HISTORY™ CLASSROOM PRESENTS

THE CENTURY: AMERICA’S TIME: MACHINE DREAMS

Reporter Peter Jennings hosts this important series that chronicles the events and experiences of America in the twentieth century, the century that Henry Luce dubbed “The American Century.” Using archival footage and interviews with historians, veterans, activists and every-day people, this documentary explores the social, political, cultural, and economic changes that have transformed this nation from a burgeoning, isolationist economic power to one of the world’s leaders. *The Century: America’s Time* would be useful for classes on American History, American Culture, Women’s History, Political Science, Civics, Science and Technology, Military History and Ethics. It is appropriate for middle school, high school and college.

MACHINE DREAMS

The last episode in this series examines several major events of the 1990s and places them in a context that amplifies their thematic relevance. Included in this episode are the proliferation of computers, the Internet, communications revolutions and the technology of today poised to enter the world of tomorrow. Some of the highs and lows of the decade such as the Oklahoma City Bombing and The Million Man March are also examined, as is the contrast between military technology from World War I and the Gulf War.

OBJECTIVES

Students will analyze the effects of the twentieth century on American life, political institutions, economics, foreign policy and culture. They will also investigate how events in the twentieth century influenced America’s position as a world leader, and how global and domestic events created change, and sometimes turmoil, in America itself.

NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

*Machine Dreams* fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5-12: Chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities, historical issues-analysis and decision-making for Era 10.

VOCABULARY

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is the world today a “global village?”
2. The Internet is one of the most radical advances of the twentieth century. How does the Internet influence your life? How has it changed American life in the past decade?
3. Henry Luce, co-founder of Time, Inc., labeled the twentieth century “the American century.” Has the twentieth century been the American century? Do you think the 21st century will be another “American century?”
4. Discuss the advances of military technology in the twentieth century. How is war different because of the new technology? How would you compare the Gulf War with World War I or World War II?
5. Why was the Oklahoma City bombing so devastating to the American psyche?
6. Government is very different at the end of the twentieth century than it was at the beginning of the century. What should the role of government be in America? What are your predictions for changes in government for the 21st century?
7. W.E.B. DuBois predicted that the problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of the “color line.” Was DuBois correct?
8. Why has the Ku Klux Klan been popular in America despite its violent actions and intentions?
9. Discuss African-American history in the twentieth century.
10. What has been the impact of television on the twentieth century?

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Create a timeline of the twentieth century.
2. Create a poster that illustrates some of the technological breakthroughs of the twentieth century.