Introduction

*Artifacts of Americana* introduces students to a study of Americana, or popular culture. By examining the current events, politics, popular music, clothing styles, commercial art and entertainment of a time period, students create a feeling for not only how people thought and felt but will uncover some of the stereotypes and beliefs of the time. Students’ final project is a virtual trip through New Mexico on Route 66. This presentation answers the driving question, “What was life like along New Mexico Route 66 in the 1940’s (or 50’s or 60’s, etc)?”

**Student Outcomes**

Students will

- Interpret, analyze, and evaluate primary and secondary sources related to Americana;
- Gather information and resources which illustrate connections between core historical themes and topics;
- Refine writing, speaking, listening and presentation skills using oral and visual communication tools.

**Content Area and Grade Levels**

Social Studies, Math, New Mexico History
Middle School and High School, Grades 6-9

**Technology Usage**

- Internet connection
- Scanner
- Image capturing and possible editing with a simple Paint program
- Photo editing software

**Resources**

Kingwood College Library, American Cultural History
(http://www.nhmccd.edu/contracts/lrc/kc/decades.html) This site, divided into decades, shows facts at a glance, descriptions of fads, trends, and important political events.
An online Corvette museum (http://www.corvettemuseum.com/library-archives/chronicle/index.htm) What car better portrays the feeling of freedom and adventure tooling down Route 66 as the Corvette?

An online vintage clothing store (http://www.rustyzipper.com/shop.cfm). Clothing styles through the decades.

Pictures of diners (http://www.dinercity.com/index.html) including a few on Route 66.

Then and Now (http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/museum/kidstuff/depressn/costlist.html) lists prices from the depression days and compares them to today’s prices.

Car ads (http://www.nfi.net/~fpweb/yesteryear/autos/index.shtml) from the 30s through 60s.

Driving Vacations through the Ages (http://www.msnbc.com/modules/summer_driving/decades/default.asp?cp1=1) is an interactive site with information concerning original prices, cars, and vacation spots through the decades.

This book is about what things have cost and how much money people have had to buy them. Includes reproductions of ads, news accounts and summaries of political influences.


**Tips**
The Internet is a rich source of Americana information. Familiarize yourself with the sites and bookmark ones you feel will be most useful to your students.
Preparation
Many families will have personal photos that students might use in their final presentation. This personalizes the project for students and adds visual interest. Remind students to allow time for scanning and digitizing.

Tasks
1. Brainstorm prior knowledge on Americana. “What indicates that a movie, a TV show or a magazine is from the 70s or the 80s?” Create a semantic map from the responses.
2. Group students into 5 or 6 groups. (40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s and possibly 90s)
3. Assign each group a decade.
4. Using the Research Chart, instruct groups to assign tasks within their group.
5. Students research particular topics of their decade paying attention to the significance of their findings to the development of Route 66.
6. Groups plan their final presentation. Encourage groups to storyboard their presentation, planning placement of graphics, and creating minimal text that contains key concepts.

Presentation
Each group creates a virtual time trip of their decade. By combining all presentations, an almanac of Route 66 in the twentieth century could be created. Separating each decade by student produced commercials of products typical of the decade would further extend this project.

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Yet</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Meets Standard</th>
<th>Exceeds Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill development</td>
<td>Little evidence of applying different strategies appropriate to the project</td>
<td>Exhibits strategies appropriate to the project, with some weakness</td>
<td>Exhibits strategies appropriate to the intent of the project</td>
<td>Strategies meet standard plus highly sophisticated technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explains how people have influenced the development of New Mexico up to the present day.</td>
<td>A few or no people are mentioned, little or no attention to their significance.</td>
<td>A few people are mentioned, significance is not tied to Route 66.</td>
<td>Significant people are mentioned, importance to Route 66 is clearly explained.</td>
<td>Significant people are mentioned, importance to Route 66 is established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Critique</td>
<td>No evidence of reflection or critique</td>
<td>Some evidence of reflection or critique</td>
<td>Written evidence of reflection of critique</td>
<td>Thorough use of reflection and critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach to Work</td>
<td>No evidence of working through problems or creatively generating ideas</td>
<td>Some evidence of working through problems or creatively generating ideas</td>
<td>Evidence of both working through problems and creatively generating ideas</td>
<td>Meets standard plus extraordinary effort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Content Standards and Benchmarks

History
Content Standard I: Students are able to identify important people and events in order to analyze significant patterns, relationships, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in New Mexico, United States, and world history in order to understand the complexity of the human experience.
Benchmark 1A: Explore and explain how people and events have influenced the development of New Mexico up to the present day.
Content Standard II: Students understand how physical, natural and cultural processes influence where people live, the ways in which people live and how societies interact with one another and their environments.