

Elaboration of *The Authoring Cycle* for Fifth Grade Teachers' Design of Integrated  
Literacy and Social Studies Units  
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### **Abstract**

This paper elaborates on the best practices for integrating curriculum instruction. While the ideas surrounding integrated instruction have long since be established, there has been no central way for teachers to plan for instruction. The *Authoring Cycle Framework for Inquiry* (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996) is a foundational tool that has been taken up by teachers to help plan integrated instruction. However, this framework was not meant to be used as a lesson-planning template.

This capstone describes the *Authoring Cycle Framework for Inquiry* and provides a critique using literature surrounding the best practices for integrated instruction. I also create a lesson-planning tool to enable a more streamlined process for planning integrated instructional units. I do this by analyzing literature and planning an integrated social studies and literacy unit for upper elementary students. I use the lesson-planning tool to provide an example unit using the U.S. Great Depression and literacy skills.

John Dewey laid the groundwork in integrated approaches to curriculum when he emphasized schools' lack of resemblance to the real world and pushed for a more student-centered design (Gavelek, Raphael, Biondo, & Wang, 2000). While integrated curricular units in elementary school settings are known to be beneficial for student learning (Gavelek et al., 2000; Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996), many existing planning tools for teachers' design of integrated units are too general to be useful. Many tools do not directly lend themselves to productive planning documents for which teachers are often accountable in their local context, such as lesson plans. Furthermore, there remains a lack of central process or tools for the design of integrated units, which has led to different approaches, misunderstandings, and overall teacher frustration.

One of the most influential approaches to elementary teachers' design of integrated units is the *Authoring Cycle Framework for Inquiry* (Short et al., 1996), which can be seen in Appendix A. Short, Harste, and Burke designed the authoring cycle to generate a framework for curriculum design. This framework and the activity structures presented in the book have become a cornerstone for thinking about integrating curriculum (e.g.: Owens, Hester, & Teale, 2002; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010). Since the Authoring Cycle Framework for Inquiry is meant to be a framework, it lacks the everyday usability for creating lesson plans. For this reason, this capstone will focus on answering the question: How can the Authoring Cycle Framework for Inquiry (Short et al., 1996) be a more useful planning tool for teachers seeking to create integrated instructional units?

To answer this question, I will discuss the authoring cycle and use it to create a planning tool to be more useful for teachers seeking to craft integrated instructional units. I will discuss the importance of integrating instruction and then focus specifically on integrating social studies

and literacy. In order to inform my design of the instructional template, I will take on the role of an elementary teacher to design an integrated literacy unit in which students read and write about the social and economic events of the U.S. Great Depression.

### **Authoring Cycle**

#### **What is it?**

Short et al., (1996) originally created the Authoring Cycle as a framework for writing instruction and eventually discovered that it could be used as a framework for any subject. By the end of their work, they have “come to see the authoring cycle as a framework for rethinking schools and schooling” (p.5). The underlying structure of the authoring cycle supports the process of inquiry. Activities are used to guide students in building on what is known and provide differing perspectives to reach the overall learning goal. Inquiry as part of the curriculum is used as a framework for viewing education. The use of the authoring cycle as a curricular framework is intended to augment the classroom culture of how teachers communicate with students, how students communicate with each other, and how subject disciplines are viewed in education.

Short et al. (1996) and Short (2009) explain that for the authoring cycle to be effective within curricular framework, the philosophy has to one of inquiry. All versions of the authoring cycle were designed for use in different subjects with inquiry at the center. Inquiry is not to be understood as a skill, but a lens to look at each subject through to inform growing ideas and gaining new perspectives. For example, instead of teaching a reading skill of summarization when talking about comprehension, an inquiry framework focuses on coming to terms with different interpretations of a text.

In the Authoring Cycle for Inquiry, Short et al. (1996) outline seven areas of learning. These include building from the known, taking time to find questions for inquiry, gaining new perspectives, attending to differences, sharing what was learned, planning new inquiries, and taking thoughtful action. These seven areas come from the research they conducted in classrooms, teaching experience, and use of the authoring cycle in different subjects. These seven areas are thought of as conditions needed for learning and language use. They are considered to be circular in nature and have no definite starting point.

**Building from the known.** Short et al. (1996) firmly believe that the only way for students to learn is by connecting and building on what students already know. To do this, teachers must plan initial experiences to help students make connections to their prior knowledge. The first experiences need to be open-ended so that students can make connections and teachers can observe when those connections are made. These first experiences can look like read alouds, setting aside time for students to browse books, and allowing students to peruse through materials and artifacts related to the chosen topic area. Bird, Libby, Rowley, and Turner (2002) use this framework to create an initial experience for students around the curricular study of the colonial period of American History. They decided to create a day in the life experience for students by dressing in clothing of the colonial period, and by using chalkboards and other colonial materials. During and after an initial experience, it was important for students to be able to share their prior knowledge and experiences with each other. The role of the teacher was to listen in order to get a sense of the connections made and not simply teach content. These first experiences with a particular topic are used to “highlight personal and social knowing as the heart of inquiry” (Short et al., 1996, p.265). Students’ own experiences are used as the foundation to continue exploration of a topic to extend their learning.

**Taking time to find questions for inquiry.** This part of the cycle is a time for students to “wander and explore a topic from as many different perspectives as possible and to wonder about all kinds of ideas as they wander” (Short et al., 1996, p.265). This process is important for students so they can determine what kinds of questions they want to ask around a specific topic. The “wander” and “wonder” portion of this cycle allows students to come up with questions that are of interest to them. When students have little time to contemplate their questions, they tend to be superficial in nature. The important aspect of this section is to support students in formulating a meaningful question that they have an interest in.

For students to be able to “wander” and “wonder”, they need to be allowed the opportunity to explore, observe, browse artifacts and materials, and watch documentaries. These are the same opportunities that would occur in any normal unit, however one difference is that these activities are used to help students come up with a question they want to explore through research. Another difference is that some of these activities are set up as centers where students can explore work individually and some allow whole group experiences. In both individual and group settings, Bird et al. (2002) invite students to participate in the centers. They suggest that invitations must “arise from our objectives for the focus study: standards and content, student interests and ownership of the process” (p.3). Bird et al. (2002) used this method in their colonial unit to create invitations for making butter, considering how technology has changed, understanding units of measure, and games.

**Gaining new perspectives.** Short et al. (1996) believe that students gain new perspectives through collaboration. To do this, students form groups to discuss their ideas and findings from their life experiences and through the “wander” and “wonder” experiences. These collaborative groups can be formed based on the types of questions that students would like to

research. Students can have their own individual question or they can create a group question together. Students are encouraged to share using “Say Something, Save the Last Word for Me, Sketch to Stretch, and Written Conversations” (p.271).

This portion of the authoring cycle is taken up in a majority of ways. In Glover’s (1993) classroom, students worked together to sort questions and complete investigations. In other classrooms, collaboration occurred during the centers and with a whole class conversation (Bird et al., 2002). To help her students think more about questions for inquiry, Copenhaver (1993) used a variation of the “Save the Last Word for Me” strategy. Every night she had her class write in their journals all of their questions and why those questions were important to them. Once students had a question, they investigated through disciplines and sign systems. Students gained new perspectives on their questions when they are explored and investigated through different means. Disciplines are the lens that the question is looked at through such as a historian, mathematician, scientist, and writer. Sign systems are subjects that might be taught in school, including math, language, and music. The sign systems are used to further knowledge and help answer questions by teaching skills in context (Harste, 1993). For example, in one classroom students took on the role of ornithologist to learn different information about birds. Students created a bar graph to represent the different types of birds they saw outside of their school. Students also wrote about their bird observations and about bird nests (Mills, 2014). Short et al. (1996) suggests using more methods besides journals such as “webs, charts, graphs, and diagrams to gather and share” (p.277). These methods allow students to record their findings in diverse and organized ways.

**Attending to differences.** Students can feel a tension from all of the perspectives they are exploring while investigating their questions. The collaborative groups students are in create

avenues for intense conversations about student ideas and findings. To help students reconcile the perspectives, Short et al. (1996) suggest allowing students to have quiet time to write or sketch their thoughts in a journal. This provides students the opportunity to reflect and make sense of the perspectives to reconcile them with their own ideas. At this point, Bird et al. (2002) uses organization devices as a way for students to capture the information they have received and hold students responsible for their learning. While students have learning logs, journals, and other information they learned from the invitations, students have to reflect on what they have learned to come to a consensus.

**Sharing what was learned.** At a certain point, students have investigated their questions enough and are able to present what they have learned. In this process, students are able to bring all of their data and information together which allows them to figure out what they know about their current question. The sharing of information can be done in a multitude of ways. Students can share informally with their group or another group, the entire group can create a presentation, or students can create a presentation. At this point students are able to share their new understandings and learn new information from each other. In some classrooms, everyone creates a presentation (Bird et al., 2002) or writes a paper and presents it (Mills, 2014). In other cases, each student or group gets to decide to present in various ways such as a skit, diagram, drawing, and poster board (Copenhaver, 1993).

**Planning new inquiries.** It is imperative for students to be reflective in the process of inquiry. Short et al. (1996) says, “they need opportunities to reflect on what they know (content), how they come to know (process), and why they inquire (purpose and goals)” (p.280). After students have presented, it is important to have whole class conversations about what students learned about the process of inquiry. Learning new information is wonderful, but it is important



for students to gain new understandings about the process they went through and how it can be related to other areas. Students can share their reflections orally and in journals. During this reflection process, students can examine the purpose of inquiry and how they can improve their inquiry process. Visovatti (1994) provides students with different ways to reflect during the inquiry process. Afterwards, students can share their reflections in a journal, through voice recording, and through sharing with the class.

Strategy lessons on how to improve on the research process are important at this point so students can enhance their inquiry skills for the next lesson. These strategy lessons can include the best practices for recording observations, how to conduct an interview, ways to record data such as a graph or timeline, and how to use an informational book (Mills, 2014; Short et al., 1996).

**Taking thoughtful action.** The next step in the inquiry process is at the discretion of the teacher and the class. After students have presented and reflected on the process of inquiry, some students may have further questions while others may be ready to move on to a different topic. Short et al. (1996) suggest creating umbrella concepts to connect inquiries. This idea helps keep the topics of inquiry keep moving to satisfy students who would like to move on to a different topic and students who have come up with more questions. When the topics flow, students can still investigate portions of the previous topic while learning about the next topic if they flow together.

Depending on how teachers use the authoring cycle and design their units, this is either the decision point for moving forward, the students choosing a specific question to investigate, or the class uses the information to do something that has an impact. In one classroom, students

individually investigated one insect (Castro, 1994) while in another classroom students put on an Earth expo and advertised it to the community and city officials (Dockstader-Anderson, 1994).

### **What is the Problem?**

The authoring cycle was always meant to be a framework and a philosophy for curriculum design. With the lack of other foundational resources surrounding integrated instruction, it has become one of the few guiding sources for how to plan. Therefore, the authoring cycle framework for inquiry has been used to help teachers plan integrated instruction. While the authoring cycle is a nice framework, it was not intended to be used as a lesson plan template. However, with this framework being only one of very few that exists to help with planning integrated instruction, this cycle is what teachers try to plan with. However, everything that is needed to plan a lesson is not listed in this cycle. Therefore, the authoring cycle can be very confusing to look at in terms of planning for teachers who are new to integrating instruction. The authoring cycle does not include certain aspects of planning that help teachers create cohesive lesson plans.

The authoring cycle as a curricular framework is missing the very beginning pieces of planning a lesson. Short et al. (1996) says that the inquiry cycle begins with choosing a topic or a theme and “the topics involve a negotiation between the school curriculum, teacher interests and experiences, and student interests and experiences” (p.263). However, the negotiation is not present in the authoring cycle itself. This can make it difficult for teachers who are using the visual of the authoring cycle to begin planning for a topic or theme.

The seven areas of the authoring cycle do not make it clear on how to use subjects to further investigate inquiries. Short et al. (1996) says that “curriculum as inquiry means that instead of using the theme as an excuse to teach science, social studies, mathematics, reading,

and writing, these knowledge systems and sign systems become tools for exploring, finding, and researching student questions” (p.261). Using the disciplines as a support to explore questions is an important part of inquiry and subject integration, but it is not made clear when looking at the authoring cycle. There is no section of the cycle dedicated specifically for discussing what subject knowledge will be used as a vehicle to learn more about a specific inquiry.

Andrews-Sullivan and Negrete (1994) voiced their challenges with integrated instruction and said, “what we didn't know was how much work was involved in the everyday “how-to-do-it”” (p.15). For teachers to want to provide integrated instruction, the process has to be made easier to follow. A step-by-step guide that hits all of the requirements of planning a lesson is important. To make planning instruction easier the authoring cycle needs to be adapted to create a version of a lesson plan template.

### **New Planning Tool**

#### **Methods**

In order to inform my design of the new lesson-planning tool for integrating instruction, I assumed the role of an elementary teacher to design an integrated literacy unit in which students read and write about the social and economic events of the U.S. Great Depression. I used Short et al.'s (1996) Authoring Cycle Framework for Inquiry as the foundational underpinning of my lesson-planning tool. My lesson-planning tool is informed by Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) *Understanding of Design* and my experiences while planning an integrated unit around the social and economic events of the U.S. Great Depression.

Since Short et al.'s (1996) framework is the cycle of inquiry, it is missing key features of the lesson planning process: this is an integral part of creating an integrated unit. I chose to model the lesson planning tool after the *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)

template because “a design template is meant to reinforce the appropriate habits of mind needed to complete designs for student understanding and to avoid habits that are at the heart of the twin sins of activity-based and coverage-based design” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p.21).

I explored various literature on integrated units, inquiry-based design, and literacy and social studies instruction. The literature on integrated units and inquiry-based design were all grounded in Short et al.’s (1996) framework. There were variations around how the framework was taken up in different classrooms. I categorized the processes that went into planning integrated lessons and grouped similar processes together. Some of the processes were the same in each lesson, but sometimes called a different name, such as sign system (Harste, 1993) instead of subject. I used the literacy and social studies literature to make informed decisions about what specifics needed to be added to the lesson-planning tool. All lessons and lesson plans are at the discretion of teachers. This lesson-planning tool has the basic parts to plan an integrated unit. This tool provides an easier starting point for teachers who are new to integrating instruction. It can be modified to add more specific sections as needed. This lesson-planning tool is designed to be completed in the order it appears on the sheet.

### **Design Decisions**

The full lesson-planning tool can be found in Appendix B. The first item on the lesson-planning tool is to list the topic or theme. As stated above, Short et al. (1996) says that planning a lesson should start with determining the topic or theme. Mills (2014) looks across standards to determine what skills to focus on, while Altwerger and Flores (1994) look at standard bands to create a theme to focus on. The next item to fill out is the big idea. There can be several levels depending on your operating definition. I am using Burke’s (2010) definition of a big idea, which is a concept, theme, or issue that is important to a course. The integrated unit should be

able to fit under a big idea to support the need to teach the lesson (Burke, 2010). The next item on the template is subjects. I find it useful to list the subjects that will be used in the integrated lesson. Listing the subjects at the beginning helped my thought process while planning the integrated unit. Harste (1993) mentions picking sign systems, which are subjects, as a lens to look at the question through. Mills (2014) describes the chosen subjects as tools to be utilized in answering inquiry questions. The next item on the list is standards. I list standards twice because it helps organize the two subjects I am integrating. The next item to complete is the objective, which states what students should be able to do by the end of the unit (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). The next item to fill out are the essential questions, which are important because they use these questions to explore the big idea (Burke, 2010). Essential questions can be ones that inform the unit and be used as a starting point for potential student inquiries (Burke, 2010; Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). It is up to the user which essential question definition they use, but for the purpose of the lesson I created, I used essential questions around the class and the unit.

The central question is next. The decision to add a central question to the lesson-planning tool was informed by social studies literature. According to Caron (2005), central questions are used to frame an issue-centered unit in social studies. This provides an opportunity for teachers to provide more purposeful learning experiences through everyday instructional activities. Bird et al. (2002) creates a central question to build their integrated unit around a question about Colonial America. The next item on the template is personal knowing, which is important for multiple reasons. Personal knowing wants to capitalize on what students know and can relate to (Harste, 1993). Teachers should start with personal connections before planning the lesson procedure because it is necessary to start with what students know and value (Burke, 2010). In the personal knowing section, I included categories such as what students know from a previous

unit, other information students might know, possible interests they might have around the topic, and any possible misconceptions students might have. These are just some ideas about what you think students already know or might be interested in. The possible connections provide a tentative starting point for the lesson. The next item on the template are questions to investigate. These questions can help guide students to the central question. It is also important to think of some possible questions that students might ask or want to investigate. These questions are useful when thinking about the types of invitations students engage in later in the planning process. To help teachers think of guiding questions and possible questions students might ask, Mills (2014) provides a list of categories such as conceptual questions, pragmatic questions, personal knowledge questions, and social knowledge questions.

The next section of the template is the assessment section. This section is split into the performance task and other evidence. The placement of this section comes from Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) backwards planning template, where the assessments are created prior to the lesson being developed so that the key understandings are used as a guide to inform content. It is important to have a variety of assessment methods for gathering evidence of understanding. Performance tasks demonstrate the desired understandings and what students should be able to do as a result of the understanding of lesson. Other evidence can include quizzes, tests, journals, and anecdotal notes. This section addresses how students will reflect on their learning.

The next section of the template is the invitations for learning section. In this section, the instructional activities and the materials needed for each activity can be listed. I created a section for learning invitations because teachers in the literature focused on planning invitations for learning after they came up with a guiding question, but before they planned the daily lesson procedures (Altwerger and Flores, 1994; Bird et al., 2002). Bird et al. (2002) had a long planning

meeting about the materials needed for their invitations and Andrews-Sullivan and Negrete (1994) discussed the necessity of finding and collecting resources around the topic of study. This section provides teachers with easy access to all invitations for their lesson as well as the materials needed for them.

The last section of the template is the lesson procedure. This section is where the lesson is planned out in more detail. In most cases, this is also where Short et al.'s (1996) Authoring Cycle Framework for Inquiry starts on the new lesson-planning tool. This section starts off with finding out what students know about the topic of study. Discovering students' personal connections is needed for teachers to relate the lessons to student's prior knowledge and capitalize on it (Harste, 1993). The next section is creating an initial experience as a "way of jump-starting a focus study" and "help students have experiences that raise questions for them and heighten their interest in the focus area" (Bird et al., 2002, p.23). Initial experiences can look like a read aloud, presentation, speaker, and more (Short et al., 1996). Teachers should have students share connections and thoughts to learn about what students know. These first two sections of the lesson procedure can be combined. I leave room to have students share their thoughts and make connections multiple times. The next section is where students begin to pose their initial questions. This helps me gauge what students are interested in around the topic of study. The next section is the invitations for learning. These invitations come from the standards, content, and student interests in an effort for students to gain an understanding of the learning aims for the unit (Bird et al., 2002). Invitations for learning should be varied through centers, small group activities, and whole group activities. These invitations also make use of curricular subjects to be used as tools for gaining skills and understanding of a topic (Fischer, 2002). Now that students have gained some new knowledge and skills surrounding the topic, it is time for the

section on questions for inquiry. This section can be group inquiry or individual inquiry depending on the teachers' preference. These questions for inquiry come from student interest and wonderings about the information they have obtained so far in the unit (Mills, 2014).

Students can research their questions using resources such as artifacts, texts, art, and video. The assessment portion in this section is the culminating task that students carry out. This assessment is a performance based assessment that shares what each student has learned about the topic of study. The other evidence that was completed in the third section can be placed in the procedure section where the assessment is taking place. The last part of this section is where students share and reflect. Students can share their product from the performance based assessment and discuss future implications of the information they have learned from their topic of study. Mills (2014) says that the reflection portion of lessons is the most important to grow and change. Students use reflections to evaluate their learning process such as the strategies they used, what went well during their inquiry, and what students need to work on.

### **Developing an Integrated Unit**

#### **Why Integrate Curriculum?**

One of the major problems of schooling is that it seems to be unrelated to the real world. Knowledge and skills should be taught using a real context for an authentic purpose (Taylor & Nolen, 2008). Integrating the school curriculum can solve this problem by presenting skills and content in a way that illustrates how they are connected to each other. Students tend to be more engaged in class when the day is not broken up into different subject chunks for small blocks of time (Flint, 2008). Research has proven integrated instruction can lead to higher academic gains for students (Hernandez-Ramos & De La Paz, 2009; McBee, 2000).



Integrated instruction also helps teachers come to terms with mandated amounts of time allotted for certain subjects. The challenge Johnston (2001) faces is “how best to use the minutes of my students’ instructional day while meeting the time requirements set by my district” (p. 8). Subjects such as reading and writing can be used as tools to learn science and social studies. Integrated instruction is used to help overcome mandated instructional time to construct meaningful learning for all subject areas and alleviate the pressure of time during the school day.

### **Problems with Current Social Studies Teaching**

I chose to focus on social studies integration because it is a subject that tends to be forgotten or lacking in elementary classrooms. In the current realm of elementary classrooms, social studies instruction is one with many struggles. Social studies is normally a subject that gets pushed aside because of time constraints or taught minimally with social studies not being the main focus. While interviewing teachers, Hinde (2005) found that “teachers report that they simply do not have time to teach social studies” (p.105). Social studies instruction tends to be very standards driven where the focus is on glossing over the facts for the purpose of covering the standards instead of learning about events in depth (Caron, 2005). In lower elementary grades, social studies is overshadowed by the reading process and often relegated to a storybook note. In upper elementary grades, social studies textbooks and trade books are used as an emphasis for literacy skills surrounding nonfiction texts. Integration in both of these scenarios is by happenstance and not a systematic planning choice. Some teachers think they integrate social studies and literacy, but the social studies component tends to be a less important factor with no critical thinking about events (Boyle-Baise, Hsu, Johnson, Serriere, & Stewart, 2008).

### **Why Integrate Social Studies and Multimodal Literacy?**

Social studies should not be taught in isolation (Caron, 2005) and neither should literacy (Gavelek et al., 2000). When given proper thought and attention, social studies is a good vehicle for developing language arts skills, character, and content knowledge (Boyle Baise et al., 2008; Dingler, 2017). Literacy should be used as a tool to uncover the content and skills of other subjects (Gavelek et al., 2000). I specifically chose to focus on using multimodal literacy as a tool to explore social studies in depth. Multimodal literacy is the “literacy practices carried out across multiple sites/texts/or media” (Flint, 2008, p.346). Multimodal literacy used in conjunction with social studies provides students with the opportunity to evaluate a wide array of information presented in a variety of ways and promote significant learning among students.

Integrating social studies with multimodal literacy is a great way to promote critical thinking about the world. Framing social studies curriculum around a problem and using multimodal literacy as a tool to investigate the problem promotes reasoning skills and historical knowledge. Asking *critical questions* are crucial and provide an avenue for purposeful learning experiences through the use of daily activities (Caron, 2005). Using multimodal literacy to see various sides of a problem, these daily activities use fiction and nonfiction text, statistics, video, art, and many other artifacts to stimulate investigations around the problem posed (Farris, 2015). During these daily activities students can observe, read, write, and role-play to gain a better understanding of the historical information. Technology can be used to help students keep track of their learning, feelings, and other information gathered during the daily activities and through the social studies unit (Owens et al., 2002). Using a performance-based assessment, students can be challenged to apply historical information in a critical way to develop and use their interpretation skills. Students can use a blog, a graphic blog, or digital storytelling to communicate aspects of feelings and past experiences (Caron, 2005). Multimodal literacy allows

students to use various mediums that are relevant to their lives to explore aspects of a situation and provides various unique ways to explore social studies beyond a textbook. Students are able to encounter the social studies topic and problem in many different ways to help foster understanding of others lived experiences. Since multimodal literacy has been shown to benefit all students, particularly those labeled as low achieving (Owens et al., 2002), all students have the opportunity to think critically about the effects of history on society.

### **Planning a Unit**

The unit that I discuss in this section can be found in Appendix C. The first step of planning is to decide what to teach. This unit is designed for a fifth grade classroom that is located in an elementary school. I decided that my specific social studies focus would be the 1920s and the United States Great Depression. I chose this topic because it is important for students to be able to think critically about the social and economic events of the 1920s and the Great Depression and how it relates to society today. The use of multimodal literacy is a purposeful choice and very useful for investigating social studies. When writing about social studies, many authors discuss the necessity of using artifacts, videos, and many other multimodal tools to enhance learning (Caron, 2005; Farris, 2015). In the context of the Great Depression, the use of multimodal literacy allows students to experience social and economic aspects of society through many mediums, which provides students with various perspectives of the time period. Multimodal literacy helps convey abstract ideas and feelings (Johnson & Kendrick, 2017) that surrounded the 1920s and the Great Depression.

The overall big idea for fifth grade social studies is to analyze cultural, economic, and political development and the effect it had on society. The big idea for the unit is to analyze the U.S. cultural, economic, and political development of the 1920s through the Great Depression.

The overall big idea and the big idea of the unit both provide a concept that makes a connection to the facts and skills that are a part of the unit (Burke, 2010; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The subjects that are the main point of integration are social studies and literacy. I decided to use the standards band for the 1920s through the Great Depression. Standard bands are a popular choice when there are many standards around one specific topic (Altwerger & Flores, 1994). I determined the literacy standards based off of what I wanted students to take away from the 1920s and the Great Depression. I chose standards around analyzing multiple accounts of a topic, explaining how multimedia can contribute to meaning, and reporting a topic using relevant ideas and details. Focusing on what students should take away from the learning experience is one way to help determine what standards to choose (Mills, 2014). The objectives are broken down into what I want students to understand and what I want them to be able to do by the end of the unit. One objective for this unit is that students will be able to explain how the growth of popular culture in the 1920s affected people's lives. I use these objectives as a guide to plan assessments and instructional activities (Taylor & Nolen, 2008; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). An essential question for this unit is, how did the culture of the 1920s change America? I have many essential questions listed in the example unit. The essential questions are ones that students use to explore the big idea (Burke, 2010).

The next section of the template is the central question. As I stated earlier, central questions help inform instruction by creating an issue-centered unit (Caron, 2005). The central question for this unit is: How did social and economic experiences affect the lives of people during the 1920s through the Great Depression? It is important to have a purpose for teaching social studies or any unit subject (Caron, 2005). The purpose of this question is to think critically about how people were affected by social and economic issues. The next two sections are where

it is important to think ahead about what students might know about the topic and the questions students might want to explore. For personal knowing, students should have knowledge from previous units such as World War I, have interests in the music and inventions of the period, and have misconceptions about debit and debt. Students might want to investigate a specific musician or athlete. I made these choices specifically from what I know about fifth grade social studies and student interests. It is necessary to focus on what students know when planning because students learn when they make connections to what they already know (Short et al., 1996).

The performance based assessment that I chose for this unit is to have students create a digital story. Students create a two to four minute film using photos, videos, voiceover, music, and sound to share a lived experience during the 1920s through the Great Depression. This assessment has students think critically about historical information (Dingler, 2017; Farris, 2015) through digital storytelling (Johnson & Kendrick, 2017). The assessments and evidence around student learning are reflective journals, teacher notes, and student portfolios (Visovatti, 1994). These assessments will be gathered during the invitations for learning during the unit.

The invitation for learning section is where I worked out all of the activities that students will participate in. These activities are informed by the standards, objectives, and the central question (Bird et al., 2002; Mills, 2014). This section takes a lot of thinking and it is best to work with a group. I came up with nine invitations for learning. One invitation has six sections because it is meant to be for centers. While I was thinking about the invitations, I created a materials list for each one.

The last section of the template is the learning plan. This section is where the unit starts to come together. The first section is creating a conversation about what students know. I decided to ask a general question about students' ideas about the 1920s and the Great

Depression. Another way to determine what students know is by using a KWL chart (Mills, 2014). I move on to the initiating experience, but I will come back to documenting the connections made by students after completing the initial experience. I do this because students' initial ideas are important and provide the foundation for the unit (Harste, 1993). For the initiating experience, I chose a video overview about the 1920s. The video provides a quick look into what the first half of the unit is about. I ask students what they notice about the video and the connections they have. I move on to students sharing their initial questions they have about the 1920s. These initial questions can provide lens to look through for the upcoming activities (Altwerger & Flores, 1994). Students are able to express their interests and I can make adjustments with these initial questions in mind.

The invitation for learning section is where students can investigate the central question and topic. There are a total of ten invitations for this unit. Reading and writing workshop will be a continuous invitation during the unit. During this workshop time, there will be strategy lessons on note taking, website searches, organizational techniques, and technology. There will also be read alouds using fiction and nonfiction texts for students to learn about athletes, inventions, and the lived experiences of people during the time period. There will be time for students to read independently and with a partner to explore text, artifacts, and websites. There will also be time for independent writing to continue reflections, write questions, and stories about the time period. This workshop time allows students to explore their interests with flexibility while learning skills during mini lessons that help support student learning (Flint, 2008).

The next invitation is one that students complete at centers. Students will travel to two centers a day to explore the world of the 1920s. At each station, students take notes and use organizers to gather information (Mills, 2014; Visovatti, 1994). Students will explore music, art,

sports, movies, dance, and inventions of the 1920s. Each station has text, websites, and materials. Students explore these materials to examine what life was like during the 1920s. Students learn to dance, make a silent movie, make an invention, and learn about famous athletes. Students journal and reflect on the information they gathered at each station and what it tells them about the 1920s. The journaling process allows students to share their thoughts and reflect on their learning (Visovatti, 1994).

The next eight invitations allow students to experience and discuss the events of the 1920s through the Great Depression. Students invest in the stock market, experience it crash, build a town, experience unemployment, and learn about government services. Students begin to think critically about the problems during the Great Depression because they are experiencing them through simulations. Students begin to look at historical information critically to determine how people were affected by the choices of politicians and the government. Students are able to explore the feelings of society during the 1920s through the Great Depression. All of these invitations are purposeful with the intent that students become able to think critically about historical information and how it affected people during the time period (Caron, 2005). The central part of social studies instruction is to observe and role-play so that students can think critically and make decisions (Farris, 2015).

Now that students have been able to explore the 1920s through the Great Depression, students are ready to pick a question for inquiry. This question is one that is of personal interest to the student (Mills, 2014). Questions for this unit should be able to relate in some way to the lives experience during the 1920s through the Great Depression. For example, if a student is interested in cars, the question might be: What was the impact of the automobile in the 1920s, and how were people in the automobile industry affected by the Great Depression? Once

students have a question for inquiry, it is important to place students in groups so they have people to discuss ideas with. These groups help each other with ideas for resources and different perspectives to take on their questions (Short, 2009). Once students have researched their question, they use the information they collected to complete the performance based assessment. Digital storytelling is a way for students to communicate aspects of feelings and experiences to make abstract and complex ideas and feelings visible (Johnson & Kendrick, 2017). Students use video, audio, photographs, and any other materials to discover answers to their questions and encounter the lived experiences that occurred during the time period. Students have the ability to analyze history and visualize their understanding (Hernandez-Ramos & De La Paz, 2009).

The final portion of the learning plan is having students reflect and share their experience. In a journal entry, students are asked to reflect on how life is similar today to the 1920s and 1930s. In this journal students have the opportunity to push their thinking further and use their new historical knowledge to make informed judgments. Students are also asked to reflect on how they can improve their learning process (Short, 1996; Visovatti, 1994). To end this unit, a class discussion will be held where students can reflect on what they have learned about the 1920s through the Great Depression and the historical implications that can be seen today.

### **Conclusion**

The lack of a central design process has handicapped the widespread use of integrated curriculum. Short et al. (1996) has provided the foundation for integrating instruction, but it is being used as a type of lesson plan. Since the framework is being used in a way that it was not meant for, integrated instruction loses its appeal to teachers because it is hard to plan.



I used the foundational framework provided by Short et al. (1996) in conjunction with other literature on integrating curriculum to craft an instructional template that can be used as a planning tool for teachers. This template can be changed and modified as needed to fit with different types of integrated instruction. Even though the template I created streamlined the planning process for integrating instructional units, it is still a very time consuming process that should be planned by a team. The ability to bounce ideas off of others makes integrating instructional units easier.

Overall, planning integrated instructional units is very important. Subjects should be taught using authentic purposes that are related to the real world. Creating integrated instructional units have shown to be beneficial for all students.

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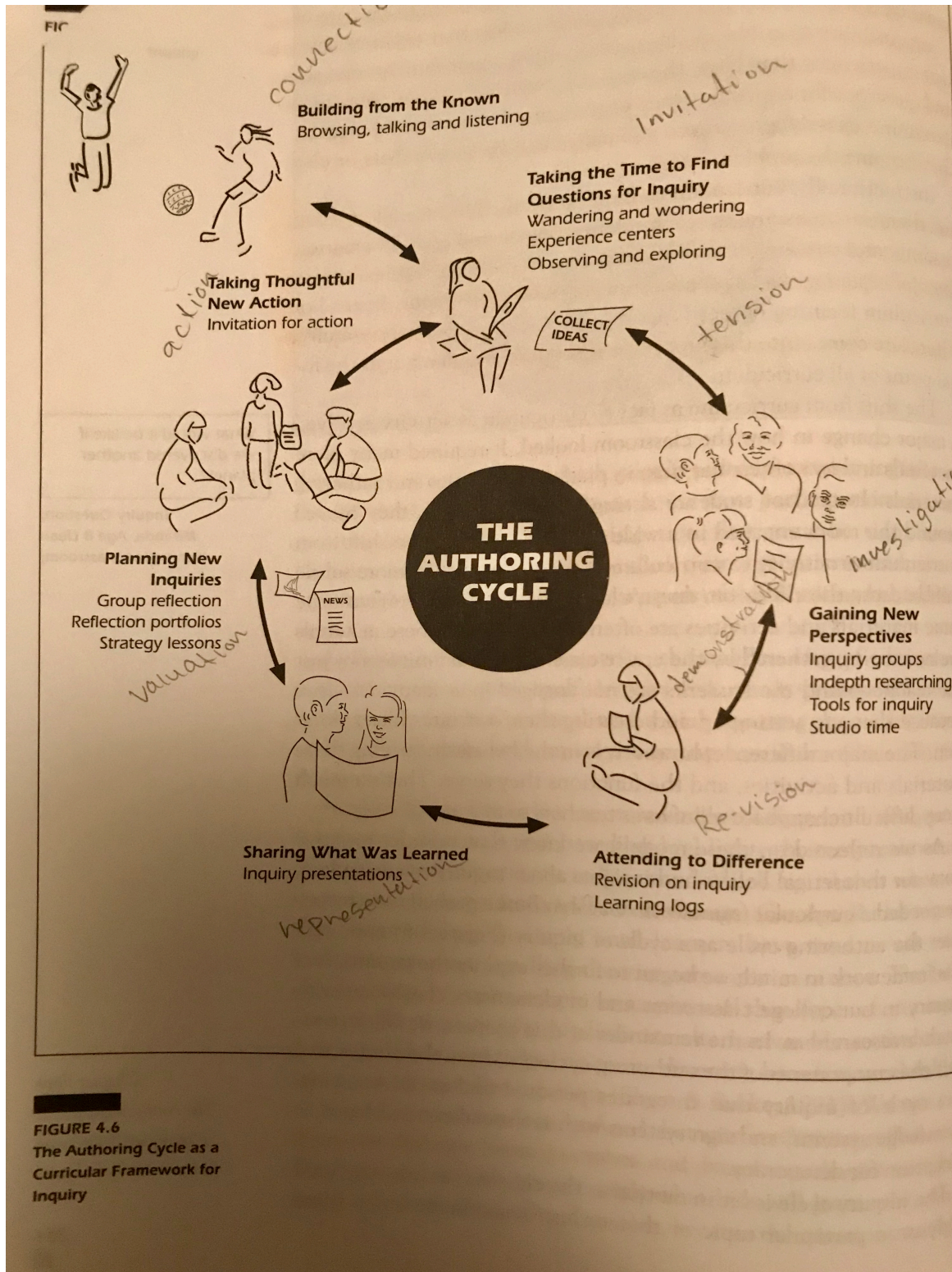
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Appendix A:



## Appendix B:

**Integrated Unit Design Template**

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<b>Topic / Theme</b>	
<b>Big Idea:</b>	<b>Sign Systems / Subjects:</b> <i>What subjects are being integrated?</i>
<b>Standards:</b> Standards for subject 1.	<b>Standards:</b> Standards for subject 2.
<b>Objectives:</b>	<b>Essential Questions:</b> <i>Overall for the course:</i> <i>Unit:</i>
<b>Central Question</b> <i>Question to frame the entire unit around</i>	
<b>Personal Knowing</b> <i>Ideas about what you think students already know / will be interested in.</i>  <i>From Previous Unit:</i>  <i>Other Information:</i>  <i>Interests:</i>  <i>Misconceptions:</i>	<b>Questions to Investigate</b> <i>In depth possible questions that students might like to learn more about.</i>
<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Performance Task</b>	<b>Other Evidence</b>

	<i>(Other assessments)</i>
<b>Invitations for Learning</b>	
<b>Instructional Activities:</b> <i>(Activities planned to investigate the specifics of the standards)</i>	<b>Materials Needed:</b>
<b>Learning Plan</b>	
<p><b>What Students Know</b> (Ask questions, KWL chart, etc.)</p> <p><b>Initiating Experience(s)</b> <i>(Presentations, speakers, read-alouds)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>What student Know and Connect With</b></p> <p><i>Initial Questions</i> (Have students share initial questions and make a list. Some of these questions can be answered along the learning path.)</p> <p><b>Invitations for Learning:</b> <i>Activities planned to investigate the specifics of the standards. Use artifacts, statistics, art, video, photos, fiction and nonfiction text</i></p> <p><b>Questions for Inquiry</b></p> <p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <p><b>Share / Reflect:</b></p> <p><b>Files:</b></p>	

## Appendix C:

**Integrated Unit Design Template**

<b>Topic / Theme</b>	
Social and economic events leading up to the U.S. Great Depression and after.	
<p><b>Big Idea:</b> Overall: Analyze cultural, economic, and political development and the effect it had on society.</p> <p><b>Unit</b> Analyze U.S. cultural, economic, and political development of the 1920s through the Great Depression.</p>	<p><b>Subjects:</b> <i>What subjects are being integrated?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social Studies – Specifically 1920s through U.S. Great Depression</li> <li>2. Literacy – Specifically Multimodal Literacy</li> </ol>
<p><b>Standards:</b> Standards for subject 1.</p> <p>Social Studies</p> <p>5.47 – Make connections with the growth of popular culture of the “Roaring Twenties” with the following: (C,E, TN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W.C. Handy, Bessie Smith</li> <li>• automobiles, radios, and nickelodeons</li> <li>• Harlem Renaissance</li> <li>• WSM, Grand Ole Opry</li> <li>• Charles Lindbergh and the Spirit of St. Louis</li> <li>• mass production, “just in time” inventory, appliances</li> </ul> <p>5.48 – Determine the meaning and use of economic terms credit, interest, and debt and the role these played in the economy of the 1920s. (E)</p> <p>5.49 – Analyze the events that caused the Great Depression and its impact on the nation and Tennessee, including</p>	<p><b>Standards:</b> <i>Standards for subject 2.</i></p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>5.RI.CS.6 - Analyze the similarities and differences in points of view of multiple accounts of the same event or topic.</p> <p>5.RL.IKI.7 - Explain how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or mood of a text, such as in a graphic novel, multimedia presentation, or fiction, folktale, myth, or poem.</p> <p>5.RI.IKI.9 - Integrate information from two or more texts on the same topic in order to build content knowledge.</p> <p>5.SL.PKI.4 – Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to present main ideas.</p>



<p>mass unemployment, Hoovervilles, and soup kitchens. (C, E, H, TN)</p> <p>5.50 Use specific textual evidence from primary and secondary source to summarize the success, failures, and challenges of President Roosevelt's New Deal policies, including: (C, E, G, H, TN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Security</li> <li>• Civilian Conservation Corps</li> <li>• Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation</li> <li>• Tennessee Valley Authority</li> <li>• Cumberland Homesteads</li> <li>• Great Smoky Mountains National Park</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p><b>Understand:</b></p> <p>Students will understand social, political, and economic events have lasting consequences.</p> <p>Students will understand the impact that the 1920s had on the Great Depression and the effect the Great Depression had on Americans.</p> <p><b>Be able to do:</b></p> <p>Students will be able explain how the growth of popular culture in the 1920s affected peoples lives.</p> <p>Students will be able to define economic terms and evaluate the role they played in the economy in the 1920s.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain and evaluate the success, failures, and challenges of President Roosevelt's New Deal policies.</p>	<p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <p><i>Overall for the course:</i></p> <p>How do cultural, economic, and political developments of a time period effect society?</p> <p>How can the use of visuals and other multimedia tools create meaning and perspective?</p> <p><i>Unit:</i></p> <p>How did the culture of the 1920s change America?</p> <p>What is the most significant effect of the Great Depression?</p> <p>What did Americans try to do to survive during the Great Depression?</p> <p>How did the political and social climate effect the policies put into place during the Great Depression?</p> <p>How can the use of visual and multimedia</p>

<p>Students will be able to analyze the similarities and differences in points of view of multiple accounts of the same event or topic.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or mood of a text.</p> <p>Students will be able to produce a presentation, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and details to present main ideas.</p>	<p>elements contribute to thoughtful thinking about the lived experiences of those who lived during the 1920s and 1930s?</p> <p>How can analyzing the similarities and differences of multiple experiences during the 1920s and 1930s contribute to the evaluation of the social and economic events?</p>
<p><b>Central Question</b>  <i>Question(s) to frame the entire unit around</i></p> <p>How did social and economic experiences affect the lives of people during the 1920s and the Great Depression?</p> <p>Why did the U.S. Great Depression happen and what type of impact did it have?</p>	
<p><b>Personal Knowing</b>  <i>Ideas about what you think students already know / will be interested in.</i></p> <p><i>From Previous Unit:</i>                  After World War I                  Women’s Suffrage</p> <p><i>Other Information:</i>                  Credit                  Interest                  Debt</p> <p><i>Interests:</i>                  Style and Clothing                  Music</p> <p><i>Misconceptions:</i>                  Debit vs. debt</p>	<p><b>Questions to Investigate</b>  <i>In depth possible questions that students might like to learn more about.</i></p> <p>What was the impact of (cars, radios, etc.) on the lives of people in the 1920s?</p> <p>What were Hoovervilles like in Tennessee?</p> <p>Why was credit so important in the 1920s?</p> <p>Pick a musician or actor and follow their life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What impact did (musician or actor) have on the time period?</li> </ul> <p>What was the role of the bank in the 1920s and what happened to it during the Great Depression?</p>

<b>Assessment</b>	
<p><b>Performance Task</b>            Digital Storytelling            - Create a 2-4 minute digital film using (photo, video, voiceover, music, sound) to share a lived experience of life in the 1920s through the Great Depression.</p>	<p><b>Other Evidence</b>            - Teacher Notes            - Journals – reflection on learning            - Student Portfolios              - Organizers            - Writing from all activities</p>
<b>Invitations for Learning</b>	
<p><b>Instructional Activities: (WG, SG)</b>            1. Continuous stock market game &amp; Economy             2. 1920s Centers              a. Music              b. Art              c. Sports              d. Movies              e. Dance              f. Inventions             3. A day in the Life – 1920s             4. Boom &amp; Bust – Stock Market Crash             5. Build a Town             6. Election Time             7. Unemployment             8. A day in the Life – Great Depression             9. New Deal Saves the Day?</p>	<p><b>Materials Needed:</b>            1. Stock market data, calculators             2. a. Music on YouTube, books, websites, iPad and headphones              b. Art pictures, art supplies, books, websites              c. Books, websites              d. Video, websites, books              e. iPad, instructional videos, video              f. Books, websites, art supplies             3. Clothes, instruments, music, photos, art, money             4. Stock market game, fake money             5. Pictures, videos, material to build structures             6. Slogans, speeches, election maps             7. Pictures of bread line/soup kitchen, data             8. Towns, election information, unemployment information             9. Excerpts of New Deal, websites and books explaining the programs, poster paper</p>
<b>Learning Plan</b>	
<b>What Students Know</b>	

General Question – What do you know about the 1920s and the Great Depression?

### **Initiating Experience(s)**

*(Presentations, speakers, read-alouds)*

(1) Watch a video about life in the 1920s

#### **What student Know and Connect With**

- Ask students what they notice about the video.
  - What is similar to today? What is different?
  - What are some connections you can make with 2018?
  - What connections can you make with your own life?

#### *Initial Questions*

- Have students share their initial questions about the 1920s / Great Depression with a group. Have students discuss why they are interested in their question.

### **Invitations for Learning**

*Use artifacts, statistics, art, video, photos, fiction and nonfiction text*

(1) Reader / Writer Workshop will occur **everyday**

- Mini Lesson
  - Strategy for reading or writing (alternate days)
  - Reading Examples:
    - Nonfiction Text (headings, index, glossary)
    - Summarization
    - Note taking
    - Websites (search strategies, skims, headings, tabs)
  - Writing Examples
    - Organizational techniques
  - Technology – Demonstrate / Anchor Chart
    - Copy / Paste
    - Word, PowerPoint, iMovie
- Read Aloud
  - Read both fiction and nonfiction texts
- Independent Reading
  - Read a nonfiction or fiction book, or website about 1920s-1930s.
- Partner Reading
  - Read a nonfiction or fiction book, or website about 19220s-1930s.
- Independent Writing
  - Students can continue with reflections, write stories about the time period, etc.
- Author circle
  - Share reflections and stories.

**(2) 1920s Centers – Students rotate in groups to centers (2 a day)****a. Music**

- Students will explore the music of the 1920s through nonfiction texts, websites, and music on YouTube.
- Students will look at the Harlem Renaissance, WSM, and Grand Ole Opry.
- Student will discover information on W.C. Handy and Bessie Smith.
- Students will use graphic organizers for the information they learn.
- Students will journal and reflect on the information they learned from this station.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**b. Art**

- Students will explore the art of the 1920s through looking at artwork and learning about artists.
- Students will take notes and organize their thoughts.
- Students will create a piece of artwork.
- Students will reflect in their journal about what they learned and what art taught them about the 1920s.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**c. Sports**

- Students will explore sports and famous athletes from the 1920s.
- Students will explore video, websites, and books.
- Students will take notes and organize their information.
- Students will reflect in their journal about what they learned about sports and what it taught them about the 1920s.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**d. Movies**

- Students will explore movies from the 1920s.
- Students will explore video, websites, and books.
- Students will take notes and organize their information.
- Students can create a short silent movie.
- Students will reflect in their journal about what they learned about movies.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**e. Dance**

- Students will explore the dance craze of the 1920s.
- Students will explore videos and websites.
- Students will take notes and organize their information.
- Students can learn the dance moves from the 1920s.
- Students will reflect in their journal about what they learned about dance and what it taught them about the 1920s.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**f. Inventions**

- Students will explore inventions from the 1920s. Students will explore Charles Lindbergh and the Spirit of St. Louis.
- Students will explore video, websites, and books.
- Students will take notes and organize their information.

- Students will create an invention that could belong in the 1920s.
- Students will reflect in their journal about what they learned about inventions and what it taught them about the 1920s.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

### (3) Continuous Stock Market Game

- In groups, students will select predetermined companies to follow until the stock market crash.
- Each group will invest the same amount of money.
- Groups will follow their company and gain or lose money each day.
- Groups will record the number of stocks they have, how much they are worth, how much the stock went up or down, and how much money they have everyday.
- Differentiation – students can use a calculator
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

### (4) A day in the Life – 1920s

- Students will experience the 1920s through listening to music, dancing, watching a silent movie, looking at art, and buying products.
- Students will use money and economic terms.
- Students will create a skit. Students will record skit and practice digital storytelling.
- Preview for performance assessment.
- Use mini – lessons and anchor charts. Model and have students practice.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

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### (5) Boom & Bust – Stock Market Crash Game

- In groups, students will experience different life scenarios. During these scenarios groups will gain or lose money. Then groups will experience the Stock Market Crash. They will experience choices of where to live and what jobs to take.
- Students will journal about this experience and how it made them feel. Students will also discuss what they think it felt like for people during the Great Depression.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

### (6) Build a Town

- Explain to students that after the Stock Market crash, many businesses closed, and people lost jobs and had little money.
- Ask students questions about how they would feel, what they would do, and whom they would blame.
- Explain that people who were evicted created communities called Hoovervilles.
- Have students explore pictures of Hoovervilles.
- In groups, have students create a Hooverville community. What do you think is in the community?
- Have students explain their choices in a gallery walk presentation.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**(7) Election Time**

- Ask students who they blame so far for how people are living and what they are experiencing.
- Have students look at election maps and other data around the election. Have students read the debates and speeches.
- Explain what a town hall is. If you were at a town hall, what questions would you ask?
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**(8) Unemployment**

- Show students an unemployment chart from the 1930s.
- Have students discuss what types of problems this might cause.
- Have students look at pictures of bread lines and soup kitchens. What do you notice?
- Ask students how we help the unemployed today.
- What are ways that the government could help the people who are unemployed?
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**(9) A day in the Life – Great Depression**

- Have students resume the identities from the Boom and Bust game. What would your life be like during the Great Depression?
- Where would you live? What would you be doing? What would you want the government to do to help you?
- Have students write about what their lives would be like during the Great Depression.
- Have students share their life with the class.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**(10) New Deal Saves the Day?**

- Revisit the question: What could the government do to make life better for people during the Great Depression? Have students share and discuss the answers.
- Have students watch a video on the programs the government created. Have students share one program and what it was for.
- Explain the New Deal
- Have groups pick a program to research. Groups can create a poster, video, skit, or something of their choosing to explain the program, its benefits, and challenges.
- **Files:** Place all files needed for activity here

**Questions for Inquiry**

Have students choose an interest / question they have about the 1920s through the Great Depression. Have students come up with a question that they can investigate.

- **Make sure the question can connect to the central question**
- **Create collaborative learning groups for students to help each other.**

**Assessment**

Performance – based

- Digital story telling
- Create a 2-4 minute digital film using (photo, video, voiceover, music, sound) to share a lived experience of life in the 1920s through the Great Depression.
- Focus on answering your chosen question in relation to the lived experience of the 1920s through the Great Depression.

**Example Questions**

- Ex. What was the impact of the automobile in the 1920s and how were people or the automobile industry affected during the Great Depression?
- Ex. How were lives changed during the Great Depression?
- Ex. What are the pros and cons of credit and what were the effects of credit on the 1920s and 1930s?

**Share / Reflect**

- Journal Entry – How is life today similar to that of the 1920s-1030s?
- Class discussion – How is life today similar to that of the 1920s-1030s?

<p><b>Files For 1920s</b>  <a href="#">1920s Overview Video - Start</a>  <a href="#">1920s Economy</a>  <a href="#">1920s Culture</a></p>	<p><b>Files for Great Depression</b>  <a href="#">Crash Depression Grips America</a>  <a href="#">Great Depression</a>  <a href="#">Great Depression Pt.2</a></p>	<p><b>Files for Digital Storytelling</b>  <a href="#">Example of Digital Storytelling</a></p>
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