

the ARTICLE (for teachers)

The Last Decade

The decade has ended and the world now moves into the second decade of the twenty-first century.

An insatiable appetite for up-to-the-minute news fuels online media, resulting in fads churned out, adopted, and discarded at a breakneck pace. This is perhaps one reason that the English language still lacks a universally adopted term for the years between 2000 and 2009. No single idea has been picked up by enough people to go viral.

The last decade as a whole was quite bland. However, major exceptions include the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the war in the Middle East, and the devastated world economy. Yet not much of note has occurred which might adequately define the decade. For better or worse, the 90s had grunge music, the 80s had Reaganomics, and the 70s had disco. What has happened in the 2000s?

The lack of any particularly defining cultural moment also serves as a reason for the absence of a definite term. Some people call the decade the "aughties," which refers to zeros. Others call the decade the "zeroes" and the "2Ks." No single idea has stuck. Experts in the evolution of the English language, as well as other experts in pop culture, anticipate that as years pass, at least one term will gradually get adopted. Which term it will be, though, is anyone's guess.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface may be vocabulary unfamiliar to the students.

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Notes:

STEP ONE

Brainstorm: Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "decade" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

STEP TWO

Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- | | |
|----|--|
| a. | The last decade was fantastic! |
| b. | The next decade will be terrible! |
| c. | A new year encourages people to make changes in their lives. |
| d. | I believe in New Year's resolutions. |
| e. | I think 2010 will be a good year for me. |

STEP THREE

The Article: Read the article, and work with a partner to understand it. Lastly, summarize in your own words.

STEP FOUR

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | Did you like this article? |
| b. | Why do you think no term has been decided on yet? |
| c. | What major events happened in your life during the last decade? Please explain. |
| d. | Because there were few defining cultural moments, will this decade be forgotten? Why/not? |
| e. | What can you say about past decades, like the 90s, 80s, 70s, or even earlier? Please explain. |
| f. | What do you predict for the next ten years? |

STEP FIVE

Discuss: Discuss these major events of the last decade. Where were you at the time? What was your reaction? What has happened as a result since then? Be sure to support your answers.

9/11:

The War in Afghanistan and Iraq: