Unit 3 – WANTED! American Gangsters.

1- What’s our new topic? Notion? Why?

- I guess we will speak about gangsters.
- This Black and White image looks like it’s from comics or cartoon. The three men in the foreground / at the front look like stereotypical American mafia lords / bosses.
- Their faces is split between light and dark as if they were hiding something. It might illustrate the double / ambiguous personalities of gangsters.
- We like gangster stories and some of them are heroes in Hollywood films. But they do illegal stuff like drug trafficking or money laundering so they can’t be considered as heroes. We admire them because they break the law and look classy, smart and charismatic.
- Actually / In fact gangsters question our idea of a hero, they may be anti-heroes. Also in this image they are posing / standing in a street and the buildings can be seen in the background so we will study American gangsters and how they relate to the American Dream, how they show a different side of the myth of the self-made men and the American Dream.
- Notion: Myths & Heroes – American Dream / anti-heroes //
- Places and Forms of Power – mafia / streets / gangs > outlaws / counter-powers

2- Can you name any gangsters?

Mesrine and Escobar are international bandits whereas (tandis que ) Al Capone (Scarface) and John Dillinger are 1920s – 1930s gangsters who started organized crime waves (vagues de crime organisé) in Chicago and New York.

Do you think an outlaw can be a hero? Why?

Outlaws (hors-la-loi) don’t correspond to the definition of a hero as a perfect and brave person, someone who stands up for a cause like Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks. Yet (pourtant), they are admired because they break the law and are portrayed as heroes in fiction and Hollywood films. We sometimes prefer the baddie in the movies! Why?

3- List all the words you associate with the word ‘GANGSTER’. Create your gangster mind map!

- Drugs: la drogue
- drug dealing / drug trafficking: trafic de drogue
- money laundering: blanchiment d’argent
- to traffic: faire du trafic
- an outlaw: un hors la loi
- to break the law: enfreindre la loi
- a brothel: une maison close
- a speakeasy: un bar illégal
- to bootleg: faire du commerce d’alcool pendant la Prohibition
- A drug lord / a mafia boss / a mobster
- to sneak: se faufiler / se glisser
- to catch a criminal: attraper
- to get caught: se faire prendre
- cheap # expensive: cher / peu cher
- a hat / a gun / a rifle / a suit / a cigar
- charisma: le charisme
- appearance / look
- to look handsome : avoir l’air beau # to look like a criminal: ressembler à …
**Background information:**

- **Prohibition**: period of American History when drinking or selling alcohol was prohibited so people started to **make their own alcohol** and **bootleggers sold and hid** (to hide, hid, hidden : cacher ir.) bottles between their legs and boots in their **baggy** (large) **pants** (pantalons).

- **Rum-running, or bootlegging, is the illegal business of transporting** (**smuggling - contrebande**) alcoholic drinks where such transportation is **forbidden by (interdit par) law**.

  Smuggling is usually done **to break** taxation or prohibition laws **without getting caught. (sans se faire prendre)**.

  The term **rum-running** is more commonly applied to smuggling over **water**; **bootlegging** is applied to smuggling over **land**.

  It is believed that the term "boot-legging" originated during the **American Civil War**, when soldiers would **sneak** liquor into army camps by **concealing** pint bottles within their boots or beneath their trouser legs. The term "rum-running" most likely originated at the start of **Prohibition in the United States (1920–1933)**, when ships from Bimini in the western Bahamas transported cheap Caribbean rum to Florida **speakeasies**.

- **Capo di tutti capi** or **capo dei capi**, often referred to as the **Godfather** in English, is Italian for "**boss of all bosses**" or "boss of the bosses" (literally "head of all heads" or "head of the heads"). It is a phrase used mainly by the **media**, public and the **law enforcement** community to indicate a **supremely powerful crime boss in the Sicilian or American Mafia** who holds great influence over the whole organization.