

The Birth of Hippie Culture in the 1960s

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How did the Grateful Dead reflect new ideas about life and society in the 1960's?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore the significance of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood in the 1960s by watching clips from the documentary Long Strange Trip and analyzing archival documents. They then apply their learning to determine if hippies were trying to change American society, or simply escape it.



After World War II, The United States entered into a period of enormous economic growth and prosperity. New technologies and industries were developed, union membership was high, and the U.S. government invested in social projects such as public schools, housing, highways, welfare, and veterans benefits. As a result, millions of Americans gained access to meaningful employment, invested in homes, and stocked them with families and new commodities. The birth rate skyrocketed and the nation's population rose almost 20 percent. The generation now known as the "Baby Boomer" was born.

There were some, however, who were troubled by the effects of this "Golden Era of Capitalism." Social critics like Herbert Marcuse feared that a growing obsession with consumer goods wasn't actually liberating people, but rather controlling them. For him, TV shows, popular music, and the newest dishwasher were little more than distractions to placate the masses and keep them distracted and uninterested in the rampant militarization and a world that was spiraling ever closer to nuclear war.

By the time the Baby Boom generation was coming into adulthood in the mid 1960s, Marcuse's ideas were increasingly being embraced. Many of the young adult "Boomers" became disenchanted with the types of consumption valued by their parents' generation, and began experimenting with varied modes of thought and styles of living.

One of the most famous of such experiments culminated at Haight-Ashbury, a district of San Francisco, California. Between 1965 and 1967, young people from across the country arrived to Haight-Ashbury, drawn in by cheap rent and the bohemian reputation of the neighborhood. A vibrant counterculture developed, made up of a community of what some would later refer to as "hippies"—people who rejected the pressure to live as workers, earners, and consumers within a singular family unit.

Rock and Roll was the primary musical language of Haight-Ashbury. Free concerts proliferated in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and on the city's streets, and venues such as the Matrix and the Fillmore showcased bands that personified the "San Francisco Sound": Jefferson Airplane. Quicksilver Messenger Service, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and others. The band that came to most represent this moment in Haight-Ashbury, however, was the Grateful Dead.

While the Grateful Dead and their fans maintained some elements of countercultural ideals well into the 1990s, much of the idealism of Haight-Ashbury as a utopian location did not survive the 1960s. Following the publicity of the 1967 "Summer of Love," thousands flocked to the neighborhood, overrunning the area, and, in the language of the day, "burning out." American corporations saw the value of "flower power," and absorbed key elements of the movement for marketing purposes, turning much of it into nothing more than a fashion trend that could be found in stores across America. Record companies too saw opportunity, and some of the San Francisco bands ultimately became the Top-40 artists they were so critical of earlier in their careers. Some suggest that by the time the country embraced the counterculture, it was already over.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- Learn about the concept of the "American Dream"
- Connect the ideas of the Hippie movement with the Grateful Dead
- Find out how new ideas and beliefs and actions spread in the late 1960s
- Understand the historical significance of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury neighborhood

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will identify factors that led to the Hippie Movement, and apply learning to explain the significance of The Grateful Dead in igniting the spread of new ideas in the 1960s.

ACTIVITIES

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Show **Image 1, American Dream Definition**. Ask a volunteer to read the definition aloud to the class, then ask students to list things that might show that a family is living "The American Dream."
2. Ask students to share their list with a partner.
3. Pass out **Handout 1 - Birth of Hippie Culture Vocabulary Terms**. Inform students that they will be writing their own definitions to these terms by the end of the lesson.

PROCEDURE

1. Tell students that today they will be learning about how a group of people in America decided to pursue their own dreams instead of following what they felt was “The American Dream.”
2. Play **Clip 1, Television Commercial from 1960**. While watching, ask students to think about what the commercial might tell us about the early 1960s. Then ask students:
 - Who are the people in this commercial?
 - Why do you think they are dancing?
 - What might this commercial be telling its audience?
 - How do you think the woman in the commercial feels? Why?
 - What does this commercial tell us about the life of women in 1960?
3. Tell students that in the 1950s and 1960s, the United States experienced an economic boom. For the first time, millions of people could afford their own house, and nice cars, furniture, clothing, among other products.
4. Show students **Image 2, The American Dream**. For 30 seconds, ask them to tally the number of things that they see in this image.
5. Have students share the number they came up with. Then ask by a raise of hands:
 - Does this family have not enough things?
 - Does this family have the right amount of things?
 - Does this family have too many things?
6. Tell students that in the mid 1960’s, while many people celebrated “the American Dream,” others were critical. They said that Americans were becoming mindless workers and consumers who were only thinking about buying new things.
7. Split students into groups of three. Tell them that each group will be analyzing a statement made by Herbert Marcuse in his 1964 book *One-Dimensional Man*, which was written in 1964 and was critical of consumerism.
8. Show **Image 3, Excerpts from One-Dimensional Man**. Number student groups 1, 2, or 3, and assign the first, second or third statement in the image. Ask students to discuss the meaning of these statements among their groups, using context clues to help understand words they might not know. Because these statements are complex, it’s recommended the teacher walks around the classroom to work individually with students groups when required.
9. For each quote, have student groups share their interpretation, then seek consensus from groups that all had the same quote. Then ask students:
 - What might Herbert Marcuse think about the “The American Dream”?
10. Tell students that they will watch a clip from 1968 filmed in San Francisco, California. Play **Clip 2, Introducing Haight-Ashbury**. Ask students:
 - What was appealing to the “Hippies” about the neighborhood of Haight-

Ashbury? What do you think the “Hippies” thought about the “American Dream”?

- The reporter describing Haight-Ashbury in the clip claims that the neighborhood attracted young people “seeking something new and significant for themselves.” What do you think these young people hoped to find?
- What do you think life might have been like for the young people who moved to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood? Would you want to live in that kind of environment? Why or why not?

11. Tell students that they are about to see a video of The Grateful Dead, a band that started in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood in 1965. Play **Clip 3, Introducing the Grateful Dead**. Then ask students:

- What did the Grateful Dead’s daily life seem like when they lived in Haight-Ashbury?

- What might have Jerry Garcia meant when he said at the beginning of the clip, “We’d all like to be able to live an uncluttered life, a simple life, a good life?”

12. Print out **Gallery Walk: A Time of Contrasts** and hang the images throughout the classroom. Ask students to walk around the classroom examining the images, and making notes of the differences they observe between the “Hippies” and “Mainstream America.” Then ask students:

- What are some of the differences you noticed between the “Hippie” images and the “Mainstream America” images?
- Based on the images you saw, how would you describe the “Hippies”?
- How would you describe “Mainstream America?”
- In your opinion, is one of these cultures better than the other? Why or why not?

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Have students write their own definitions for the vocabulary terms in **Handout 1**, and share their definitions with the class.
2. Then, ask students to create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting Mainstream American Life with Hippie Life in Haight-Ashbury. Encourage Students to make their Venn Diagrams detailed and colorful.
3. Ask students to think about their favorite band or musician. Ask them to design a concert poster for that musician or band in the style of 1968 Mainstream America and another one in the style of 1968 Haight-Ashbury, as seen on page three of the Gallery Walk. Use the **Creative Concert Posters** handout for guidance.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Interview a member of your family that was either a teen or adult in the late 1960s. What memories did they have at that time? Did they know about the hippies in Haight-Ashbury? Do they remember having an opinion of the hippies at that time? Has that opinion changed today?
2. Listen to music from bands that constructed the “San Francisco sound.” Summarize what you see as the defining characteristics of this style of music, and consider the ways those musical characteristics might represent the attitudes among the hippies in Haight-Ashbury. Bands could include the Grateful Dead, the Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe and the Fish, and Quicksilver Messenger Service.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (K-12)

Reading 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.

Craft and Structure 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Craft and Structure 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Reading 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)

Comprehension & Collaboration 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.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Comprehension & Collaboration 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge 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.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language (K-12)

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering



vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 7: Production, Distributions, and Consumption

Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

Core Music Standard: Responding

Analyze: Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response. Describe how the elements of music and expressive qualities relate to the structure of pieces, including contrasting works and programs of music.

Enduring Understanding: Response to music is informed by analyzing context (social, cultural, and historical) and how creators and performers manipulate the elements of music.

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators’/performers’ expressive intent. Describe a personal interpretation of works or contrasting works and explain how creators’ and performers’ application of the elements of music and expressive qualities, within genres, cultures, and historical periods, convey expressive intent.

Enduring Understanding: Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.

Essential Question: How do we discern the musical creators’ and performers’ expressive intent?

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Connecting 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music. Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.



Enduring Understanding: Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing and responding.

Essential Question: How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding? Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music?

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Enduring Understanding: Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding.

Essential Question: How do the other arts, other disciplines, contexts and daily life inform creating, performing, and responding to music?

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Essential Question: How do we discern the musical creators' and performers' expressive intent?

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standards 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural and historical



RESOURCES

VIDEOS

- Television Commercial from 1960
- *Long Strange Trip* - Introducing Haight-Ashbury
- *Long Strange Trip* - Introducing the Grateful Dead

HANDOUTS

- Handout 1 - Birth of Hippie Culture Vocabulary Terms
- Gallery Walk: A Time of Contrasts
- Creative Concert Posters Activity

Lesson Materials



Image 1, American Dream Definition

The American Dream is the belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success.

The American Dream is achieved through sacrifice, risk-taking, and hard work, rather than by chance.

Image 2, The American Dream



Image 3, Excerpts from One-Dimensional Man

“[Today] people recognize themselves by their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment.”

“The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food, and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industries carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits. . . which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers.”

“Thus emerges a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that. . . transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe.”

Handout 1 - Birth of Hippie Culture Vocabulary Terms

Listen for the following words in the lesson. Based on context clues, make notes on what they might mean.

Consumers	
Prescribed	
Commodity	
Objective	
Transcend	
Discourse	
Aspiration	
Haight-Ashbury	
Hippies	
Mainstream America	

Gallery Walk: A Time of Contrasts

At Home

“Mainstream America”



Hippies



Family Cars

“Mainstream America”



Hippies



Concert Posters

“Mainstream America”

THE SANDS PRESENTS

THE RAT PACK

APPEARING AT THE

COPA ROOM

2 SHOWS NIGHTLY

JUNE 2-16, 1960

RESERVATION ONLY

Hippies

PRESENTED IN DANCE CONCERT BY BILL GRAHAM IN SAN FRANCISCO

NEW HIPPY BASH

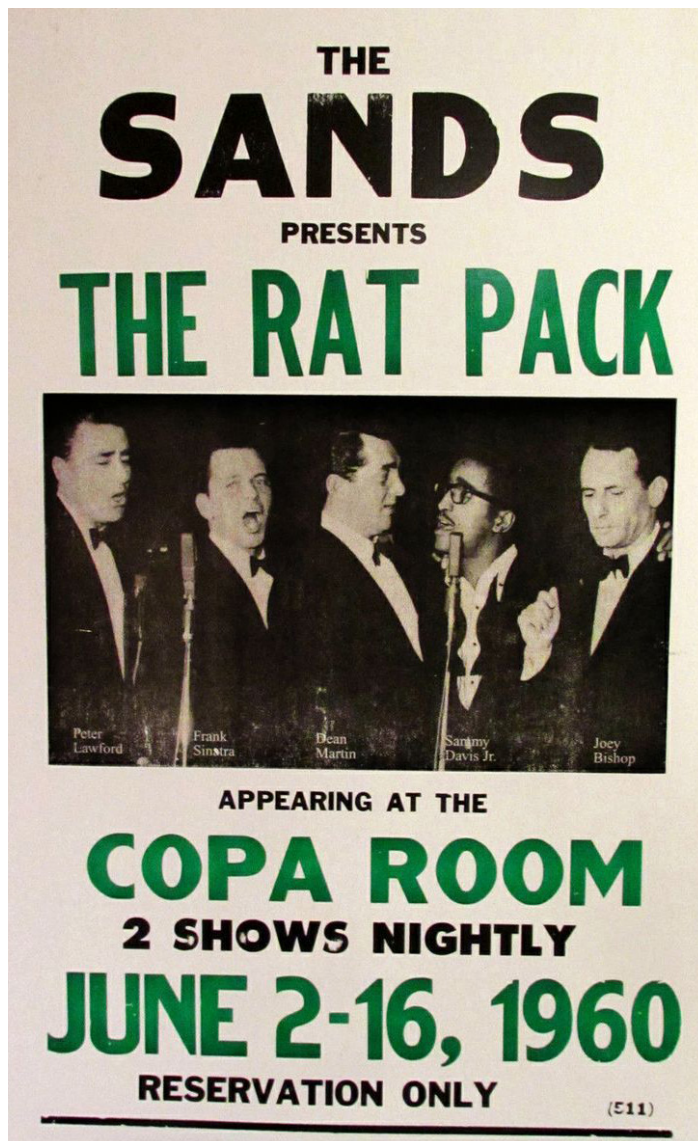
22 JUNE 1967

ADVANCE TICKET OUTLETS

Creative Concert Posters

Examine the two posters presented below. Then, think of your favorite band or musicians, and create two concert posters that musician might have, one in the “Mainstream America” style and the other in the “Hippie” style.

“Mainstream America”



Hippies





“Mainstream America” Style

Artist/Band Name:_____

Hippie Style

Artist/Band Name: _____