23), when was the Charleston first performed?
5. According to the reading, in what tradition does the Charleston seem to be extracted from?
 - a. How does this represent society and culture during the early 1920s?
6. According to the reading (line 42-43), where were people dancing the Charleston?
 - a. How does this contribute to our understating of society and culture of the 1920s?
7. According to the reading, how did other members of society view the Charleston?
8. According to the reading, why was the Charleston banned around the world?
9. According to the reading, how did Russians feel about American dances?
 - a. What does this tell us about the relationship between America and Russia during the 1920s?
10. According to the reading, why was there a universal boycott of the Charleston by dance teachers?
11. According to the reading (line 68-69), why else was the Charleston banned? Give 2 specific events.
12. According to the reading, what are three major ways the Charleston reflected the culture of the 1920s? Cite the line number for each claim.

SAMPLE ESSAY

Dancing Through the Decade: The Charleston and the 1920s

Runnin' wild was the norm during the decade of the 1920s. Not only were the youth runnin' wild, the most popular Broadway show was *Runnin' wild*. The title was iconic for the era and so was the featured dance, the Charleston. The Charleston's popularity was in large part due to its frenetic nature that reflected the society of the 1920s. The Charleston reflected the society of the 1920s in its representation of three major characteristics: growing presence of African American culture, a more liberal view of sexuality and morals, and a carefree lifestyle.

The 1920s marked advancement in the growing presence of African American culture in popular culture and the Charleston highlighted that presence, as well as some of the societal resistance to integration. Haim quotes Harold Courlander while addressing the potential origins of the Charleston, "It is, of course, possible to perceive in the Charleston certain steps or motifs extracted out of Negro tradition, but overall it was a synthetic creation, a newly-devised conglomerate tailored for wide spread popular appeal." (Line 38) Courlander accredits much of the dance to popular appeal; however, it is important to note that some steps and motifs were extracted from the Negro tradition, thus showing the presence of African Americans in popular culture. While the Charleston marked the presence of African American culture in America, it also highlighted the resistance from many in its worldwide presence, "The Christian Churches of South Africa have declared war on the Charleston on the ground that it is essentially a Kaffir dance and that the performance of it by whites lower their prestige in the native eyes." (Line 56) The Charleston's worldwide presence emphasizes the remaining inequalities felt between whites and blacks. Although African American culture was slowly growing within the United States, the tradition of racial inequality was expressed throughout the world, as well as a growing sense of the Charleston's contribution to a moral demise.

The Charleston was a sign of the growing sexual and moral liberation in the United States. The Charleston met much resistance in America, as well as throughout the world due to its questionable moral implications, "a universal boycott of the Charleston was considered because 'The negro dance is immoral and not fit for good society.'" (Line 53) Not only did this quote express the concerns with morality, but it also addresses the aforementioned theme of racial inequality. The Charleston represented a more modern and less conservative movement that lasted throughout the 1920s. Many members of society agreed with the sentiment above, as a Buffalo city inspector declared, "The physical being of the young upstarts may be shattered with their morals through the agency of the Charleston." (Line 77) This further demonstrates the vast disapproval of the dance within the Victorian morals that

were supported leading to the twentieth century. It also shows the transformation of culture during the 1920s as young people chose to depart from more traditional values. The Charleston was an excellent example of the cultural departure from the Victorian morals, which also included a carefree lifestyle.

Lastly, the Charleston was a representation of the youth's carefree lifestyle. Youth of the 1920s wanted to lead carefree lifestyle and the Charleston was just the dance to do it as, "People danced the Charleston in dance halls, at the beach, on college campuses, on the roof of a London taxi..., on boardwalks and at home."(Line 42) This showed the widespread popularity of the dance, as well as the people's desire to express themselves through dance anywhere they went. The people were no longer working 12-14 hours as they had done previously, they now had time to enjoy life and the Charleston was a way to do just that. In addition to being danced everywhere, the Charleston contained "the quintessential jazz age symbols: flappers dancing frantically to the Charleston rhythm and drinking prohibition booze."(Line 7) Flappers personified a carefree lifestyle, as they represented women who moved away from tradition and wanted to enjoy themselves. In addition to enjoying themselves, flappers enjoyed alcohol and drinking in speakeasies with men, further demonstrating the power of the Charleston to represent popular culture during the 1920s. The Charleston clearly reflected the carefree lifestyle of the 1920s.

The Charleston represented the culture of the 1920s in many ways. Many Americans saw the song and dance as a representation of the narrowing divide between races. 1. Although the racial implications of the dance were accepted in large part in America, the banning of the Charleston worldwide showed the lack of equality that was still felt in those places. 2. In addition to a reflection of racial opinions, the Charleston also represented a cultural shift in regards to morals and sexuality. 3. Lastly, the Charleston was truly the quintessential dance of the 1920s because it encouraged a carefree lifestyle. The Charleston represented the 1920s in many ways, but the most prevalent in the reading were: the growing presence of African American culture, a more liberal view of sexuality and morals, and a carefree lifestyle.

The Charleston and the 1920s Essay Rubric

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

	1	2	3	4	5
Paragraph 1 Introduction	Thesis is not clear or does not address the prompt. Introduction information is weak or absent.	Thesis is weak and does not outline each body paragraph.	Thesis outlines body paragraph, but only highlights one point. Introduction information provides background information	Thesis outlines body paragraph, but only highlights two points. Introduction information provides background information	Thesis outlines body paragraph and highlights three points. Introduction information provides background information
Paragraph 2 Body Paragraph 1	Argument is weak. There are no quotations or analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is weak. There are is only one quotation and no analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is fair. There are two quotation, but no analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is good. There are two quotations, but only once sentence of analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is very good. There are two quotations and at least two sentences of analysis in the paragraph.
Paragraph 3 Body Paragraph 2	Argument is weak. There are no quotations or analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is weak. There are is only one quotation and no analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is fair. There are two quotation, but no analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is good. There are two quotations, but only once sentence of analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is very good. There are two quotations and at least two sentences of analysis in the paragraph.
Paragraph 4 Body Paragraph 3	Argument is weak. There are no quotations or analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is weak. There are is only one quotation and no analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is fair. There are two quotation, but no analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is good. There are two quotations, but only once sentence of analysis in the paragraph.	Argument is very good. There are two quotations and at least two sentences of analysis in the paragraph.
Paragraph 5 Conclusion	The thesis was not restated in the conclusion/ the author did not review any arguments made throughout the body paragraphs. Author includes new information in the conclusion.	The thesis was restated, but author does not provide a review of arguments made in the body paragraphs.	Thesis was restated, but author only restates one argument made in the body paragraphs.	Thesis was restated, but author only restates two of the arguments made in the body paragraphs.	Thesis was restated and author only restates all three arguments made in the body paragraphs.

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