

# It's a Long Way from Home

## Lesson 4: Historical Heads

### Focus Questions

What role did Chicago's South Side nightlife play in the history and development of jazz? How did a spirit of rebellion change Chicago in the 1920s? How did teenagers express rebellion in the 1920s? What opportunities and challenges did urban Chicago offer to new migrants from the rural South during the Jazz Age?

### Core Understandings

Students will understand why Chicago's South Side nightlife scene in the 1920s was fertile ground for Jazz Age rebellion. They will understand that a spirit of rebellion defined the age and nurtured the history and development of jazz. They will understand that new migrants had a major impact on social transformation of the South Side during the 1920s.

### Knowledge

Students will know the key events and trends that defined the Jazz Age. They will know that young people in the 1920s rebelled against the Victorian morality of their parents and grandparents. They will know that the spirit of rebellion defined the decade and found expression in the jazz music and nightlife of Chicago's South Side.

### Skills

Students will use their language arts skills to interpret the past and their analytical skills to discern fact from fiction. They will summarize their interpretations in writing.

### Common Core ELA Standards

CCSS.R.1. 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.

CCSS.R.3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

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.

CCSS.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### 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

This lesson uses the "historical head" conceptual framework derived from the work of James Percoco to explore the thoughts and feelings of the characters in *It's a Long Way from Home*. The story elements of character and obstacles/problems are addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Diane Shalda.



## Activity

Begin by conducting a class discussion to review what students have learned so far about the Jazz Age in Chicago. Have students share some of their reflections from the Lesson 3 Home Connection. How did the Black Metropolis nurture the development of jazz?

Next, divide the class into small groups and give each a blank “historical head” representing one of the story’s major characters: Louis, Robert, and Aunt Celia. Blank heads should be drawn in profile using a heavy black marker on full-size, easel-board sheets. Instruct students to fill in the head with the various ideas, attitudes, hopes, and dreams of the character. Both words and images are acceptable additions. Encourage students to reference the story as much as possible and suggest they quote directly from the story as needed. (For examples, see Lesson 2 of the *Angelo’s Saturdays* unit.)

Finish by having each group present their historical head to the class, describing why it captures the spirit of the character.

### **Lesson 4 Home Connection**

Have students write a brief personality profile of all three characters as generated by the exercise. They should finish by summarizing the conflicting attitudes between old and young, urban and rural, in Chicago during the 1920s as expressed by the characters.

## Materials & Resources

- **Printouts of *It's a Long Way from Home*:**  
[http://www.GreatChicagoStories.org/pdf/story/Its\\_A\\_Long\\_Way\\_from\\_Home\\_by\\_Katherine\\_San\\_Fratello.pdf](http://www.GreatChicagoStories.org/pdf/story/Its_A_Long_Way_from_Home_by_Katherine_San_Fratello.pdf)
- **Easel-board paper**
- **Markers and other art supplies**

## Instructional Notes

For more information about James Percoco's "historical head" activity, see page 31 of his book *A Passion for the Past: Creative Teaching of U.S. History* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1998).

## Extension Activities

Journaling assignment: How and why do teenagers set themselves apart from adults? Think about yourself, family members, friends and/or acquaintances at school. What are the positive and negative consequences of rebellion?