

Mr. Henn
US History
US News Illustrated

The 1920's have been called "The Roaring Twenties," "The Jazz Age," "The Fabulous Decade," and "The Era of Wonderful Nonsense." It was all of these and more.

When the Great War ended in 1918, Americans were determined to forget about the horrors of war by enjoying themselves as much as possible. The United States turned its back on the rest of the world and began two decades of drifting. They hoped to find meaning in making fortunes, having fun and living out fantasies.

President Calvin Coolidge said in 1925: "The business of America is business." American businesses boomed during the 1920's. It was a decade devoted to the making and spending of money. The only goal was to make a profit. Business leaders became national heroes. But the seeds of selfishness planted during the 1920's would reap a bitter harvest during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Many large circulation magazines started publication in the 1920's. Some of the most popular magazines included Vogue, Life, New Yorker, and Time. These magazines printed illustrations to depict the changes in culture and lifestyle that were sweeping across America.

Assignment: *Pretend you are an illustrator working for the pretend magazine US News Illustrated. You have been assigned to draw the magazine covers for the next 8 issues of the magazine. Your editor has given you a brief description of each topic to be covered. Read each summary and draw a magazine cover to illustrate the topic.*

After you have completed each of the 11 magazine covers, complete the provided quiz.

This is worth TWO assignments.

Radio

The nation's first radio station, KDA in Pittsburgh, began broadcasting in 1920. By 1925, 30 million listeners were tuned in. Almost every family could afford a "wireless." They could enjoy music, sports, plays, news, and speeches in the privacy of their own homes. Two favorite comedies were Amos 'n Andy and Fibber McGee and Molly. By mid-decade, advertisers were sponsoring these programs to promote their products.

Motion Pictures

Films were silent with a piano player providing the background music. "Newsreels" were shown before the main feature. Almost every large city had a large, fancy theater called "dream palaces." Hollywood, California became the movie capital of the world due to its sunny weather. The most famous star was Charlie Chaplin as the "Little Tramp." The "talkies" began

Radio

Motion Pictures

in 1927 with the release of the Jazz Age, starring Al Jolson. One year later, Mickey Mouse made his first film called "Steamboat Willie."

Age of Heroes

Sports stars became heroes. Babe Ruth hit a record 60 home runs in 1927. Red Grange, "The Galloping Ghost of Illinois" scored 5 touchdowns in one game. In 1926, 120,000 fans paid \$2.5 million to watch heavyweight boxers Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney. Tennis stars Bill Tilden and Helen Willis and golfers Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen became sport legends. Johnny Weismuller set many swimming records and Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the English Channel. But the greatest hero of the age was Charles Lindbergh. In 1927, he became the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. He flew his plane, the Spirit of St. Louis, from New York to Paris in 33 and 1/2 hours.

Automobiles

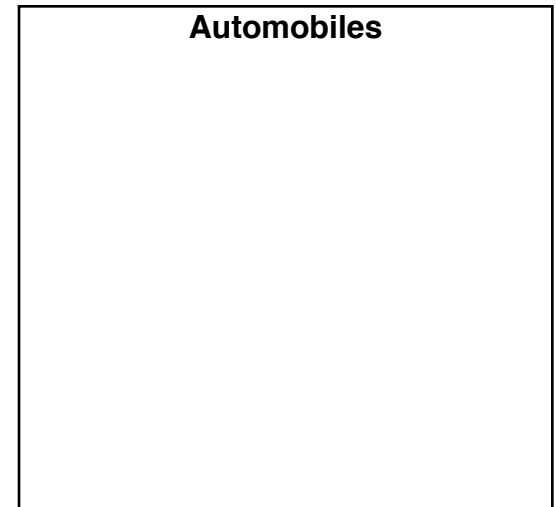
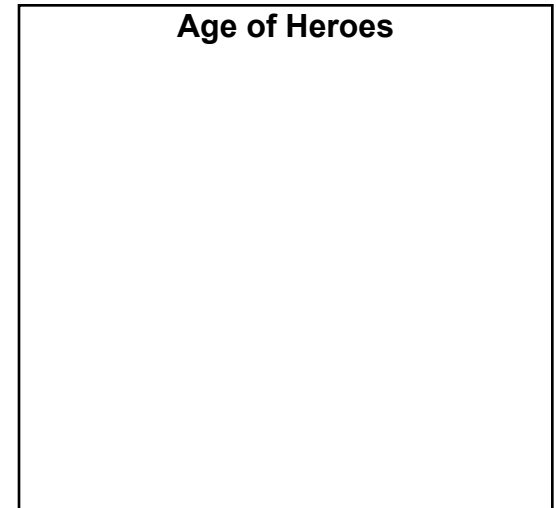
Henry Ford put America on wheels in 1908. He organized a mass production system using a moving assembly line. Each worker performed the same task all day long. An entire car could be built in two hours. The auto industry gave birth to new industries: service stations, garages, rubber, plate glass and tourism. Automobiles, called "tin lizzies," became the symbol of the 1920's. Cars gave people a sense of freedom and independence. They could go places they never had before. In 1925, the Ford Model T cost about \$300 and came in any color - as long as it was black.

Prohibition

The 18th Amendment took effect on January 16, 1920. Prohibition outlawed alcoholic drinks in the US. Gangsters, like Al Capone, made fortunes in "bootlegging" - supplying illegal alcohol. Some people made homemade alcohol called "bathtub gin." But thousands of otherwise honest citizens broke the law by visiting illegal taverns called "speakeasies." Chicago alone had 10,000 worth \$100 million a year. Competition between rival gangs over bootlegging often turned violent. The most famous incident, the St. Valentines Day Massacre, was planned by Al Capone to wipe out his rival, Bugs Moran. Prohibition ended in 1933 when the 21st Amendment was passed.

Flaming Youth

Many young people rebelled in the 20's. They were determined to dress and behave differently than their parents. Older, more conservative adults called them a "lost generation." Some young women, called "flappers," wore short hair, short skirts, loose-fitting blouses and makeup.



They smoked and drank in public and went on dates without chaperones. They listened to “jazz” music and danced the “Charleston.” Jazz became the most popular music of the 1920’s. It began among black musicians in New Orleans. The music was not written down, but improvised - made up as the band played. It grew out of the “blues” with a syncopated rhythm. Two of the most famous jazz musicians were Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong and pianist Jelly Roll Morton.

Appliances

Many new household appliances were introduced during the 1920’s. The vacuum cleaner, gas oven, electric refrigerator and washing machine became common in American homes. These items made routine chores faster and easier to do for American housewives. It also increased the amount of leisure time available to enjoy recreational activities. Many women went back to school to earn college degrees. The number of women in the work force increased. Buying on credit was first introduced in the 1920’s. The installment plan made it possible to “buy now, pay later.” Luxury items like automobiles, phonographs and radios gradually became “necessities.” Americans enjoyed a period of prosperity it had not experienced before.

Fads and Folly

Americans took part in many crazy contests and stunts during the 1920’s. Kissing contests, crossword puzzles, marathon dancing, goldfish swallowing and flagpole sitting were some of the fads sweeping across the country. The aim in marathon dancing was to keep dancing longer than other couples. One contest lasted for over 100 days. “Shipwreck” Kelly set a record for sitting atop a flagpole 50 feet off the ground for 23 days and 7 hours. A transcontinental footrace was run between Los Angeles to New York. It took 84 days for the winner to cross the finish line. Nonsense songs, silly sayings and raccoon coats were part of the folly. She was the “cat’s pajamas” with her “jazzbo” boyfriend riding in his Model T. “Hot diggety dog!”

Nativism Resurges

The depression of 1919 helped fuel the resurgence of nativism and racial tensions as many returning soldiers found it hard to obtain employment. At the forefront of the movement to restrict immigration was the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan targeted Catholics, Jews, immigrants, blacks, and other groups said to be “un-American”. One of the famous cases that reflected the prejudices and fears of the era against immigrants was the Sacco-Vanzetti Case. Police arrested two immigrants for robbery and murder of two employees of a shoe factory. The evidence against them was questionable,

Flaming Youth

Appliances

Fads and Folly

but the fact that the accused men were anarchists and foreigners led many to assume they were guilty. They were sentenced to death and executed in 1927.

Fundamentalism

While many people embraced the new consumerism, the changing role of women, and the relaxed ethics of the 20s, others feared that the country was losing its traditional values. They responded by joining a religious movement known as “fundamentalism”. They believed that the Bible was literally true and without error, including the idea of creationism – the belief that God created the world. Therefore they rejected Charles Darwin’s new theory of evolution, which said that human beings had developed from lower forms of life over the course of millions of years. They tried to outlaw any lessons in school that taught evolution and denied creationism. The Scopes “Monkey” Trial was broadcast over the radio and public opinion started to change and fundamentalists slowed in their commitment to activism.

Harlem Renaissance

During WWI and the 1920s, hundreds of thousands of blacks joined in the Great Migration from the rural south to the industrial cities in the north. As populations swelled in the cities, nightclubs began to emerge, none more prominently than in New York’s Harlem neighborhood. It was there that black artists expressed themselves through writing, art, and music. When New Orleans native Louis Armstrong moved to Chicago in 1922, he introduced an early form of Jazz that would spur the growth of many new musical talents. Duke Ellington led a small band that would play at a famous nightclub called “the Cotton Club”. The jazz movement would continue its growth seeing many black artists play the Cotton Club, like Bessie Smith and Benny Goodman, ironically to all white audiences.

Nativism Resurges

Fundamentalism

Harlem Renaissance

QUIZ

Part 1: Facts (.5 points each)

- _____ 1. The original name for the radio.
- _____ 2. He said, "The business of America is business."
- _____ 3. The most famous dance of the "Roaring Twenties."
- _____ 4. He developed the moving assembly line in mass production.
- _____ 5. Secret, illegal nightclubs where alcohol was served.
- _____ 6. She became the first woman to swim the English Channel.
- _____ 7. Another name for large, beautiful movie theaters in the 1920's.
- _____ 8. The world record holder for flagpole sitting during the 1920's.
- _____ 9. The credit system where consumers "buy now, pay later."
- _____ 10. The name given to homemade alcoholic beverages.
- _____ 11. The constitutional Amendment that made alcohol illegal in the
US.
- _____ 12. The name for young, unconventional women of the 1920's.
- _____ 13. The most famous baseball star of the "Jazz Age."
- _____ 14. The star of the talking picture "Steamboat Willie."
- _____ 15. A gangland slaying in Chicago ordered by Al Capone in 1929.
- _____ 16. A famous football star at the University of Illinois.
- _____ 17. The supplying of illegal alcoholic drinks by gangs in the 1920's.
- _____ 18. A slang expression for automobiles in the "Fabulous Decade."
- _____ 19. The plane used in the first successful flight across the Atlantic.
- _____ 20. The name given to the first sound pictures.
- _____ 21. The greatest hero in the age of heroes.
- _____ 22. The constitutional Amendment that made alcohol legal again.
- _____ 23. The most popular form of music of the "Era of Wonderful
Nonsense."
- _____ 24. The term used by older Americans to describe young people.
- _____ 25. The most famous comedian of silent movies.
- _____ 26. Famous trial about teaching evolution vs creationism in school.
- _____ 27. Groups that the KKK targeted in their movement.
- _____ 28. What was the religious movement known as in the twenties?
- _____ 29. Where did the black art movement (music, literature) emerge
during the 1920s?
- _____ 30. What did conservative adults call the young people of the 1920s?

PART 2 ON BACK

Part 2: Opinions: Respond thoughtfully on a separate piece of paper in complete sentences. (1 point each)

- 1. Would you like to have lived during the 1920's? Explain why or why not.**
- 2. Describe some of the changes in American culture and lifestyle which began in the 1920's and are still having an impact on our society today.**
- 3. Imagine that you are living during the 1920s, detail how the automobile has changed society using at least 3 ways.**
- 4. How do you think women's roles changed during the 1920s? Explain at least two reasons.**
- 5. How do you think radio promoted a "consumer culture."**
- 6. Could prohibition work today? Why or why not.**
- 7. When would you rather live: during the "Gilded Age" or during the "Roaring 20s?" Explain your choice.**
- 8. If you lived during the 1920s, what would you rather do: listen to the radio, go shopping, go to the movies, or go watch a sporting event? Explain your choice.**
- 9. What does "buy now, pay later" mean? How does this philosophy relate to the 1920s?**
- 10. Describe the mood of the 1920s using at least 3 adjectives. Explain why you chose these.**

