

# TEACHER'S OUTLINE

## LESSON 5: "Politics"/GRADES 9<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup>

### Key Concept: Bacon and Beans and Limousines

In 1931, during the Great Depression, Rogers gave a radio broadcast entitled "Bacon, Beans, and Limousines," which is considered his most famous speech. "Bacon, Beans, and Limousines" proved to be one of the few times Will Rogers did not incorporate much humor into his performance due to the gravity of the topic and the economic downturn in America during this trying time in American history.

Will Rogers was encouraged and approached to run for political office. Though he never did choose to be a politician, he did play a pivotal role in the political arena throughout his adult life. His satirical wit and political commentary often scolded political leaders in a playful and humorous manner. It wasn't until the economic downturn of the Depression that Rogers stepped away from his role as entertainer and into the role of humanitarian. During this trying episode in American history, Rogers displayed characteristics of leadership and commitment that rivaled any political figure of his time.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Analyze the historical significance of Will Rogers' famous speech, "Bacon, Beans, and Limousines"
2. Understand the importance of this speech in the career of Will Rogers as a political satirist versus a humanitarian
3. Recognize and articulate the impact the Great Depression had on the majority population during this trying time in American history
4. Compare and contrast contemporary satirists to Will Rogers as an agent of change who challenges political views and critiques policy makers and politicians through media
5. Make connections between Will Rogers' radio broadcast "Bacon and Beans and Limousines" and contemporary issues of economic crisis in America

### Video Clip:

Before completing the *Learning/Media Activity* or *Student Handouts* for this lesson, students should watch Chapter 5 of the documentary *Will Rogers & American Politics*. If time or resources do not allow, students should at a minimum, view the short video clip for Lesson 5. These clips can be viewed online by visiting [www.insearchofwillrogers.org](http://www.insearchofwillrogers.org), and clicking the "Learn About Will" tab in the main menu.

### Learning Activity: "The Economy During the Depression"

Using the supplied material in this lesson plan, students will be asked to estimate the price of various products during the Depression in 1930. Then, students will estimate the cost of those same items in 2017.  After the students have completed this portion of the activity worksheet, the instructor will provide the actual cost of the items using the answer key included in this lesson plan. As an instructor, you are encouraged to engage students in a conversation regarding their findings as well as what surprised them when comparing their estimates with the actual cost values. Then, students should complete the questions on the "Then and Now" worksheet, using the knowledge obtained from the activity. Because some of these questions are discussion based, instructors should grade students based upon their participation, thoughtfulness, and creativity in addition to their overall comprehension of the lesson material.

### Student Handouts:

Students will be challenged to demonstrate their comprehension of material covered in Lesson 5. Additionally, students will be given the opportunity to further explore and discuss various topics covered in the lesson material.

# THE ECONOMY DURING THE DEPRESSION

Estimate or provide your best guess of the cost of the listed items during the Depression and costs of those items today. The actual costs of these items will be given. Compare the difference in price.

	1930 - Average Income : \$114/month		2017 - Average Income : \$3,473/month	
	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
BACON	_____ /lb.		_____ /lb.	
BEANS	_____ /lb.		_____ /lb.	
HERSHEY'S BAR	_____ /each		_____ /each	
CARTON OF EGGS	_____ /2 Dozen		_____ /1 Dozen	
COCA-COLA	_____ /16 Oz.		_____ /16 Oz.	
GASOLINE	_____ /gallon		_____ /gallon	

# THEN & NOW

USING THE INFLATION/COST CHART YOU RECENTLY COMPLETED, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What do you believe caused the change in price of the items since the 1930s?
2. The item prices in the 1930s seem to be significantly lower. Why then were people unable to afford very much?
3. How were economic conditions in the Depression similar to the recent recession conditions in the U.S.?
4. The table in this exercise shows the average dollar income for a household has increased dramatically since the 1930s. Using this information along with the other data you have discovered, has the value of the U.S. dollar increased or decreased since the 1930s?

# THE ECONOMY DURING THE DEPRESSION

Estimate or provide your best guess of the cost of the listed items during the Depression and costs of those items today. The actual costs of these items will be given. Compare the difference in price.

	1930 - Average Income : \$114/month		2017 - Average Income : \$3,473/month	
	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
BACON	_____/lb.	<b>.11/lb.</b>	_____/lb.	<b>\$5.48/lb</b>
BEANS	_____/lb.	<b>.08/lb.</b>	_____/lb.	<b>\$1.79/lb</b>
HERSHEY'S BAR	_____/each	<b>.05/each</b>	_____/each	<b>1.79/each</b>
CARTON OF EGGS	_____/2 Dozen	<b>.25/2 Dozen</b>	_____/1 Dozen	<b>\$1.68/1 Dozen</b>
COCA-COLA	_____/16 Oz.	<b>.05/16 Oz.</b>	_____/16 Oz.	<b>\$1.77/16 Oz.</b>
GASOLINE	_____/gallon	<b>.10/gallon</b>	_____/gallon	<b>\$2.34/gallon</b>

# THEN & NOW

USING THE INFLATION/COST CHART YOU RECENTLY COMPLETED, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What do you believe caused the change in price of the items since the 1930s?

**Inflation. The value of the US dollar has decreased. Economic Changes have played a large role in this process as well.**

2. The item prices in the 1930s seem to be significantly lower. Why then were people unable to afford very much?

**With so few jobs, many people we're out of work and had to live on very little income. Many people couldn't even afford enough to feed their families.**

3. How were economic conditions in the Depression similar to the recent recession conditions in the U.S.?

**Higher unemployment. Less people spending money. Higher fuel cost. Stock market worries.**

4. The table in this exercise shows the average dollar income for a household has increased dramatically since the 1930s. Using this information along with the other data you have discovered, has the value of the U.S. dollar increased or decreased since the 1930s?

**The value of the US dollar has decreased.**

# STUDENT HANDOUT

LESSON 5: "POLITICS"  
9TH-12TH GRADE

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTENT REVIEW

1. The Great \_\_\_\_\_ was a time in history when most of America's population was suffering from great poverty and economic hardship.
2. What was the name of Will Rogers' famous radio broadcast given in 1931 that encouraged Americans to reach out a helping hand to their neighbors who were in need?
3. When giving this famous broadcast, Will Rogers commented that NBC stood for \_\_\_\_\_ about radio anymore.
4. Rogers said in his radio broadcast that "The only problem that confronts this country today is at least seven-million people are \_\_\_\_\_."
5. What did contemporary satirist and comedian Lewis Black say about Rogers' courage in speaking out in "Bacon and Beans and Limousines" broadcast?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the Great Depression and how did it impact Americans in the 1930s?
2. Why do you think Will Rogers' famous radio broadcast was titled "Bacon, Beans, and Limousines?"
3. Lewis Black described Will Rogers as showing courage by appearing on the same radio broadcast as President Herbert Hoover. Why do you believe Black would say this?
4. Who today can be compared to Will Rogers as a political satirist who utilizes his/her celebrity to voice opinions criticizing politicians. Explain your answer. (Must be someone besides Lewis Black.)

# STUDENT HANDOUT

LESSON 5: "POLITICS"  
9TH-12TH GRADE

# ANSWER KEY

## CONTENT REVIEW

1. The Great Depression was a time in history when most of America's population was suffering from great poverty and economic hardship.
2. What was the name of Will Rogers' famous radio broadcast given in 1931 that encouraged Americans to reach out a helping hand to their neighbors who were in need?

**Bacon and Beans and Limousines**

3. When giving this famous broadcast, Will Rogers commented that NBC stood for nobody cares about radio anymore.
4. Rogers said in his radio broadcast that "The only problem that confronts this country today is at least seven-million people are out of work."
5. What did contemporary satirist and comedian Lewis Black say about Rogers' courage in speaking out in "Bacon, Beans, and Limousines" broadcast?

**Lewis Black said that Will Rogers had a lot of courage to speak out, as well as to appear on the broadcast with President Hoover. Black also said that he didn't believe that was something you would likely see much of today.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the Great Depression and how did it impact Americans in the 1930s?

**TEACHER'S DISCRETION**

2. Why do you think Will Rogers' famous radio broadcast was titled "Bacon, Beans, and Limousines?"

**TEACHER'S DISCRETION**

3. Lewis Black described Will Rogers as showing courage by appearing on the same radio broadcast as President Herbert Hoover. Why do you believe Black would say this?

**TEACHER'S DISCRETION**

4. Who today can be compared to Will Rogers as a political satirist who utilizes his/her celebrity to voice opinions criticizing politicians. Explain your answer. (Must be someone besides Lewis Black.)

**TEACHER'S DISCRETION**