

# It's a Long Way from Home

## Lesson 3: All That Jazz

### Focus Questions

What did Chicago's South Side look like in the 1920s? Why was Chicago called the nation's "Black Metropolis"? What role did Chicago play in the history and development of jazz? What can artifacts teach us about the past?

### Core Understandings

Students will understand why Chicago's South Side became the nation's "Black Metropolis" in the 1920s. They will understand how and why Chicago's South Side nightlife scene nurtured the history and development of jazz. They will understand how photographs and artifacts can preserve history and document the past for future generations.

### Knowledge

Students will know the key events and trends that defined the Jazz Age. They will know how and why jazz evolved in Chicago. They will know how the South Side looked in the 1920s. They will know how to analyze photographs and artifacts and what they can teach people about the past.

### Skills

Students will use their observation and language arts skills to analyze and compare primary source materials. They will use their writing skills to summarize their interpretations.

### Common Core ELA Standards

CCSSR1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSSR7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### ISBE Social Science Standards

Goal 15: Understand economic systems, with an emphasis on the US.

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the US, and other nations.

Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society, with an emphasis on the US.

Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the US.

### In This Lesson

Students will learn about Chicago's role in the development of Jazz and the primary sources that inspired *It's a Long Way from Home* by exploring the interactive history map. The story element of setting is addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Diane Shalda.



## Activity

As a bell-ringer activity, play an audio clip of Studs Terkel describing Chicago in the 1920s from the PBS website. [http://www.pbs.org/jazz/places/places\\_chicago.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/places/places_chicago.htm)  
Tell students they are going to learn about the setting for *It's a Long Way from Home* and conduct a brief discussion about the significance of setting in any story.

Distribute the handout *Welcome to the Jazz Age* found at the end of this lesson. Have volunteers read the handout aloud, pausing to let students discuss what they find particularly surprising or intriguing. Then distribute copies of the background information for *It's a Long Way from Home*. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/jazz/background.php> Have volunteers read aloud “The Stroll and the Jazz Age.” Underscore for students the idea that jazz music migrated along with people from the South to the North during the Great Migration.

Next, lead students through an overview of the interactive history map for *It's a Long Way from Home*. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/site/storymap/index.html?story=6> Demonstrate the then-and-now function, zooming tools, and look-closer questions.

Distribute printouts of the Artifact Analysis worksheets from the Classroom Activities section of the Great Chicago Stories website. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/classroom/artifact.php> Working individually, in pairs, or in small groups, have students review the interactive history map in its entirety and fill out a worksheet for the three primary sources they find the most compelling. If time allows, have students present their findings to the class.

### Lesson 3 Home Connection

Journaling assignment: What unique characteristics made Chicago the “Black Metropolis”? Could jazz have developed anywhere else?

## Materials & Resources

- **Computer access in the classroom or the computer lab**
- **Printouts of the Welcome to the Jazz Age handout**
- **Printouts of the background information for *It's a Long Way from Home*:**  
<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/jazz/background.php>
- **Artifact Analysis worksheets:**  
<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/classroom/artifact.php>

## Instructional Notes

This lesson is best conducted in your school's computer lab. If this is not possible, the lesson can be conducted using a single computer with projection capability or by distributing printouts of the *It's a Long Way from Home* artifact image set. [http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts\\_its\\_a\\_long\\_way\\_home.pdf](http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_its_a_long_way_home.pdf)

To set the mood, play the music of jazz artists who moved to Chicago during the Great Migration such as Louis Armstrong and Joseph “King” Oliver.

## Extension Activities

View the video *A Walk through the Twentieth Century with Bill Moyers: The Twenties* available for checkout from Chicago Public Library. This would be especially useful if you are teaching U.S. history.

View “The Gift,” volume 2 of the Ken Burns’s documentary *Jazz*, which focuses on the beginnings of the genre, Louis Armstrong, Joe Oliver, and Chicago’s black-and-tan clubs.

*The Devil’s Music: 1920s Jazz* (volume 2 of the four-volume documentary *Culture Shock*) explores the cultural controversies surrounding the development of jazz. It is available for checkout at Harold Washington Library on both DVD and VHS.

Explore the NEA’s website on the history of jazz. <http://www.neajazzintheschools.org/home.php>

## Handout: Welcome to the Jazz Age

Source: *Fashion, Flappers 'n All That Jazz* gallery guide, © 2001 by The Chicago Historical Society.

### Welcome to the Jazz Age

The Roaring '20s were the years between the close of World War I in 1918 and the crash of the Stock Market in October 1929. Author F. Scott Fitzgerald coined the phrase to capture the mood of an era led by young people determined to break free of the Victorian traditions of their parents and create a new youth culture. Forged from a nation's experience in war, the changing role of women in society, and the influx of new people with new ideas into American cities, the Jazz Age celebrated modernism and spontaneity.

### What Is a Flapper?

In the 1920s, the word "flapper" described a young woman who rebelled against convention, spoke openly about sex, and loved to go out dancing, drinking, smoking, and wearing short skirts, sleeveless dresses, and scandalous shoes that revealed the top and sides of her feet. Like jazz music, the gangster, and the speakeasy, the rebellious and fun-loving flapper was a product of 1920s urban America. Most American women were not flappers, but the flappers' shocking behavior set a tone that helped many women explore Jazz Age freedoms without fear.

### Women Cut Their Hair—Short!

In the decade before the Jazz Age, women started having their long, sometimes waist-length, hair cut to chin-length (or "bobbed") to suit the latest style. By sporting ever-shorter hair and the fashionable boyish figure, women continued to challenge tradition and blur the lines between genders.

### Jazz Age Chicago

In 1920, for the first time, more Americans lived in cities than in the countryside. From across the country and around the world, people migrated to Chicago. The city offered migrants a more open environment for experimentation and self-expression. The era's nightlife—glittering fashions, clubs and cabarets, jazz music, and dancing—provides a window into the 1920s, when different people with different experiences crossed paths and helped transform America.

## Handout: Welcome to the Jazz Age (continued)

### Prohibition Opened the Door to the Speakeasy

In 1919, the 18th Amendment to the Constitution passed prohibiting the production, transportation, and sale of alcohol. Supporters hoped Prohibition would reestablish a moral code for the nation. In Chicago and many other cities, it had quite the opposite effect. Many average citizens quietly defied Prohibition by seeking out and purchasing illegal liquor. Organized crime thrived. Gangsters developed a black market for alcohol and trafficked bootleg liquor through speakeasies, secret bars and clubs where drinks were bought and sold out of the sight of the law. Legend has it that patrons were asked to "speak easy" (or softly) to avoid detection of the police.

### Dance crazes swept the nation

In the 1920s, social dancing was wildly popular. Americans took to the floor to show off their fancy footwork with the Black Bottom, Charleston, Fox Trot, One Step, Shimmy, and Varsity Drag. Jazz music, with its fast, forceful beats, inspired the bold, athletic dances of the era. Many of these new dances demanded energy, motion, and improvisation and highlighted the shaking and twisting of the body rather than the studied movements of the waltz. The fashion of the time aided these dances by expressing movement, reflecting light, and allowing dancers to kick up their legs, wave their arms, and swing their hips easily.

### South Side Black-and-Tans

Chicago's strict segregation policies created neighborhoods that were home to blacks from all walks of life. Wealthy and poor, old and young, lifelong Chicagoans and southern-born migrants all lived in the same few communities. African American-owned businesses, from barbershops to service stations, thrived in these all-black neighborhoods, because segregation was usually enforced by custom as well as by intimidation and violence. "Black-and-tans," South Side clubs catering to both black and white patrons, were alive with hot jazz and dancing. Gangsters ran the vice, blacks ruled the stage, and both blacks and "slummers," middle- and upper-class whites, came to be part of the hottest scene in town. Black-and-tans were one of the only places in the city where black and whites mixed. Such racial tolerance was extremely rare in Jazz Age Chicago.

Black Women Took on New Roles

## **Handout: Welcome to the Jazz Age (continued)**

### **Black Women Took on New Roles**

Black women, like their white counterparts, were drawn to the opportunity to challenge society and express themselves freely during the Jazz Age. Some went to college, started businesses, voted, and experimented with smoking, drinking, and sex. Some sought careers playing and composing jazz music; however, opportunities for women jazz musicians were limited. Lil Hardin was one of the few to succeed. In 1918, Lil moved to Chicago and landed a job in Jones's Music Store on South State Street. When the New Orleans Creole Jazz Band came into play one day, she said "They made goose pimples break out all over me." The band hired her to play piano, and she went on to play with Joe "King" Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. She later met and married Louis Armstrong. Together they formed Louis's Hot Five and Hot Seven bands.

### **The Decade Ended with a Crash**

On October 29, 1929—Black Tuesday—the Stock Market crashed and crashed hard. The American economy fell with a sudden thud that silenced the Roaring '20s. The Great Depression, which seemed all the greater compared to the highs of the Jazz Age, would last for 12 long years.