

**TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT – 2009-2012**

***Lesson Title – We Didn't Start the Fire from Melissa Szych***

Grade - 8

Length of class period – 90 minutes (can be split into two 45 minutes classes)

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

*What were some of the major events or people involved in shaping the United States in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century?*

*How was the event or person responsible for how we live today?*

*Why was the event or person so influential?*

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

*Familiarize students to some important events or people of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century to begin a larger unit spanning the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

*Develop research skills by viewing websites and trying to determine the validity and reliability of the sites visited*

*Enhance Oral Presentation skills*

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

*Billy Joel's song, "We Didn't Start the Fire"*

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

*Students will listen to the song, "We Didn't Start the Fire" by Billy Joel and then engage in a brief discussion on what the song is about.*

*Students will then be assigned a topic listed in the song to research how or why the person or event was listed in the song. Was this person or event someone or something to be considered important in influencing the shaping of the United States in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century?*

*Students will practice and enhance their research skills by visiting websites to find information on their topic. They must visit and submit a list of at least 3 websites to verify that the information found is valid and reliable. If they find varying information, they need to use a fourth website.*

*Students will create a 2-minute presentation on their topic. The presentation will be verbal; however a PowerPoint presentation or poster may be created to help present the information.*

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

*Observing students working on their research  
Class discussions  
Presentations*

Connecticut Grade Level Expectations-

- 1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of significant events and themes in US History*
- 1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of significant events and themes in World History*
- 2.4 Demonstrate an ability to participate in social studies discourse through informal discussions, debate and effective oral presentations*

## **WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE**

Harry Truman, Doris Day, Red China, Johnnie Ray  
South Pacific, Walter Winchell, Joe DiMaggio

Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Studebaker, television  
North Korea, South Korea, Marilyn Monroe

Rosenbergs, H-Bomb, Sugar Ray, Panmunjom  
Brando, "The King and I", and "The Catcher in the Rye"

Eisenhower, vaccine, England's got a new queen  
Marciano, Liberace, Santayana goodbye

### CHORUS

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Josef Stalin, Malenkov, Nasser and Prokofiev  
Rockefeller, Campanella, Communist Bloc

Roy Cohn, Juan Peron, Toscanini, Dacron  
Dien Bien Phu Falls, Rock Around the Clock

Einstein, James Dean, Brooklyn's got a winning team  
Davy Crockett, Peter Pan, Elvis Presley, Disneyland

Bardot, Budapest, Alabama, Khrushchev  
Princess Grace, Peyton Place, Trouble in the Suez

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Little Rock, Pasternak, Mickey Mantle, Kerouac  
Sputnik, Zhou Enlai, Bridge On The River Kwai

Lebanon, Charles de Gaulle, California Baseball,  
Starkweather homicide, Children of Thalidomide

Buddy Holly, Ben Hur, Space Monkey, Mafia  
Hula Hoops, Castro, Edsel is a no-go

U2, Syngman Rhee, payola and Kennedy  
Chubby Checker, Psycho, Belgians in the Congo

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Hemingway, Eichmann, Stranger in a Strange Land,  
Dylan, Berlin, Bay of Pigs invasion

Lawrence of Arabia, British Beatlemania  
Ole Miss, John Glenn, Liston beats Patterson

Pope Paul, Malcolm X, British Politician sex  
J.F.K. blown away, what else do I have to say

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Birth control, Ho Chi Minh, Richard Nixon back again  
Moonshot, Woodstock, Watergate, punk rock

Begin, Reagan, Palestine, Terror on the airline  
Ayatollah's in Iran, Russians in Afghanistan

Wheel of Fortune, Sally Ride, heavy metal suicide  
Foreign debts, homeless Vets, AIDS, Crack, Bernie Goetz

Hypodermics on the shores, China's under martial law  
Rock and Roller cola wars, I can't take it anymore

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning since the world's been turning.  
We didn't start the fire  
But when we are gone  
It will still burn on, and on, and on, and on...