

**INTERWAR EUROPE
(1919-1939): LOST
GENERATION:
HEMINGWAY: THE SUN
ALSO RISES**



INTERWAR EUROPE (1919-1939): LOST GENERATION: HEMINGWAY: THE SUN ALSO RISES

Description

Through an examination of both primary and secondary sources on the subject, including various types of visual media in addition to electronic and written sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the basic plot of Hemingway's novel, *The Sun Also Rises* and how the main characters in the book represent different aspects of societal change and the rejection of Victorian social norms inherent in the "lost generation" of the 1920s.

Subjects

English / Language Arts, European History, US History

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

Multiple Classes

Tour Links

- Hemingway Memorial, Pamplona
- Hemingway Apartment, Paris
- Hemingway Monument, Cuba
- Hemingway Museum, Key West, FL
- Hemingway Memorial, Idaho
- JFK Library and Museum, Boston

Essential Questions

- Who was Ernest Hemingway? Why is he called a member of the “Lost Generation”? Where did that term come from?
- What are the main points of Hemingway’s book, The Sun Also Rises? How do the characters in the book interact? Do the different characters represent real people?
- How do the experiences of war influence and affect the different characters in the novel?
- Why might Hemingway have included the passages about bulls and bullfighting? Do these passages have a symbolism beyond advancing the plot?

Academic Summary

"Listen, Jake," he leaned forward on the bar. "Don't you ever get the feeling that all your life is going by and you're not taking advantage of it? Do you realize you've lived nearly half the time you have to live already?"

Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises

His books are among the most famous of the twentieth century, speaking to generations of people in America and Europe over the span of almost five decades, from the years following the Great War to the turbulence of the 1960s. Today he is seen as the main voice of the so-called "lost generation" of people changed forever by their experiences in the world wars. A modern-day Renaissance man with a flawed and tortured soul, his life too often consisted of bouts of heavy drinking and the perpetuation of a bohemian lifestyle. He's famous for exposing readers to bullfighting and the running of the bulls in Spain. Personally unlucky in love, sometimes due to his own indiscretions, he was married three times and had many affairs. Over the course of his life, he worked as a Red Cross Great War ambulance driver in Italy, toured much of Europe, and lived in Paris, Cuba (both before and after the Revolution), the Florida Keys and Idaho. His travels always put him at the forefront of places in Europe at times where the images he saw would come to be some of the most important of the twentieth century, including the chaos of Interwar Europe, the Spanish Civil War, World War II and the Cuban Revolution. Many of these events would play key roles in his writing, often providing the setting for many of his stories.

He was a legend wherever he went, enriching both his surroundings and his friends, and his name is one of the most recognizable around the world today. Unfortunately, his last few years were spent in a state of troubled paranoia, as he suffered from hemochromatosis, an iron disorder that causes mental and physical deterioration. On 02 July 1961, in the basement storeroom at his Idaho home, after spending a lifetime vainly searching for inner peace, he committed suicide. His name was Ernest Hemingway.

Hemingway wrote numerous poems, short stories and non-fiction books, but he is best known for his novels, including *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Perhaps the most famous of the author's novels was his first: *The Sun Also Rises* (1925).

The Sun Also Rises is the story of a group of young adults from the so-called "lost generation" (a phrase coined by Gertrude Stein, an American writer and friend of Hemmingway's). The first part of the book is set in Paris, seen by many as a great city of depravity and decadence, in the years following the end of the Great War. The characters' individual experiences in dealing with the horrors of war have influenced their outlook on life.

Male characters in the book often seem frustrated and disillusioned, constantly searching for their manhood and masculinity. Whether because of physical wounds suffered in the war or because they are tormented by memories of what they saw in battle, many of these men seem to be searching in vain for a sense of morality in an immoral world.

Female characters in the novel personify many of the new attitudes often seen in women of the “lost generation.” In rejecting many of the Victorian societal norms of their mothers and grandmothers, many younger women of the 1920s on both sides of the Atlantic instead looked to their own needs and desires. Lady Brett Ashley, the twice-divorced character in the novel, is promiscuous and independent, and at times seems to enjoy toying with the emotions of the novel’s male characters. In many ways, however, Brett is also a tragic character. She seduces and controls men throughout the book, but is unable to have Jake, the one man she really wants. Jake loves Brett, but he is unable to consummate their relationship because of a war wound that has made him impotent. For her part, Brett seeks to satisfy her animal desires through other men, but in the end she is empty and unfulfilled.

Through an examination of both primary and secondary sources on the subject, including various types of visual media in addition to electronic and written sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the basic plot of Hemingway’s novel, *The Sun Also Rises* and how the main characters in the book represent different aspects of societal change and the rejection of Victorian social norms inherent in the “lost generation” of the 1920s.

Objectives

1. Students will identify, analyze, understand and be able to explain the basic plot and structure of Ernest Hemingway’s 1925 novel, *The Sun Also Rises*.
2. Students will identify, analyze, understand and be able to explain how the main characters in the book represent different aspects societal change and the rejection of Victorian social norms inherent in the “lost generation” of the 1920s.

Procedure

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: Why were many young people disillusioned with traditional societal norms after the Great War ended? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of the primary sources and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Hemingway, the “Lost Generation” and *The Sun Also Rises* (20 min)
- Video – Lost Generation (10 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the primary sources and articles on Hemingway and *The Sun Also Rises* taking notes as appropriate. (20 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of the articles for homework.
- Suggestion: Break students into groups and assign different articles to each group.
- Suggestion: Students should have ample time to read the novel in its entirety before discussing it in class. See the links below for reading questions.
- Group Activity – Socratic Discussion: Hemingway, the Lost Generation and *The Sun Also Rises* (20 min)

III. Closure

- Assessment – Essay / DBQ: Explain in detail the basic plot of Hemmingway’s novel, *The Sun Also Rises* and how the main characters in the book represent different aspects of societal change and the rejection of Victorian social norms inherent in the “lost generation” of the 1920s.

Extension

On tour: Hemingway Memorial, Pamplona, Spain

While on tour in Northern Spain, students can visit the Hemingway Memorial in Pamplona, where they can see for themselves the town where the “Running of the Bulls” takes place every year. The event, which coincides with the Festival of San Fermín (in honor of Saint Fermin), originates from the 14th century, a time when bulls from off-site corrals were brought to the bullring during the festival. Pamplona also features a bullfight after the running. The festival is held in July and takes 6 days to complete. Through his novels and other writings, Hemingway, who was a big fan of bullfights, brought the running to mainstream Europeans and Americans. The event is now known around the world. Crowds during the festival can swell the city, as thousands of people come to watch the event. Unfortunately, and not entirely unexpectedly, injuries are common (most are not serious). Deaths to the runners are rare (imagine being chased by a 2000 lb mad bull with horns).

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- www.modernistweb.com/page/prosevolume/7/The+Sun+Also+Rises
The Sun Also Rises (primary source) – full text of the novel organized by chapter
- www.jfklibrary.org/Research/The-Ernest-Hemingway-Collection.aspx
John F Kennedy Presidential Library – Ernest Hemingway Collection (official website)
- <http://littleyankee.hubpages.com/hub/Hemingway-Fitzgerald-and-the-Lost-Generation>
Hemingway, Fitzgerald and the Lost Generation (website)
- <http://www.ernesthemingwaycollection.com/>
Ernest Hemingway Collection (website)
- www.sparknotes.com/lit/sun/
The Sun Also Rises (website) – from Sparknotes
- www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/8355-sun-also-rises-hemingway?showall=1
Sun Also Rises (website) – from LitLovers, an online reading community, this website contains a summary and discussion questions on the book. Highly recommended for all students and teachers.
- www.pbs.org/wnet/americannovel/timeline/lostgeneration.html
The Lost Generation (website) – from the PBS series on the American Novel.
- www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Page/53193
The Sun Also Rises (website) – from Farrah Hilton, AP Literature teacher at East Forsyth High School (NC). This site contains links to multiple PowerPoints applicable to this lesson plan.
- www.teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video). Great 2-minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes. From Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA. Highly recommended for teachers.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=kskPkAavP5I
Lost Generation (video) – student made video for APUSH class
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB_-907VbTQ
The Sun Also Rises lecture (video) — From Quincy Miller, AP Literature teacher at Gary Comer College Prep (a part of the Noble Network of Charter Schools) in Chicago, IL. This video, at just over 16 minutes, is well done. Highly recommended for teachers and students.

Background Information

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Hemingway
Ernest Hemingway – Wikipedia article
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sun_Also_Rises
The Sun Also Rises – Wikipedia article
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Generation

Lost Generation – Wikipedia article

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/france/interwar-europe-lost-generation-hemingway-sun-also-rises
Interwar Europe – Hemingway: Sun Also Rises
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/germany/interwar-europe-remarque-all-quiet
Interwar Europe (1919-1939) – Remarque: All Quiet on the Western Front
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/germany/weimar-gropius-bauhaus-and-internationalism
Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus: International Art and Architecture in the Weimar Republic
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/switzerland/interwar-europe-dadaism
Interwar Europe (1919-1939) – Dadaism: Rejecting Modernity's Chaos

Key Terms

- Hemingway
- Lost Generation
- *The Sun Also Rises*

