La Belle: “The Beautiful Era”
Interactive PowerPoint
Directions

• European society had reached a high point or Golden Age at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. This era is known by some historians as the La Belle Époque, meaning the Beautiful Era.

• During this activity, you will be reviewing 5 characteristics of the La Belle Époque. While you are reviewing these characteristics, by going through the Interactive PowerPoint, you will be required to answer the essential questions at the end in complete sentences.

• These questions and the 5 characteristics of the La Belle Époque are located on the following slides.
Essential Questions:

1) Why were Europeans optimistic about their culture during La Belle Époque?

2) How did their optimism reflect in their political, social, and economic actions?
Characteristics of La Belle Époque

1. High Standard of Living
2. Increased Population with a Growth of Cities & Urban Life
3. “Second” Industrial Revolution
4. New Imperialism
5. Faith in Science Alone
   - “Social Darwinism” → Herbert Spenser
   - Psychology → Sigmund Freud
Directions for Navigating Through the Interactive PowerPoint

• How to use this power point:
  
  • From the Home Page Click on these buttons to view each characteristic
  
  • Click on these symbols to navigate back and forth between the slides.
  
  • Click on these symbols to return to the Home Page. There will be these buttons at the beginning and end of each set of slides that describe one of the characteristics.
  
  • Record your answers on your La Belle Époque Magazine.
  • Now return home and click on Characteristic #1
  • If the sheet is blank, click the mouse
Home Page

Directions for Navigating Through the PowerPoint

- High Standard of Living
- Increased Population
- Second Industrial Revolution
- New Imperialism
- Faith in Science Alone
- Essential Questions
Characteristic 1: High Standard of Living

- The 19th Century was a time of tremendous social and economic flux (meaning change). The Industrial Revolution created a consumer economy and a huge middle class with the means of purchasing consumer goods. This new middle class felt that they were living better than ever before, they considered themselves to have a high standard of living. The new middle class wanted to practice appropriate manners, purchase fashionable homes, stylish clothing or the latest domestic gadgets, and engage in a variety of new leisure activities. The following slides will discuss several characteristics that made the people of Europe consider their culture to be so refined.
Pictures of people during the Victorian Era
High Standard of Living Links

- Etiquette
- The Victorian Home
- Redesigning Cities
- Mass Leisure
19th & Early 20th Century Etiquette

- The Industrial Revolution created a consumer economy and huge middle class with a means of purchasing consumer goods. This new middle class felt that they had arrived at a higher social plane of existence. The social norms of the farm (as most Europeans had been before the Industrial Revolution) would not do for the family of a man who had made his way in the new modern world. The new middle class wanted to use appropriate manners to go with their fashionable homes, stylish clothes, and latest gadgets.
The market became flooded with etiquette books, which lay out to people the polite rules of society. These rules were based on the norms of the wealthy. Europeans believed that these social rules were the best in the world and the sign of a modern and advanced society.
Basic Social Rules for Ladies

Always

• Graciously accept gentlemanly offers of assistance.
• Wear gloves on the street, at church and other formal occasions, except when eating or drinking.
• When crossing the street, one must lift her dress a bit above the ankle while holding the folds of her gown together in her right hand and drawing them toward the right. It was considered vulgar to raise the dress with both hands as it would show too much ankle, but was tolerated for a moment when the mud was very deep.
• When introduced to a man a lady never offers her hand, she merely bows politely and says, I am happy to make your acquaintance.
Basic Social Rules for Ladies

Never

• Refer to another adult by his or her first name in public.
• Grab your hoops [of your hoop skirts] or lift your skirts higher than is absolutely necessary to go up stairs.
• Lift your skirts up onto a chair or stool, etc.[to sit down].
• Sit with your legs crossed (except at the ankles if necessary for comfort or habit).
• Lift your skirts up onto the seat of your chair when sitting down (Wait for, or if necessary, ask for assistance when sitting down at a table or on a small light chair).
• Speak in a loud, coarse voice.
Basic Social Rules for Gentlemen

Demeanor (Meaning General Attitude or Behavior)

• A good manner is the best letter of recommendation among strangers. Civility, refinement and gentleness are passports to hearts and homes, while awkwardness, coarseness and gruffness are met with locked doors and closed hearts.

• Never scratch your head, pick your teeth, clean your nails, or worse of all, pick your nose in company; all these things are disgusting. Spit as little as possible and never upon the floor.

• If you are going into the presence of ladies, beware of onions, spirits and tobacco.

• It is a great thing to be able to walk like a gentleman that is, to get rid of that awkward, lounging, swinging gate of a clown and stop before you reach the affected and flippant step of the dandy. In short, nothing but being a gentleman can give you the air and step of one.
Basic Social Rules for Gentlemen

In the Presence of Ladies

• Civility is particularly due to all women; and, remember, that no provocation whatsoever can justify any man in not being civil to every woman; and the greatest man would justly be reckoned a brute if he were not civil to the meanest woman. It is due to their sex, and is the only protection they have against the superior strength of ours; not, even a little is allowable with women; and a man may, without weakness, tell a woman she is either handsomer or wiser than she is.

• When entering a crowded streetcar, a lady should leave the door open. It is quite permissible for her to appropriate the seat of the man who gets up close to it.

• A gentleman will assist a lady over a bad crossing, or from an omnibus or carriage, without waiting for the formality of an introduction. When the service is performed, he will raise his hat, bow and pass on.
High Standard of Living: The Victorian Home

• The Victorians considered the outdoors to be very healthy, most homes had front porches that became outdoor living rooms where they sipped glasses of lemonade.

• The Parlor (similar to a living room) was the center piece of the house adorned with floral carpets, paintings and family portraits on the wall.

• Most houses had outdoor gazebos and flower gardens.
Victorian House: The Parlor Room

High Standard of Living Links
Not only was housing transforming, but cities were transformed to accommodate expanding populations.

- Old defensive walls were torn down and the areas were converted into parks and boulevards.
- Sky rises were developed to accommodate the huge numbers of workers pouring into European cities.
- Cities also developed streetcar and commuter train lines to accommodate the working and middle classes that worked in the city but lived in suburban neighborhoods. Cities began to take on a modern appearance.
Mass Leisure

- The process of industrialization in the 19th century had an enormous impact on the lives of workers. New leisure hours created by the industrial system – evening hours after work, weekends, and later a week or two in the summer for vacation – gave the average middle class worker more free time. This time gave the opportunity to more Europeans to participate in new forms of leisure activities such as:
  - Music and dance halls
  - Trips to Art Museums
  - Fairs
  - Tourism (taking trips to new destination hotels/areas)
  - Team sports (primarily soccer and rugby)
    - Developed organized teams, written rules, officials, and stadiums

High Standard of Living Links
Impressionist Art

• During the La Belle Époque era a new style of art was developed, commonly called impressionism. Impressionism is characterized by the use of new subject matter and a way of looking at the world.
• Instead of rural subjects, preferred by earlier artists, Impressionists turned to modern subjects, paintings by upper-class Parisian society, landscapes, and leisure activities. The following slide is a piece of Impressionist work that shows middle class people relaxing in a Parisian restaurant.
Trademarks of Impressionism

• For impressionists, the subject of a painting was less important than the properties of color, light, and texture.
• Instead of traditional somber tones, these artists utilized bold colors.
• Above all, the Impressionists wanted to show the effects of natural light.
Characteristics of Impressionism

• Painted ordinary people
• Used colors that were brighter than nature
• Tried to capture the fleeting moment
• Used thick and choppy brush strokes for an unfinished quality
• Usually painted swiftly to catch the mood of the natural light
The Impact of Impressionism

• Prior to the La Belle Era, art was only commissioned by the wealthy who kept pieces of art in their homes, never on display to the public. During La Belle Époque, museums began to open in major metropolitan centers so that art was no longer just for the upper class. Art was also now being displayed in cafes. Everyone – including working and middle classes – could view art and be a critic. The Impressionist movement contributed to the higher standard of living in Western Europe.
Characteristic 2: Increased Population with the Growth of Cities and Urban Life

• The European population increased dramatically between 1850 and 1880, rising from 270 million to over 460 million by 1910.
• Not only was there an increase in the birth rate but after 1880 there was a noticeable decline in death rates.
• People were living longer than ever for several reasons:
  – medical discoveries
  – improvements in living conditions
  – increased agricultural productivity
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>68,500</td>
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Characteristic 3: “Second Industrial Revolution”

• The Second Industrial Revolution, which began in 1870, is characterized by the substitution of steel for iron, chemicals, electricity, and petroleum. These became the building blocks for many of the inventions we commonly use today. Replacing steel for iron made construction of lighter, smaller, and faster machines and engines as well as railways, ships and weapons.
The Second Industrial Revolution also brought many new inventions which helped people’s home lives including:
- Sewing machines
- Clocks
- Bicycles
- Electric lights
- Typewriters

These products rapidly created a new consumer class that became a crucial part of the modern economy.
Characteristic 4: “New” Imperialism

- Though colonial empires dated back hundreds of years, the rapid drive for colonies at the end of the nineteenth century (the late 1800s) led Europe to gain political control of most of Asia and Africa. Between 1880 and 1914, European nations scrambled to divide among themselves virtually the entire continents of Africa and Asia. Once European nations carved up Empires, they quickly set up colonial governments to rule them and systems to make them profitable.
Comparing African Imperialism from 1880-1914

PARTITION OF AFRICA
1885 - 1914

Colonial Powers
- British
- French
- German
- Portuguese
- Italian
- Belgian
- Spanish
- Independent

AFRICA
1880
Motives for New Imperialism

- Economic, political, and social motives accelerated the drive to take over land in all parts of the globe. The Industrial Revolution in particular provided European countries with a reason to add lands to their control. As European nations industrialized, they searched for new markets and raw materials to improve their economies.
Belief in Racial Superiority

• The race for colonies also grew out of a strong sense of national pride, known as nationalism. Europeans viewed an empire as a measure of national greatness.

• Many Europeans believed that they were better than other peoples. The belief that one race is superior to another is called racism. The attitude was a reflection of Social Darwinism, a social theory of the time, based on Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution.
Religious Motives for Imperialism

• The push for expansion also came from missionaries who worked to convert the peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands to Christianity. Many missionaries believed that European rule was the best way to end evil practices, such as the slave trade. They also wanted to "civilize," that is, to "Westernize," the peoples of foreign lands. This "duty" to "civilize" non-Europeans was referred to as the "white man's burden."
Social Darwinism

• The idea of Social Darwinism was developed by Herbert Spencer. Spencer used Charles Darwin’s ideas about evolution and natural selection and applied them to human societies. According to Spencer, those who were fittest for survival enjoyed wealth and success and were considered superior to others. According to this theory, non-Europeans were considered to be on a lower scale of cultural and physical development because they had not made the scientific and technological progress that Europeans had. Europeans believed that they had the right and duty to bring the results of their progress to other countries.
White Man’s Burden

• The term “white man’s burden” was coined in 1899 by Rudyard Kipling, an influential British author. Kipling wrote the poem below which describes the white man’s burden. He believed that Europeans were helping non-European peoples through imperialism. He stated:

“Take up the White Man’s Burden-
Send forth the best ye breed-
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives’ need.
To wait in the heavy harness,
On fluttered fold and wild-
Your new-caught, sullen peoples
Half-devil and half-child.”
How could, according to this ad, Pear’s Soap help the White Man’s Burden?
The Scramble for Colonies

• European governments quickly divided up Africa and Asia. The result was the huge colonial empires seen in the next slide, with Britain creating the largest. It was said that “the sun never set on the British Empire.”

• Using the corresponding slides, determine which European nations had the greatest colonial empires. Use this information to create a cause and effect chart on imperialism.
Colonial Empires
The Sun Never Sets on the British Empire
Characteristic 5: Faith in Science Alone

Since the Scientific Revolution (starting in the 1500s), many Europeans had turned away from the Church or religion as their primary source of understanding the world around them. In its place, Europeans began to rely on science and scientific research. During the La Belle Époque, many Europeans had faith only in science and were fascinated by the new scientific ideas and research that developed. During this era, Einstein published his theory of relativity, radiation was discovered, and new scientific fields, like psychology, were introduced. The following slides discuss the start of the field of psychology by Doctor Sigmund Freud. Use the example of Freud to consider the impact of the social impact of new scientific discoveries.
Sigmund Freud

- Freud was a physician who put forth a series of theories about human behavior. His ideas were published in the book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud’s ideas were first published in 1900. He purposely had the book published that year because he felt his scientific finds were a significant start to a new century.
- Please note that Freud’s work was a foundation for psychology, but some of his ideas have been refuted (meaning, considered to have errors in them).
Psychological determinism is the idea that many of our actions, thoughts, and feelings result from unconscious motivations, repressed experiences, fears, phobias (irrational or extreme fear), and forgotten childhood experiences.

Freud believed that within the human mind there were many conflicting thoughts and desires that were constantly battling one another. He believed these conflicts could be understood by interpreting the meaning of people’s dreams.
Sexuality and the Human Mind

• Sexuality, according to Freud, was an important key to understanding the unconscious workings of the mind. One of Freud’s most influential ideas concerned the instinctive competition between a child and a parent for the attention/affection of a parent of the opposite sex. Freud believed this was particularly strong between male children fighting for the attention of their mother.
Sexuality and the Human Mind

• Keep in mind that Freud was practicing psychology during a time when sexuality was not publically discussed, even between spouses. Women were told that sex was only for creating children. Any enjoyment of it was to betray their status as wives and mothers. Therefore, Freud’s discussions of sex as very radical for his time.
Psychoanalytic Techniques

• Freud believed that various techniques could help a person cope with internal conflicts/problems. These methods are called “psychoanalytic techniques.”

• **Dream Analysis** - Dreams were believed to be the “royal road to the unconscious.” So, Freud tried to uncover the meaning of his patients dreams to help them understand their internal conflict.

• **Drug Therapy** - Freud prescribed drugs (i.e. cocaine) to his patients as a medical treatment. Please note that after the drug-related death of one’s of Freud’s associates, he stopped prescribing cocaine.