

Lesson Plan 3 - Mass Media and the Effect of New Technologies



Essential Questions:

- What makes one person, especially an artist, famous or successful?
- How can a figure from a different time and place be relevant to our lives today?
- What are major similarities and differences between Arab culture and “western” culture?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Explain the effect radio and film had on advancing and sustaining Umm Kulthum’s career
- Examine the impact of new technology in the mid 1900s in both the Arab and western worlds, and compare it to the impact of new technologies today

Standards Alignment:

- Common Core Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies
 - RH 2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions
 - RH 7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- National Standards for Foreign Language Education
 - Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Materials:

- “Umm Kulthum and Radio” reading handout with questions
- “Compare and Contrast: Radio in 1930s America”

Procedure (suggested time):

Opening/Hook/Activate Prior Knowledge/Do Now: (7)

As students come in, they should write their answer in a journal or on other paper to the prompt you have written on the board:

What technology is most important to you in your life? What would your life be like without it?

After students have written for five minutes, ask volunteers to share. Then prompt students to think about how technology has helped musicians become famous. Ask them to name musicians who have gained fame through going viral (ex. M.I.A., Souljah Boy with “Crank Dat”). Explain that in this lesson, they will be exploring the technologies Umm Kulthum used to make her famous.

Brainstorm Activity: (5)

In pairs, have students brainstorm a list of as many 20th century technological innovations they can think of. (Ex. TV, radio, records, computer, etc.) Create a list on the board as pairs share out answers.

Reading and Analyzing: (20)

Either together, in pairs or individually, have students read and answer questions about the role that radio played in propelling Umm Kulthum’s career. (See handout “Umm Kulthum and Radio”). Students may answer the reflection questions in class, or later for homework.

Comparing and Contrasting: (10)

Now read a brief account of how radio was used during the 1930s in the United States by another famous person . Use the information to create a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the two people and their use of radio.

Closing: Personal connection and reflection (5)

Ask students to reflect on the following question: How can you use technology to help you pursue your career in life. How are your plans similar and different to how Umm Kulthum used the technology of her time?

Umm Kulthum and Radio

Excerpt from an interview with Umm Kulthum's biographer, ethnomusicologist Virginia Danielson.



Eyre: At this time, we start getting the first live radio concerts. How did that come about?

Danielson: Radio started to become popular in Cairo in 1920s through private radio stations that aficionados of technology started to build up. . . . it wasn't until 1934 when Marconi established what became a national radio station in Cairo, that the medium actually took off and became widely received. What one has to remember is that whether one is talking about commercial recordings, or radios, or later televisions, or cassette players, it wasn't necessary for an individual to buy one of the devices in order to have access to them. Because they appeared in coffee houses where anyone could come, and so if one could afford to buy a record, forget about the record player. One could take it to a coffeehouse and it would be played, or one could sit and drink coffee and listen to somebody else's record. The same thing happened with radio and later television, cassette players, and virtually every other medium. So that's one way in which technology became very widespread in the Middle East among all classes, because there was no question of having to own a gadget that played the thing. So radio became very, very popular very, very quickly.

But Umm Kulthum was a little suspicious of it, because for her entire life she preferred to sing in front of a live audience. And here she would be in a booth in a radio station, and this didn't really seem like fun, or it didn't seem to make a lot of sense. The music programmer for radio only got her to agree to perform by telling her that Abd al-Wahhab, her main competitor, had agreed and would be singing on Thursday nights, which was primetime in the Muslim world. So she immediately agreed that she would sing too, provided they could split Thursday nights, which they did. This went on for some time. Now typically, from 1934, when the radio station opened, to about '36, any live performer would be given about 20 minutes to perform, so it was a good chunk of time. Thursday nights were primetime, but the amount of time given for any given song was significant. One could sing one song and improvise for the amount of time that one had, or several songs, or whatever. But in 1936, when her contract was up, Umm Kulthum asked if she could broadcast entire concerts. Now she had by that time developed the habit of singing on Thursday nights.

One has to remember that Friday is the Muslim holiday, and so Thursday night would be the equivalent of Friday night in the United States, for example. People are willing to stay up late. They were willing to go out. They were willing to do all kinds of things they wouldn't do if tomorrow was a workday. So she would customarily sing from about 9:30 until about two or three in the morning on a Thursday night, and she would sing two or three songs, and improvise during that amount of time.

So, in 1936, she got the radio station to agree to broadcast these concerts live, and radio said, "Sure," without I think knowing exactly what their costs would be, and did so for a season. So basically, Umm Kulthum managed to get the entire Thursday night once a month devoted to her own artistry, and that remained the case until she died. It was a way of moving front and center culturally in a musical life of the Arab world as the radio station became stronger and stronger, which it did, particularly under the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasir in the fifties, and she became the international star that she was predominantly by that means.

Source: <http://www.afropop.org/multi/interview/ID/73/>

Questions:

Comprehension:

1. During what decade did radio become very popular in Egypt?
2. Why was Umm Kulthoum suspicious of radio?
3. What made her change her mind and begin performing for radio?

Critical Thinking:

1. How did radio effect Umm Kulthoum's career? How might her career have been different without it?
2. What can you learn about Umm Kuthoum's character and personality from the reading? Give two specific examples.
3. "Radio was accessible to people of all economic backgrounds." Explain this statement. Use evidence from the reading to support your answer.

Writing Extension:

What are the similarities and differences between how a musician could benefit from radio in the past and current technologies in the present? Compare how Umm Kulthoum used radio and film to how a current celebrity uses other technologies.

Compare and Contrast: American Radio in the 1930s

While Umm Kulthoum used radio to advance her career in Egypt, a famous person in the United States was also using radio to his advantage. Read the information below and use it to compare the use of radio in these two countries.

“While developing programs to help America emerge from the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt also needed to calm the fears and restore the confidence of Americans and to gain their support for the programs of the New Deal. One of the ways FDR chose to accomplish this was through the radio, the most direct means of access to the American people. During the 1930s almost every home had a radio, and families typically spent several hours a day gathered together, listening to their favorite programs. Roosevelt called his radio talks about issues of public concern “Fireside Chats.” Informal and relaxed, the talks made Americans feel as if President Roosevelt was talking directly to them. Roosevelt continued to use fireside chats throughout his presidency to address the fears and concerns of the American people as well as to inform them of the positions and actions taken by the U.S. government.”

Source: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/fdr-fireside/>



An American family listens around a large radio (1)



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) (2)

Source (1):

<http://edu.glogster.com/media/3/8/3/35/8033581.jpg>

Source (2):

http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/nyh/88.2/images/storm_fig01b.jpg

The Golden Age of Radio in the United States (1928-1950)

Improvements in radio mark an important milestone in four centuries of electronic discovery. Radio is now the centerpiece of the family living room and profoundly impacts American life during the hard times of The Great Depression and WWII. Eager home audiences lead to rapid growth and unprecedented influence for the advertising and entertainment industries.

At the peak of its popularity during these dark years, radio is the lifeblood of the country. Radio programs not only entertain and inform, they strengthen bonds between neighbors, communities and nations. Do you think the early inventors ever imagined the world of radio?

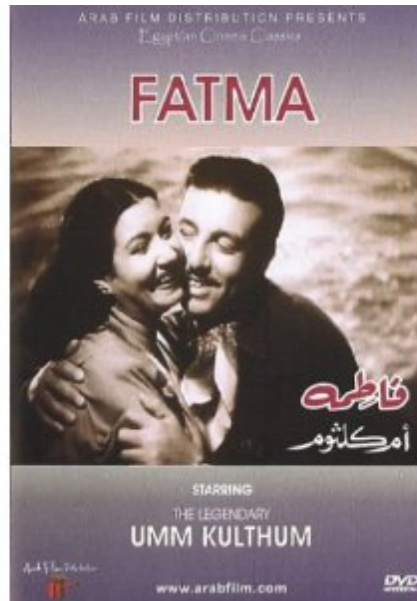
The information age is born!

- *In 1930, 12 million households across America have a radio. By 1939, 28 million own one.*
- *Stock market crash and depression put many start-up radio companies out of business. Only a few big ones remain.*
- *Radio is the centerpiece of the family living room, providing communal entertainment, culture and news.*
- *Radio has important social impact:*
 - *Mass media- quick relay of information to the masses*
 - *Advertising and marketing- Selling commercial airtime for profit.*
 - *Popular culture - increased public access to entertainment and events.*

Source: *“The Golden Age of Radio” American Museum of Radio and Electricity*
amre.us/golden_age

<p>DIRECTIONS: Create a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the use of radio by Umm Kulthum and Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s. Be sure to include information about the speaker/singer, the audience, and the historical context.</p>
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Supplementary Images



Source: http://imad_moustapha.blogs.com/.a/6a00d83453aade69e2014e5f89ea9f970c-pi