

## Prohibition Lesson Plan

**Central Historical Question:**  
*Why was the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment adopted?*

### Materials:

- United Streaming Video Segment: “American Dries Up” (from Just the Facts: The Emergence of Modern America: The Roaring Twenties)  
<http://player.discoveryeducation.com/index.cfm?guidAssetId=532C6DE7-E714-403B-BD6C-AF31FB1EFD2F&blnFromSearch=1&productcode=US>
- 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment Document and Guiding Questions
- Prohibition Documents A-D
- Prohibition Guiding Questions

### Plan of Instruction:

1. Hand out 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment sheet and have students answer questions. Ask some students to share their responses.
2. Play United Streaming Video Segment: “American Dries Up” (from Just the Facts: The Emergence of Modern America: The Roaring Twenties)  
<http://player.discoveryeducation.com/index.cfm?guidAssetId=532C6DE7-E714-403B-BD6C-AF31FB1EFD2F&blnFromSearch=1&productcode=US>

When movie finishes, ask students why some Americans supported temperance (according to the movie)?

3. Hand out Prohibition Documents A-D and Guiding Questions. Have students complete in small groups.
4. Discussion:
  - What problems did people see in society at the turn of the century?
  - Why did they think Prohibition would solve these problems?
  - What strategies/evidence did temperance advocates use to convince people to support Prohibition?
  - Do you find their arguments convincing? Do you think people at the time found their arguments convincing? Why or why not?
  - Why does the author of Document B single out immigrants?
  - Historians disagree about the motivation behind Prohibition:
    - Some say Prohibition was an attempt on the part of middle-class Protestants to control immigrants and the urban poor.

- Some say Prohibition was an attempt to help children and families.
  - *What do you think?*
- 

Citations:

Eighth Annual Meeting of the National Temperance Council, Washington D.C., September 20, 1920.

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/repository2/repoman.php?verb=render&id=1119376466906250&view=pageturner>

“Hooch Murder Bill Drafted by Anderson,” *The New York Times*, November 14, 1922.

[http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?\\_r=1&res=9E07EFD61F39EF3ABC4C52DFB7678389639EDE](http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=1&res=9E07EFD61F39EF3ABC4C52DFB7678389639EDE)

“Alcoholism and Degeneracy,” Boston, MA and Westerville, Ohio: Scientific Temperance and American Issue Publishing Company, 1913.

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/repository2/repoman.php>

“Children in Misery,” Boston, MA and Westerville, Ohio: Scientific Temperance and American Issue Publishing Company, 1913.

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/repository2/repoman.php>

## The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment (Modified)

*Source: United States Constitution*

*Context: The US Senate passed the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment on December 18, 1917. It was ratified on January 16, 1919, after 36 states approved it. The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and the enforcement laws accompanying it, established Prohibition of alcohol in the United States. Several states already had Prohibition laws before this amendment. It was eventually repealed by the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment on December 5, 1933. It is the only amendment that has ever been completely repealed.*

Section 1. After one year from the **ratification** of this **article** the manufacture, sale, transportation, importation or exportation of **intoxicating liquors** in the United States and all its territory is hereby prohibited.

Section 2. The Congress and the States shall both have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3. This article shall have no power unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission to the States by the Congress.

### **Vocabulary**

To ratify—to confirm or pass something, such as an amendment

Intoxicating liquors—alcohol

Article—a section or item in a written document. Until enough states ratified this amendment, it was known as an article.

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What is your first reaction to the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment?
2. Do you think this amendment could be passed today? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think some Americans in 1918 might have wanted this amendment?

## Document A: Prohibition and Health (Modified)

Alcohol poisons and kills; Abstinence and Prohibition save lives and safeguard health.

Dr. S.S. Goldwater, formerly Health Commissioner of New York City, stated the decision of science, the final opinion of our nation after a hundred years of education upon the subject of alcohol.

“It is believed that less consumption of alcohol by the community would mean less tuberculosis, less poverty, less dependency, less pressure on our hospitals, asylums and jails.”

“Alcohol hurts the tone of the muscles and lessens the product of laborers; it worsens the skill and endurance of artists; it hurts memory, increases industrial accidents, causes diseases of the heart, liver, stomach and kidney, increases the death rate from pneumonia and lessens the body’s natural immunity to disease.”

Justice Harlan speaking for the United States Supreme Court, said:

“We cannot shut out of view the fact that public health and public safety may be harmed by the general use of alcohol.”

### **Vocabulary**

Abstinence: Stopping yourself from doing something (e.g., drinking)

Consumption: eating or drinking

*Source: Statement read at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the National Temperance Council, Washington D.C., September 20, 1920. The National Temperance Council was created in 1913 to work for Prohibition.*

## Document B: “Hooch Murder” Bill (Modified)

### ‘Hooch Murder’ Bill Drafted by Anderson

Anti-Saloon Head Aims to Reach Those Whose Drinks  
Cause Death.

William H. Anderson, State Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, announced in a statement yesterday that the organization would sponsor a measure at the upcoming State Legislature. The measure would be known as the “Hooch Murder” bill. It says a person can be tried for murder, and punished accordingly, if they are suspected of selling alcohol that resulted in the death of the person drinking it. Commenting on the measure, Mr. Anderson said:

“This bill is intended for whoever it may hit, but it is especially directed at the immoral foreigner, usually an alien, who had largely stopped killing with a knife from hate or with a gun for hire, and has gone into the preparation and thoughtless selling of poison for profit.”

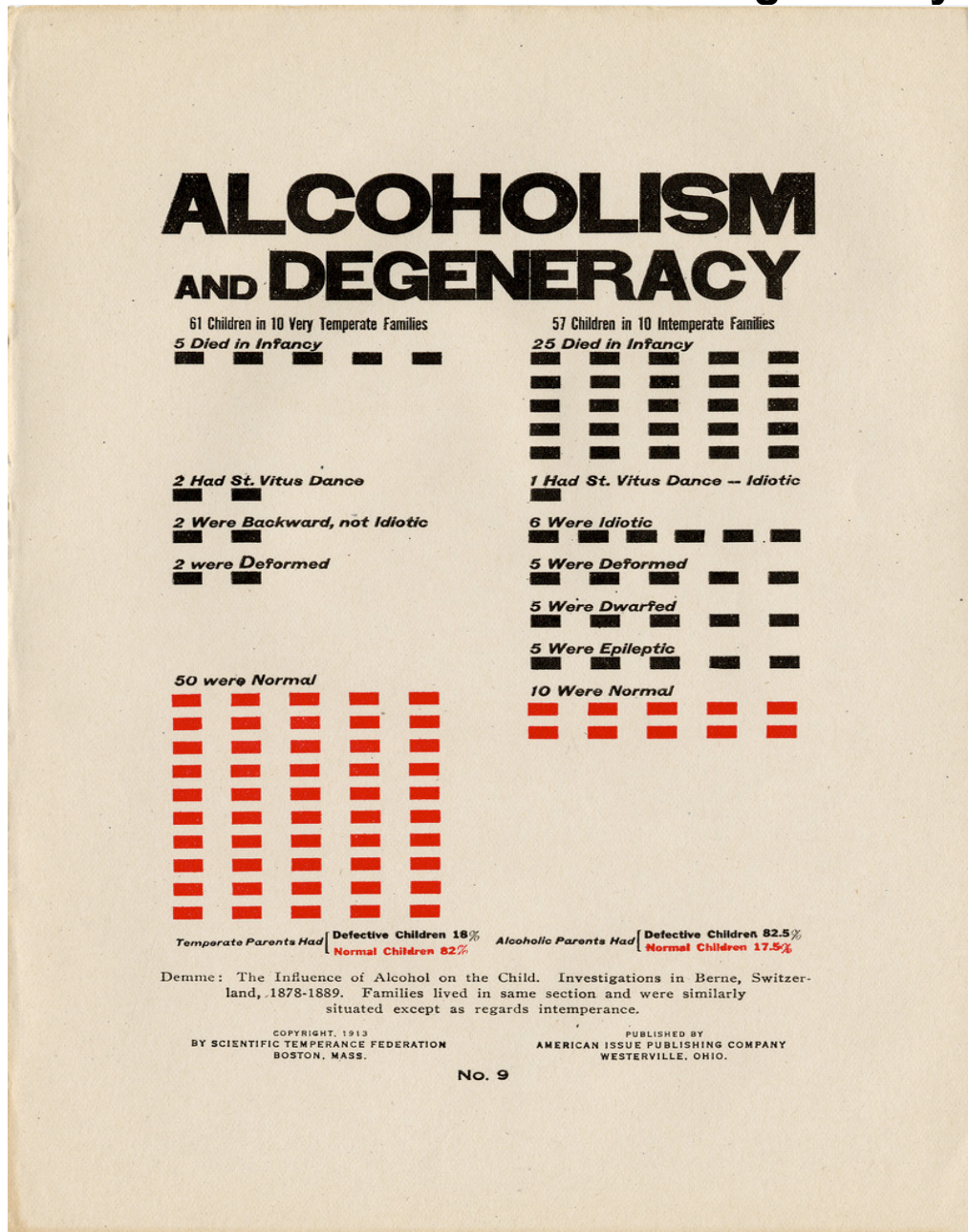
#### **Vocabulary**

Hooch: slang term for alcohol, commonly used in the 1920s to refer to illegal whiskey

Alien: a foreigner who is not a citizen

*Source*: “Hooch Murder Bill Drafted by Anderson,” *The New York Times*, November 14, 1922.

## Document C: "Alcoholism and Degeneracy"



### Vocabulary

Temperate: refraining from drinking alcohol

Intemperate: drinking alcohol

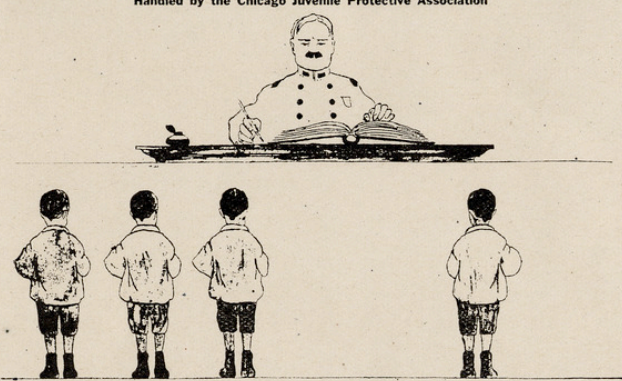
Degeneracy: being in decline; having qualities that are not normal or desirable

Source: Boston, MA and Westerville, Ohio: Scientific Temperance and American Issue Publishing Company, 1913.

## Document D: "Children in Misery"

**CHILDREN IN MISERY  
PARENTS' DRINK TO BLAME**  
IN AT LEAST  
**THREE CASES OUT OF EVERY FOUR**

Handled by the Chicago Juvenile Protective Association



75% DUE TO ALCOHOL

*The Child's Birthrights are* **To be Well Born  
To be Well Cared for  
To be Well Trained**

**DRINK SPOILS ALL THREE**

Statistics compiled by Gertrude H. Brittan, Supt. Chicago Juvenile Protective Assn., from 1,739 cases of Adult Delinquency, Jan. 1-June 30, 1910.

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WESTERVILLE OHIO

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Source: Boston, MA and Westerville, Ohio: Scientific Temperance Federation and American Issue Publishing Company, 1913.

## Guiding Questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Document A

1. (Sourcing) When was this document written? Was this before or after the passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment?

Why might the National Temperance Council have met in 1920 (*after* the passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment)? What do you predict they will say?

2. (Close reading) What does the National Temperance Council claim is caused by alcohol?
3. (Context) Do you find these claims convincing? Do you think people at the time found these claims convincing? Explain.

### Document B

1. (Sourcing) When was this document written? Was this before or after the passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment?
2. (Close reading) What is the “Hooch Murder Bill”?
3. (Context) Based on this document, who is the Anti-Saloon League blaming for the sale of alcohol during Prohibition? Why do you think they singled this group?



## Document C and D

1. (Sourcing) When were these posters made? Was that before or after the passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment?

Who published these posters? What was their perspective?

2. (Close reading) According to these posters, what are two reasons why Prohibition is a good idea?

3. (Close words) Look at the words used in Document C. These were considered “scientific” categories. What does that tell you about science at this time?

4. (Context) Using these posters, explain some of the beliefs about children that were common in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Do you think these beliefs are silly or reasonable? Explain.

People who supported Prohibition thought it would solve a lot of society’s problems. Use the documents to explain what problems they saw in society and why they thought Prohibition would solve these problems.