

## HISTORY™ CLASSROOM PRESENTS

### THE CENTURY: AMERICA'S TIME SEEDS OF CHANGE

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.

#### SEEDS OF CHANGE

This episode introduces both the series and the twentieth century and documents some of the major themes of the turn-of-the-century. Events such as immigration, the Wright Brothers, Thomas Edison's inventions, the advent of the automobile, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, suffrage, segregation, the silver screen, American imperialism and the Titanic are examined and survivors give first-hand accounts of life in the early years of the century.

#### 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

*Seeds of Change* 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 7.

#### VOCABULARY

sustained	seduce	proposition	myriad
impoverished	hordes	naïve	diverse
relentless	foundry	vanguard	wielded
suffragette	elusive	abetting	catastrophic

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Peter Jennings speaks about historical reminders in the opening sequence of this episode. What are historical reminders? What are the historical reminders in your community?
2. Attitudes towards women and African-Americans have changed dramatically in the twentieth century. Discuss some of the changes and progress made for women and African-Americans. Discuss some of the ways or areas in which more change is necessary.
3. How have politics and technology made the twentieth century the “killing century?”
4. Historians of immigration use a migration theory known as push/pull. Something “pushes” the immigrant from her homeland and “pulls” her to her new home. Discuss some of the push/pull factors for immigrants during the great waves of migration in the early twentieth century.
5. Discuss the changes and advances in technology during the twentieth century.
6. How did Henry Ford revolutionize the automobile industry, and American life?
7. Labor conditions at the beginning of the century were dangerous, dirty and miserable. Why were industrial conditions so bad? Why did these conditions go unchecked? Why weren't workers able to organize and unionize for better conditions?
8. What is Progressivism? How did the Progressive Movement shape early twentieth century history?
9. What were Jim Crow laws? How did these laws go against American ideals? Why were these laws allowed?
10. Newsreels were a standard part of movie entertainment. How did these newsreels “open the world” for their viewers?
11. How did the Panama Canal exemplify American technological prowess?

### **EXTENDED ACTIVITIES**

1. Imagine that you are an immigrant crossing the Atlantic Ocean to your new home. Create a diary or a journal that records your travel experiences and your reactions to your new home.
2. Create a chart or poster that illustrates the advance of technology in the twentieth century.
3. Interview your grandparents or any older relatives or friends about the changes they have seen during their lifetimes. How has the world changed for them in this century?