

Brunswick School Department  
Social Studies  
Grade 8 20<sup>th</sup> Century Thematic Unit

**Unit Overview**

This unit looks at the themes of conflict, culture, politics, immigration, and innovation through the lens of Twentieth Century America. Prominent events such as World War I, World War II, the Depression, Cold War, and the September 11 attacks will be reviewed. Students will also study inventions and inventors of the period and study the challenges and changes that are shaping the United States today. Guided readings of both primary and secondary resources will be employed.

**Essential Understandings**

- *20th Century Conflict:* Serious disagreements between the United States and other world powers led to warfare, as well as alliances, among nations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- *20th Century Culture:* Throughout the decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements within the United States were affected by a variety of historical events.
- *20th Century Politics:* Competing ideas about governance (manner of government) affected the political climate throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century leading to the rise and fall of different power groups.
- *20th Century Immigration:* In the late 1800's, a new wave of immigrants came to the United States for economic and political reasons. For many immigrants, the goal was to become part of American life and culture.
- *20th Century Innovation:* Beginning in the late 1800's, abundant resources, new technology, government aid to business, and the railroad boom all contributed to industrial growth. Inventors created hundreds of devices that made life easier. The automobile and the airplane launched an age of fast transportation.

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**Priority Standards and Performance Indicators**

(as based on the Maine Learning Results)

**P.S. SS -1 Conduct and present original research that utilizes primary and secondary sources in order to analyze, interpret and explain historical (and/or) contemporary social studies topics.**

- a. Locate relevant information that includes multiple perspectives from varied sources.
- b. Demonstrate facility with notetaking, organizing information, and creating bibliographies.
- c. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- d. Use information ethically and legally.

**P.S. SS-4 Utilize concepts and processes from geography to understand issues involving people, places, and environments in the United States and the world.**

- c. Use the geographic grid and a variety of types of maps to identify geographic information.

**P.S.SS-5 Draw on concepts and processes from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.**

- c. Identify and analyze major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of Maine, the United States and various regions of the world.

**Examples of Formative / Summative Assessments**

- 20th Century presentation rubric
- Describe the causes and results of World War I
- Identify inventions and inventors that changed the way Americans live
- Describe the difficulties immigrants faced adjusting to their new lives
- List the goals of conservative presidents such as Ronald Reagan and George H.W.Bush

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**Sample Texts and Materials/Resources**

- Publications:
  - American: A History of Our Nation - Prentice Hall
  - "World War I", May, 2011 Kids Discover
  - "World War II", October, 2010 Kids Discover
  
- Documentaries:
  - Schlessinger, "The Roaring Twenties"
  - Schlessinger, "The Great Depression & The New Deal"
  - Schlessinger, "The Cold War"
  - Schlessinger, "U.S. Politics, 1960-1980"
  - Schlessinger, "Immigration & Cultural Change"
  - Schlessinger, "The Great War"