

Title of Lesson: *Prohibition in the Early 1900s: One Issue, Multiple Dimensions*
(Suggested grade level: 11th grade American History or Advanced Placement American History)

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Background Information:

Support for the 18th Amendment (outlawing the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages) began building long before its ratification in 1920. Various religious groups in the late 1800s opposed the consumption (particularly the overconsumption) of alcohol because they believed it led to the breakdown of the family. According to an [Ohio State University webpage](#), the growth of the brewing industry in the late 19th century can also be closely linked to prohibition. Beer replaced distilled spirits as the drink of choice, and large brewing companies, like Anheuser-Busch, began setting up saloons and financing them in order to have outlets for their product. “The number of saloons proliferated; it was not uncommon for towns to have a saloon for every 150-200 persons...Saloon keepers tried to entice new customers, including young men, into their establishments. And they engaged in sideline vices in order to make ends meet---gambling, cock-fighting, and prostitution.” As saloons became more numerous and more violent, support for prohibition strengthened. Two groups were particularly influential in developing political support to ban the manufacture and sale of alcohol: the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (formed in 1874) and the Anti-Saloon League (formed in 1893). The League set up branches across the United States to work with churches to fight for prohibition. It was a single-issue organization that would support any political candidate, Democrat or Republican, who endorsed the idea of prohibition. And League backing often made a critical difference in elections, as evidenced by the fact that 65% of the country’s state legislatures had already banned alcohol before the 18th Amendment even went into effect. For a quick summary of the whole Prohibition era, visit the [Digital History web page](#) on the subject.

Overview of lesson:

Prohibition fits within the early 20th century Progressive movement, so this lesson could be used either to introduce the era or reinforce what students have already learned about other progressive reforms from the same time period. In this lesson, students collaboratively analyze both visual and written primary documents related to Prohibition through one of five lenses: social, political, legal, economic, and/or religious. They then discuss what the documents reveal about cultural values and assumptions in the early 1900s and compare those to today’s values and assumptions. Students are finally given time to do some research and then asked to create a poster that illustrates some of the unintended consequences the 18th Amendment produced.

Content Standards

[Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)

Grade 11: Content Standard 5

- Describe the impact of social changes and the influence of key figures in the United States from World War I through the 1920s, including Prohibition

[National Standards for History, 1996](#)
Standards in Historical Thinking

Standard 5: Read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account (a) the historical context in which the event unfolded---the values, outlook, crises, options, and contingencies of that time and place

Standards in History for Grades 5-12

Era 7, Standard 1B: The student understands Progressivism at the national level. Therefore the student is able to: Describe how the 16, 17th, 18th and 19th Amendments reflected the ideals and goals of Progressivism and the continuing attempt to adapt the founding ideals to a modern society.

[National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies](#), (Bulletin 111, 2010)

Standard 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Standard 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Standard 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

Standard 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

Primary Learning Objectives

Student will:

- Collaboratively analyze primary documents
- Determine which are for Prohibition and which are against it
- Identify concerns at play in the documents: religious, economic, political, social and/or legal ones
- Explain what the documents reveal about commonly held assumptions and values of Americans in the early 1900s
- Compare those assumptions and values to today's
- Research some of the unintended consequences of the 18th Amendment (religious, economic, political, social, or legal ones)
- Present the findings of that research in the form of a creative poster

Time allotted: 100 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- Billy Sunday's quotation (Attached)
- [New York Times article](#) (January 23, 1915, used in Step 1)
- Document A (short story, "Bessie's Mother")
- Document B (leaflet promoting Alabama Senator Oscar Underwood for President of U.S.)
- Document C (three political cartoons)
- [Document D](#) (letter from Union of United Brewery, Flour, Cereal and Soft Drink Workers to Congressman R.M. Guy in Montgomery, AL)
- [Document E](#) (report from the sheriff of Lee County listing seizures of whisky...only necessary to print the first page)
- Questions to go with documents
- Instructions for student-created poster
- Rubric to evaluate posters

Technological Resources:

- [Alabama Department of Archives and History](#): several primary documents used in this lesson come from this website.
- [Digital History webpage](#) provides an excellent summary of Prohibition
- [Ohio State University website](#): "Temperance and Prohibition"

- [National Archives](#) Teaching with Documents lesson plan: [“The Volstead Act and Related Prohibition Documents”](#)
- [Universal Newsreel clip](#) (1min. 20 sec.) about the end of Prohibition
- [Anti-Saloon Museum website](#), hosted by the Westerville Public Library in Westerville, Ohio
- [Life magazine slide show](#) about Prohibition entitled “Prohibition: How Dry We Ain’t”. It includes 34 individual photographs or visuals relating to the period, along with information about each one.
- [PBS webpage](#) outlining some of Ken Burns’s upcoming documentaries, including one entitled “Prohibition” which is scheduled for viewing fall 2011.
- [NPR slide show](#) (8 slides) on Prohibition
- [Ohio State University lessons](#) on “Clash of Cultures in the 1910s and 1920s.” Click on the button labeled [“Prohibition”](#) (on the left-hand side).

Background/Preparation:

- Students should have some knowledge of the social changes taking place in America in the late 19th and early 20th century (urbanization, increased immigration, growth of big business, women’s suffrage movement, etc). The 18th Amendment was a partial reaction against some of those changes.

Procedures/Activities:

Engagement/Motivation Activity:

- To learn what students already know about Prohibition (written with a capital “P”), print the word on the board and ask them to respond with any facts from American history they associate with it. Record responses.
- Display the copy of Billy Sunday’s quotation. Solicit answers to the three questions.
- Explain that this lesson will deal with the Prohibition era in American history which lasted from January 1920, when the 18th Amendment went into effect, until 1933 (when the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th.) The goal of this lesson is to examine some of the economic, social, religious, political, and legal arguments made by Americans (including people from Alabama) supporting or opposing Prohibition.

Step 1	Display a copy of the January 23, 1915 <i>New York Times</i> article regarding Alabama’s passage of a prohibition law. Have a student read the article out loud.
Step 2	Help students process the article by asking them: 1) How quickly did the two houses of Alabama’s legislature pass the bills related to prohibition? 2) Where did Gov. Henderson stand on the issue? 3) What had the previous 1911 “local option” law allowed counties to do? 4) How had Alabama counties responded under the 1911 “local option law?” 5) According to this document, how popular did the idea of prohibition seem to be in Alabama? 6) Why do they think prohibition was particularly popular in southern states? (By 1915, all but two of the southern states had enacted prohibition laws.)
Step 3	Tell students that the 1915 Alabama legislation became known as the “bone dry” law because we became a totally dry state. This was five years before the 18 th Amendment was ratified. Display the map of current wet/dry counties in Alabama (found on Alabama’s Alcoholic Beverage Control Board website). Explain that state law continues to govern where and when alcoholic beverages can be sold, although counties and cities (depending on their size) can vote

	<p>themselves wet or dry.</p> <p>Ask students: “Why do you think state and local governments continue to pass laws controlling alcohol? What are some social, legal, economic, religious, or political arguments for (or against) doing so?”</p>
Step 4	<p>Divide students into five groups. Distribute document sets A-E, one to each group. Give each student a copy of the guiding questions that go with all the document sets. (Tell students that everyone must complete his/her own answer sheets.) Groups should rotate their particular document set to another group as they finish it, until every group has analyzed all five sets. Check that each student has completed his/her own answer sheet.</p>
Step 5	<p>Write these categories on the board: economic, social, religious, political, and legal. Going one document set at a time, ask students to identify and explain which categories seem to fit and why. Make certain they refer to specifics in the documents themselves.</p>
Step 6	<p>Ask students what these documents reveal about the different kinds of reasons Americans had for supporting or opposing Prohibition in the early 1900s. Leaving aside the fact that history showed this particular legal experiment didn’t work, why would most 21st-century Americans still oppose a total, nation-wide ban on the manufacture or sale of alcoholic beverages? Why might we think that the federal government (or even a state government) shouldn’t do this? What’s changed since the 1920s and 30s?</p>
Step 7	<p>Hand out the assignment sheet. It tells students to use one of the five themes (social, economic, political, legal, or religious) as a lens through which to examine some of the unintended consequences the 18th Amendment and Volstead Act produced. (It also lists the requirements for a poster each student has to create to complete the assignment.)</p>
Step 8	<p>Display posters around the room. Group by theme. If you have time, show the Universal Newsreel clip about the end of Prohibition.</p>

Assessment Strategies:

- Award points for completion of the answer sheets that go with all five document sets.
- Evaluate student posters, using the rubric.

Extension:

- Students could be asked: “What sort of national or state laws might a modern-day ‘progressive’ want to see passed?”

Modification:

- To save time, you could limit the number of documents used in the lesson and cover fewer than the five themes suggested (religious, legal, social, economic, and political).

Billy Sunday was a fiery evangelist who traveled the country in the early part of the 20th century giving energetic sermons. He became a popular and well known figure. He spoke the following words after the 18th Amendment went into effect. (This was the amendment banning the “sale, manufacture and transportation” of alcoholic beverages.)

“The reign of tears is over. The slums will soon be only a memory. We will turn our prisons into factories and our jails into storehouses and corncribs. Men will walk upright now, women will smile, and the children will laugh. Hell will be forever for rent.”

Questions: According to Billy Sunday, what sort of economic benefits did he think the 18th Amendment would produce? What sort of social benefits? What sort of religious benefits?

DOCUMENT A

BESSIE'S MOTHERS

by MARY WADDELL COPYRIGHT, 1921. THE AMERICAN ISSUE PUBLISHING CO.

THE FIRE was out and the room cold. Wrapping a piece of an old quilt about her little girl, Mrs. Weston held her in her arms.

"Bessie," she began, "Mother has something she must tell you. Tomorrow you are going to take a ride on the train."

"Oh, won't that be fine!" exclaimed Bessie, clapping her hands. "Where are we going, Mother?" -

"You are going to live in a pretty new home and-"

"Oh goody!" cried Bessie. "We won't be cold nor hungry, any more will we?"

"No, dear; you will be nice and warm and have plenty to eat. Mrs. Brown is a lovely lady and I am sure you will like her. She is coming for you in the morning."

"Who is Mrs. Brown, Mother?"

"She is the lady who lives in this beautiful home. Having no children of her own to love, she wants to adopt my little girl."

"I will have two mothers, won't I? But, of course, one will be just a pretend mother. No one could take the place of my own dear Mother," said Bessie, putting her arms around Mrs. Weston's neck.

Poor Mrs. Weston's heart was breaking. O, how could she tell her all! The words seemed to choke her.

"Bessie," she began again, "I cannot go with you, but Mrs. Brown will give you pretty clothes to wear, and send you to school, and you will have a nice bed in a little room all your own. No doubt she will have a party for you and you will have such a good time. You will like it, I am sure. just think! You will not be cold nor hungry nor ragged any more. It will be such a good home for my little girl."

"Would I have to stay always, and be Mrs. Brown's little girl instead of yours?"

"Yes, dear."

"Then I'll never, never go!" exclaimed Bessie. "I wouldn't leave you for the whole world! I just couldn't. Oh, Mother, Mother! Do I have to go? I don't want nice clothes, and I would rather be hungry and cold always if I could just stay with you. Can't I, Mother? Please, Mother, I'll be big after a while and then I can work and help you." With her head nestled close to her mother's, Bessie caressed her cheek with her hand as she coaxed and wept by turns. Mrs. Weston was weeping, too. "Bessie, my child," she said, "Mother wants you more than she can tell you; but she cannot see you suffer. Listen till I tell you something. Of course, you remember how YOUR FATHER DRANK till he was

unable to work very much. It took ALL HE COULD MAKE TO BUY DRINK, so I had to go out and earn money for us to live on."

"Mother, WHY DIDN'T FATHER STOP DRINKING when it hurt him, and then you could have had the money?"

"Because, dear, ALCOHOL IN DRINK MAKES ONE WANT MORE AND MORE OF IT TILL AN APPETITE IS FORMED THAT IS OFTEN STRONGER THAN A MAN'S LOVE FOR HIS FAMILY. I worried a great deal about your father, Bessie, and then came the shock of his death. These troubles added to the hard labor I have been compelled to do have taken my strength so that I am no longer able to work. The coal is gone and there is only a mere bite of food left for breakfast. I have no money to buy these things nor to pay the rent. We cannot stay here longer. I cannot let you go hungry and cold and without a home. It will be very hard for me to give you up, but don't you see, dear, that something must be done?"

"But, Mother, what will become of you?"

"There is a home provided for sick and helpless people. I must go there."

"Is it a nice place like Mrs. Brown's?"

"I believe they will be kind to me, dear." Mrs. Weston did not tell Bessie that many of those who would be her companions IN THE "POORHOUSE" were either wrecks from living wicked lives or else had not sense enough to work. "Why can't I go there, too, Mother? We could be together then."

"They do not allow children in this home. It will be much nicer for you at Mrs. Brown's. Mother would never, never leave you if she were able to take care of you. Won't my little girl try to be brave when she knows how hard it is for Mother?"

"Will I get to see you sometimes?" asked Bessie. "I hope so, dear. Perhaps Mrs. Brown will bring you to see me.

"She'll have to or I'll just cry and cry till she does."

"You must be a good little girl and not cause Mrs. Brown trouble."

"I'll be good if she'll bring me to see you sometimes."

"You must be good anyway, dear, and love Mrs. Brown for being kind to you."

"Y-e-s say Mother, I'll stay with Mrs. Brown till I am big enough to work and then I am going to make enough money to keep us, and we will be together again. I'll go to Mrs. Brown's - but Oh, I don't want to! I don't want to!" wailed Bessie.

Mrs. Weston held her little girl close and soothed and petted her till at last, tired out from much crying, Bessie fell asleep with her head on her mother's breast. When her arms could bear the load no

longer, Mrs. Weston tenderly laid her precious bundle on the cot, covered her as warmly as possible and clasping a little hand in hers, sat grieving the whole night through.

When Mrs. Brown came the next morning and saw the grief written on Mrs. Weston's face, her heart was touched.

"Mrs. Weston," she said, "I have wanted a little girl for my very own. But I have changed my mind. IF YOU WILL COME AND LIVE WITH ME I will share Bessie with you. You need do nothing now. When you are stronger you can help me with my house work. Bessie, too, can do many little things to help us."

Mrs. Weston could not find words to express her gratitude, and Bessie danced for joy.

"I WILL HAVE TWO MOTHERS NOW," she exclaimed, "and I will call one of them just Mother, and the other Mother Brown." Putting her arms around her new mother's neck, she said, "I love you very much already, Mother Brown."

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DOCUMENT B

Oscar Underwood, a lawyer from Birmingham, served Alabama in the U.S. Congress as both a representative (1896-1914) and senator (1915-27). He ran for president in 1924. After the Alabama Legislature formally requested his candidacy in 1923, the Underwood Campaign Committee for Alabama published a leaflet explaining why he had voted against the 18th Amendment. This is a portion of that document. The complete original is available at the Alabama Department of Archives and History website.

UNDERWOOD and PROHIBITION

In order that the people may be informed fully as to the stand of Senator Oscar W. Underwood, of Alabama, the South's candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency, attention is directed to this statement in his address accepting the call of the Legislature of Alabama, the Democratic Party of Alabama and thousands of Democrats of the South, made at Montgomery July 31, 1923:

"When the issue of adopting the Eighteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution was before the American people, I opposed it because I thought temperance could be better attained along another line. It was not consistent with my idea of local self government. Just as the States of America in the beginning delegated to the federal government the right to control interstate transportation, just as they delegated to the federal government the power of war and the power of peace of this Nation, the States of the Union have delegated to the federal government the right to prohibit the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages.

"That decision made by the people of this country foreclosed the issue so far as I was concerned."

"My friends, in the last campaign for Senator, I stated to the people of Alabama that, although I had opposed the Eighteenth Amendment, **but now that is the supreme law of the land I would enforce it in its entire integrity. I know of no reason why any should doubt my integrity on that question.**

.....

Thereupon, after Senator Underwood had concluded and Gov. George W.W. Brandon had moved that the Legislature and assembled hosts of the Democracy resolve into a mass meeting to present Senator Underwood to the Nation as Alabama's candidate for the Presidency, there arose the venerable Rev. Dr. W. B. Crumpton, Baptist minister for more than fifty years, and during that time largely the head, heart and brains of the prohibition movement in Alabama---captain of the force, superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, and militant old-school Democrat as well. There was a breathless hush. There had been a faction in the Democracy of Alabama for 16 years, and Dr. Crumpton was the leader of one faction---the dry forces. He addressed the chair.

“Sir” ---his voice rang like a silver trumpet---“I have always admired Oscar Underwood, and I have differed from him on only one question, prohibition. **When he declares for the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment in its entire integrity, that satisfies me. I second the motion!**”

There was a storm of cheers and enthusiasm. The breach in the Democracy was healed, the party united and as one for the best asset the Democracy of the Nation possesses---Oscar Underwood, of the South.

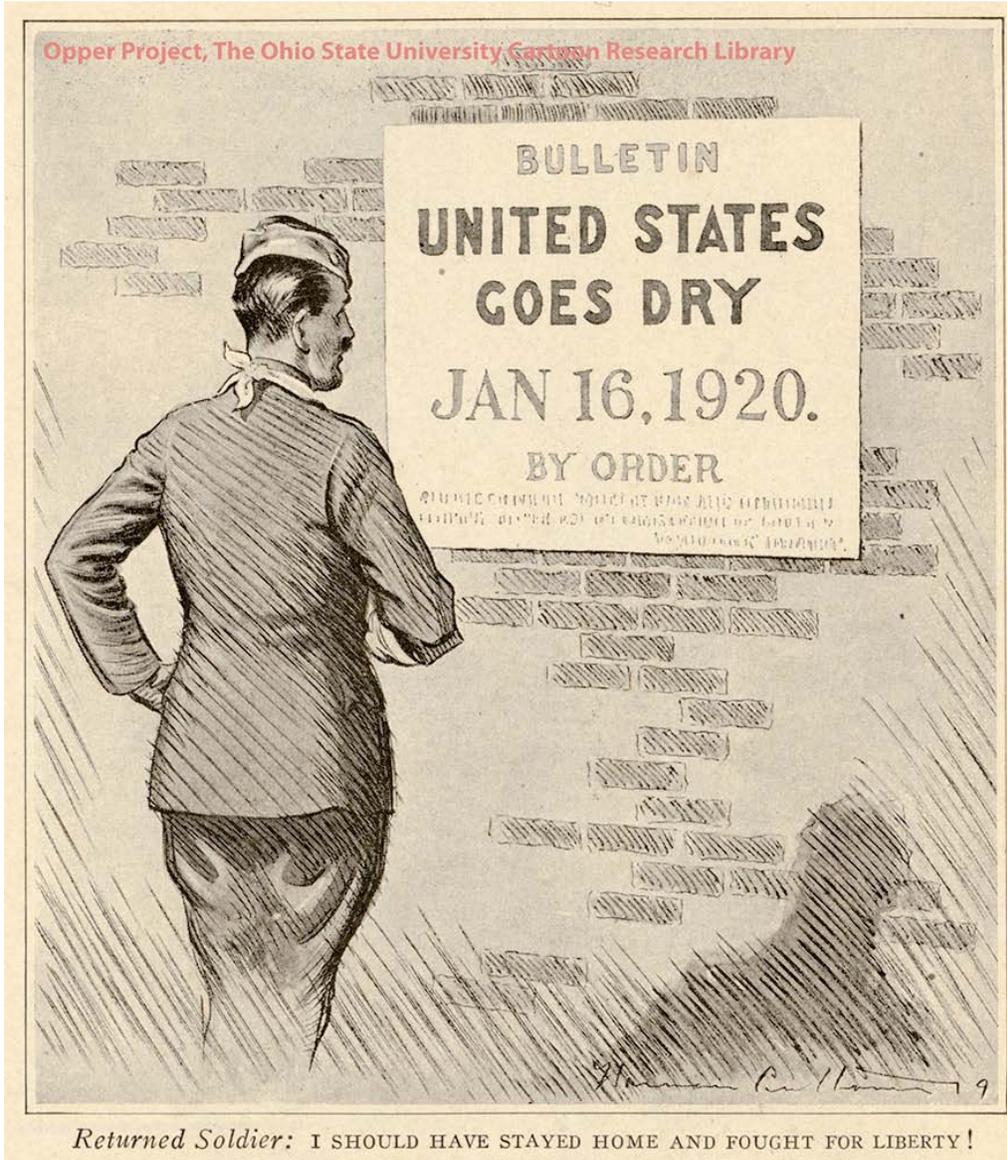
Document C (includes 2 editorial cartoons)

Cartoon # 1



Current Opinion, April, 1922

Cartoon # 2





HOW TO KEEP THE CAT AND
GET RID OF THE COOTIES?

—Morris for the George Matthew Adams Service.

QUESTIONS TO GO WITH DOCUMENT SETS A-E Your Name _____

Document A

1. Which kind of concern/s about alcohol does this story seem to reflect (circle appropriate choice/s): economic, legal, social, religious, or political?
2. Is this story meant to persuade people to be for or against Prohibition?
3. What in particular does this story seem to be saying will happen, is happening, or has happened because of alcohol? (Write one or two sentences.)

4. What specific parts of the story send that message or messages? Jot down some information.

Document B

1. Which kind of concern/s about Prohibition does this leaflet seem to reflect (circle appropriate choice/s): economic, legal, social, religious, or political?
2. Does this leaflet seem to be for or against Prohibition?
3. What in particular does this leaflet seem to be saying will happen, is happening, or has happened because of Prohibition? (Write one or two sentences.)

4. What specific words/phrases within the leaflet send that message or messages? Jot some down.

Document C

Cartoon # 1

1. Which kind of concern/s about Prohibition does this cartoon seem to reflect (circle appropriate choice/s): economic, legal, social, religious, or political?
2. Does this cartoon seem to be for or against Prohibition?
3. What in particular does this cartoon seem to be saying will happen, is happening, or has happened because of Prohibition? (Write one or two sentences.)

4. What symbols or parts of the cartoon send that message or messages? List some.

Cartoon #2

1. Which kind of concern/s about Prohibition does this cartoon seem to reflect (circle appropriate choice/s): economic, legal, social, religious, or political?
2. Does this cartoon seem to be for or against Prohibition?
3. What in particular does this cartoon seem to be saying will happen, is happening, or has happened because of Prohibition? (Write one or two sentences.)

4. What symbols or parts of the cartoon send that message or messages? List some.

Cartoon # 3

1. Which kind of concern/s about Prohibition does this cartoon seem to reflect (circle appropriate choice/s): economic, legal, social, religious, or political?
2. Does this cartoon seem to be for or against Prohibition?
3. What in particular does this cartoon seem to be saying will happen, is happening, or has happened because of Prohibition? (Write one or two sentences.)

4. What symbols or parts of the cartoon send that message or messages? List some.

Document D

1. What kind of concern/s about Prohibition does this letter seem to reflect (circle appropriate choice/s): economic, legal, social, religious, or political?
2. Who wrote this letter and is it expressing an opinion for or against Prohibition?
3. What in particular does this letter seem to be saying will happen, is happening, or has happened because of Prohibition? (Write one or two sentences.)

4. What specific words/phrases within the letter send that message or messages? Jot some down.

Document E

1. What kind of document is this?
2. What does it reveal about Prohibition in Alabama?
3. How might people in favor of AND opposed to Prohibition use this document to argue their case? Jot down some ideas for both sides.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR POSTER

Poster must:

- Be on unlined paper or poster board
- Be reasonably visible from a distance of 3-5 feet
- Clearly indicate which theme you selected: economic, political, social, legal, or religious (all facts must relate to the same theme)
- Include at least five specific facts regarding some of the **unintended consequences** the 18th Amendment produced (indicate your source for each fact, so I can double check the accuracy if I need to)
- Include both written and visual components (visual component could be a graph, cartoon, or photograph)
- Exhibit effort, factual accuracy, and creativity

This assignment is due _____ and is worth _____ points. It will be graded according to the criteria listed above.

RUBRIC – POSTER

Name _____

Points _____

Technical requirements (30%):

- Unlined paper or poster board
- Reasonably visible from 3-5 feet
- Clearly indicates theme
- Includes both written and visual material

Substantive requirements (50%)

- Provides five separate and specific facts that highlight unintended consequences of Prohibition
- All facts relate to the chosen theme
- Student lists source for each specific fact

Presentation requirements (20%)

- Poster shows effort (it's neatly done, thoughtfully organized)
- Poster exhibits creativity (there's something unusual and unique about it)

COMMENTS: