

High School U.S. History

The 1920s

Content Module

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Note: Arrows have been placed throughout the module to indicate areas where students should interact with the module.



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The Roaring Twenties

 ***As you read the following two paragraphs detailing characteristics of the era, highlight five significant major changes that defined the Roaring Twenties. Number them from 1 to 5.***

The Roaring Twenties decade is a study of opposites and contradictions. On one hand, the decade brought economic prosperity and new social norms to America. A spirit of modernism swept the nation. Automobiles became more affordable thanks to Henry Ford's new assembly line. The use of the airplane in World War I gave a boost to the aviation industry. Cultural changes occurred as formerly underrepresented groups found a voice. In 1920 women officially gained the right to vote and became increasingly independent. The African American community flourished during the Harlem Renaissance.

However, on the other hand, as the United States became more urban and industrial, tensions arose over the shift from traditional values and America's rural and agricultural lifestyle. A new wave of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe led to nativism. A growing fear of communism developed as a result of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Isolationism again became the American foreign policy as the nation retreated from the expansionist policies that had occurred at the turn of the century. Speakeasies, bootlegging and organized crime increased as a result of Prohibition. Modern scientific ideals came in conflict with traditional religious beliefs. The result was a decade that fundamentally changed the United States socially and economically.

 ***Rank the changes you have highlighted in the space below, with the change you feel is most important first:***

1.

2.

3.

4.

5

➔ As you view the collage of nine images from the 20s, select five images that represent the changes you read about in the previous paragraphs detailing characteristics of the decade. Label each picture with the change you see occurring.



➔ Circle the picture on the collage that is the most interesting to you. Answer the following questions about this picture.

1. What is the reason for your choice?

2. If you were in this picture, describe what you would be doing based on the characteristics of the 20s?

3. What would your life have been like before this picture was taken? How would your life be different after this picture?

The Roaring Twenties



As you review the terms and definitions of the Roaring Twenties era, highlight key words. Use the definition to create a symbol that will help you remember the term.

Vocabulary Term	Definition	Symbol
Great Migration	Movement of African Americans who lost their jobs in the South and followed the promise of jobs in the North	
Tin Pan Alley	Section of New York city where musicians and songwriters formed the beginnings of American music including blues, jazz, and ragtime	
Prohibition	Movement against the sale of alcohol that resulted in a disrespect for the law and a rise in organized crime	
Red Scare	Term for the fear of Communists, anarchists, and immigrants after the end of WWI; led to Palmer Raids and the order to capture and arrest anyone suspected of Communist or anarchist ideas	
Anarchists	Term used to describe individuals that believe that laws and government are not necessary	
Flappers	Term used to describe women who rejected traditional female clothing and behaviors; began to exercise their independence by smoking in public and wearing shorter dresses	

The Roaring Twenties



As you review the terms and definitions of the Roaring Twenties era, highlight key words. Use the definition to create a symbol that will help you remember the term.

Vocabulary Term	Definition	Symbol
Nativism	A dislike of foreigners; led to a rise in activity by the Ku Klux Klan and passage of laws to restrict immigration, especially from Southern and Eastern Europe	
Harlem Renaissance	Term referring to the development of African American art, literature, and music; key people in the movement included Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, and Zora Neale Hurston	
Return to Normalcy	Name for Warren Harding's plan that included reducing government intervention in the economy, high tariffs, and an isolationist foreign policy	
Social Darwinism	Belief that different human races competed for survival like plants and animals in the natural world	
Eugenics	A set of beliefs and practices with the goal to improve the genetic quality of a human population by excluding certain groups; led to a policy of using sterilization on over 64,000 Americans, specifically the mentally ill	
Teapot Dome	An area in Wyoming where the Secretary of the Interior leased Navy petroleum reserves to private oil companies at low rates, without any competitive bidding	

Checking Our Understanding



Look at the word groups below to see what concept or connection the terms have in common. Use that concept as the title for that group of terms and write the title in the box.

Title

Group 1
Great Migration
Red Scare
Nativism
Social Darwinism
Eugenics

Title

Group 2
Tin Pan Alley
Harlem Renaissance
Prohibition
Flappers

Title

Group 3
Teapot Dome
Return to Normalcy
Anarchist

Geographic Influences of the Great Migration

➔ **As you read the paragraphs complete each task below:**

From 1910 to 1930 approximately 2 million African Americans left the rural agricultural South to move to the North and Midwest for new opportunities and jobs. This became known as The Great Migration and provided a new labor force for the growing industries and factories. It also serves as an excellent example of the push-pull factors used to describe population shifts in geographic terms. A push factor is usually a negative event(s) that makes people want to leave an area for another in hopes of better opportunities. A pull factor is the positive event or characteristic that attracts people to move to a new place.

Push Factor Definition



Pull Factor Definition

The Migration Series by Jacob Lawrence

<https://lawrencemigration.phillipscollection.org/>

Example of a Push Factor During
this time period

Example of a Pull Factor During
this time period

The African Americans living in the rural, agricultural South were pushed out of that area by limited economic opportunities, discrimination and poverty, while the pull of new opportunities and jobs drew them to the urbanized, industrialized North. From 1910 to 1930 it is estimated that 2 million African Americans left the South for New York, Chicago, and other northern cities. While many created a new and better life for their families, they often faced racism and other social problems that come with big cities.

➔ **What impact did the Great Migration have on the 1920s?**

Geographic Influences of the Great Migration

→ Use the blank map of the United States and the information from your analysis of the push-pull factors of the Great Migration to illustrate your understanding of the effects of this event on society during the 20s.



Important People of the 1920s

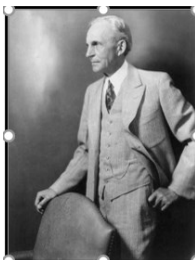
➔ **As you read the biographies of the people from the Roaring Twenties, highlight three to five words that are significant about the person.**



Warren G. Harding, born in Ohio in 1865, was elected to the U.S. Senate from Ohio in 1914. In 1920 the Republican Party nominated Harding as its candidate for President. He was elected the nation's 29th President but died in 1923 before completing his term. As a conservative Republican, his "return to normalcy" plan sought to return to isolationist policies in foreign affairs and decrease the role of government in the American economy, allowing business to flourish without intrusive government regulations. He protected American business by increasing tariffs on imported goods. His hands off (*laissez-faire*) approach to governing saw a reduction in government spending and a lower income tax. He also worked with Congress to reduce excessive taxes on corporations. Americans paid one-third less in taxes during his administration. Fortunately for Harding, he died before some notorious scandals involving members of his administration became public knowledge. The most significant of these was called the Teapot Dome Scandal. President Harding's Secretary of Labor leased government lands in Wyoming that were rich in oil deposits to business friends in return for personal payments or bribes. Even though President Harding was not directly tied to the bribes, his reputation was tarnished.



Clarence Darrow became one of the most critically acclaimed defense attorneys of our times, arguing some of the most famous trials in American history. He defended socialist Eugene V. Debs against charges of criminal conspiracy in the Pullman strikes against the railroad industry. Next, he defended teenagers Leopold and Loeb in one of the most famous murder trials in American history. His closing arguments against the death penalty were some of the strongest ever presented. Finally, he defended John Scopes for teaching evolution in his high school biology class in Tennessee. At the time, Tennessee had a statute on its books prohibiting the teaching of evolution. In the Scopes trial, Darrow challenged the fundamental religious beliefs of his opposing attorney, William Jennings Bryan. This battle between two of the most famous attorneys of the day attracted attention all across the nation. Dying in 1938, he still remains one of the most famous American trial lawyers and leading civil libertarians.



Born on a farm, **Henry Ford** showed more interest in mechanical things than in agricultural work. Early on he alternated from working as an apprentice on steam engines to working on his father's farm tools, while occasionally working in the fields. By 1891, he decided to become an engineer full time. Even though he was not the first to build a self-propelled vehicle with a gasoline engine, he became the most significant person in the development of the U.S. automobile industry, creating Ford Motor in 1903. In 1908, the Model-T was introduced as an affordable, reliable, and efficient auto for everyone. By 1918, half of the cars in the United States were Model-Ts. To make this possible and meet the demand, Ford introduced mass production by using standardized and interchangeable parts, a division of labor, and assembly lines. This totally revolutionized the industry and made his company the largest automobile manufacturer in the world during his lifetime.

Important People of the 1920s

➔ **As you read the biographies of the people from the Roaring Twenties, highlight three to five words that are significant about the person.**



Born in Jamaica, **Marcus Garvey** became the first to speak openly and publicly about African nationalism. He believed the only way African Americans were going to achieve equality was to return to Africa and build a great nation of their own. He began to work to achieve this by acquiring a ship line known as the Black Star Line. He hoped to use this ship line to transport African Americans to their new home. He often gave speeches on the street corners of Harlem expressing his views. As a result of his beliefs, he came under investigation by the BOI (Bureau of Investigation), which later became the FBI. The BOI believed he was a dangerous radical. Later, civil rights leaders Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., used his writings and speeches in their push for civil rights. Even though they disagreed about the way equality should be achieved, both men believed that Garvey's efforts to instill a sense of pride and dignity in African Americans was a model worth following. Today allusions to Garvey and his influence can be found in pop-culture musical genres such as hip-hop, blues, jazz, and reggae.



William Jennings Bryan was a noted orator and politician of the era. He began his political career by supporting such reforms as the income tax, prohibition, and women's suffrage. As a Democrat, he ran for the presidency in 1896, 1900, and 1908, losing all three elections. In the 1896 campaign, he attacked the use of the gold standard and protective tariffs in his famous "Cross of Gold" speech. He supported Woodrow Wilson in the election of 1912, and then served as Wilson's Secretary of State. He later resigned because of a disagreement over Wilson's aggressive stance against Germany. In 1925, he volunteered to prosecute biology teacher John Scopes for teaching evolution in Dayton, Tennessee's, public high school. Evolution contradicted Bryan's fundamental religious beliefs. Noted defense attorney Clarence Darrow defended Scopes. Bryan even testified in the trial as an expert on the Bible. During this testimony, Darrow was able to make the great orator appear tired and confused. In the end Scopes was convicted and fined \$100. Unfortunately, the stress of the trial and the subsequent criticism devastated Bryan. Within a week of the conclusion of the trial, he suffered a heart attack and died.



Charles A. Lindbergh, born in 1902, was the first pilot to complete a nonstop, solo transatlantic flight. In 1927, he flew from the United States to Paris aboard his plane, *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Newspapers nicknamed him "Lucky Lindy" and the "Lone Eagle." President Calvin Coolidge awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Flying Cross. In 1932, his son was kidnapped and held for ransom only to be discovered murdered several months later. To escape publicity, Lindbergh moved to Europe where he was invited by the French and German governments to visit their aircraft industries. In 1938, Hitler's German government awarded Lindbergh a German Medal of Honor. Nazi critics in the U.S. accused him of being a Nazi sympathizer. In 1939, Lindbergh and his family returned to the U.S. In 1944 he went to the Pacific as an advisor to the U.S. military and, as a civilian, flew several combat missions. After the war, President Eisenhower restored his military commission and appointed him a Brigadier General in the U.S. Air Force. Pan American Airways hired him as a consultant where he helped design the Boeing 747. In 1953 he published *The Spirit of St. Louis*, a memoir of his 1927 flight, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1954. He died in 1974.

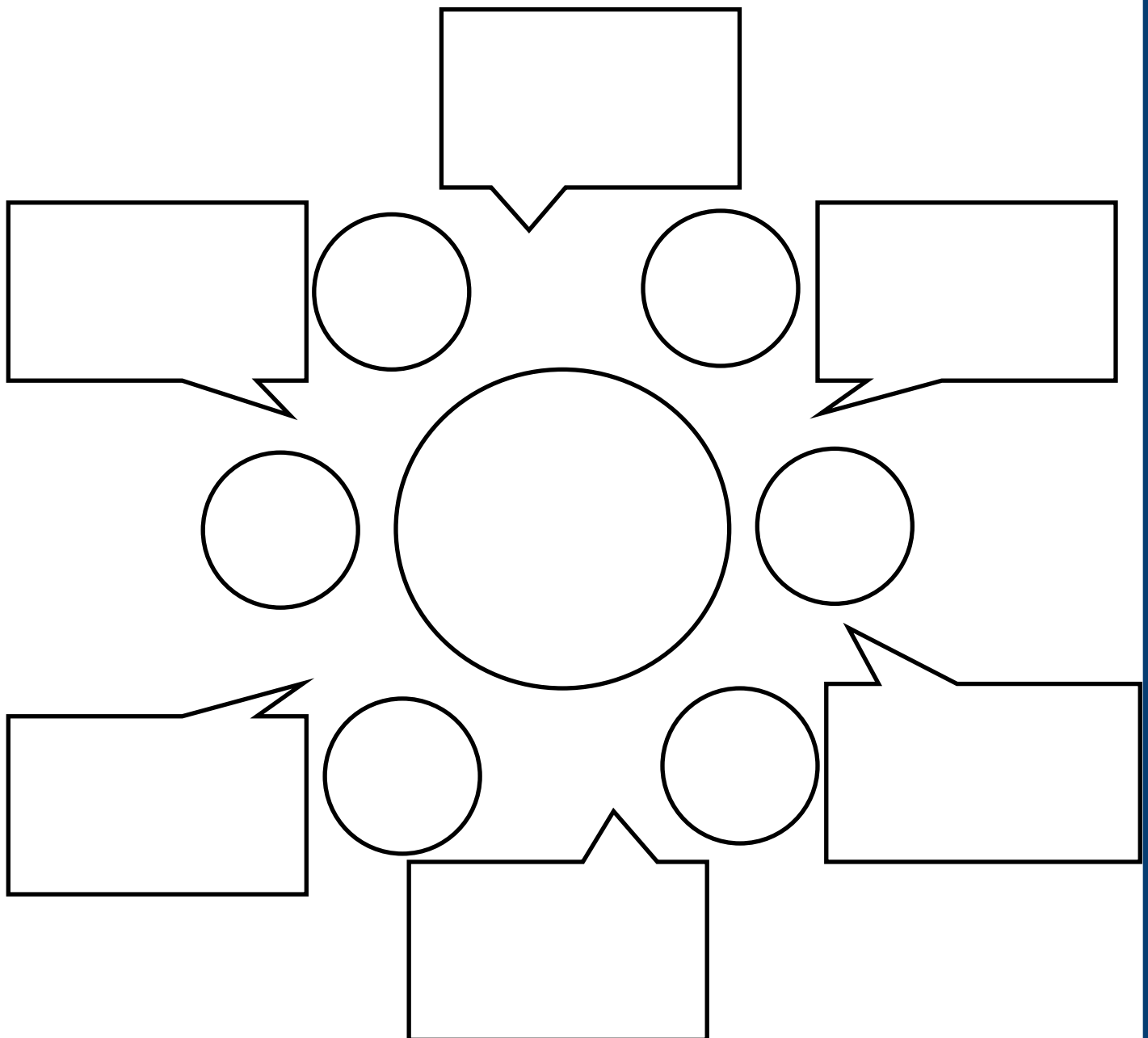
Roaring Twenties Dinner Party



After reading the biographical information about key people in the Roaring Twenties, imagine that you have invited the six to a formal dinner party. Use the diagram below to create the seating arrangement for a dinner party. Try to get the best possible conversation between the guests. Following the directions below to complete the activity:

1. Write the name of each guest in the seat to illustrate the seating arrangement.
2. Think of a topic these people might discuss with each other.
3. Write that topic with a brief explanation of the topic of conversation in the box between the two guests.

Example, if Henry Ford sat next to Charles Lindbergh, they might discuss which one made the most significant changes in transportation during the 20s.



A Look at the 20s Socially, Politically, Economically, and Culturally

Following the end of World War I, the nation was ready to resume the growth and prosperity it enjoyed before the United States entered the war. Politically the 20s were characterized by presidents William G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover continuing to support business, even though Harding's administration was plagued by scandal. Economic growth fueled by the continued industrialization of the nation created steady prosperity for big business and new opportunities for the workforce. Socially, the nation struggled to cope with changing values and beliefs that resulted from all the political and economic changes. Finally, the cultural experience captured in music and literature defined the decade for the future.



As you read each of the excerpts from the 1920s,

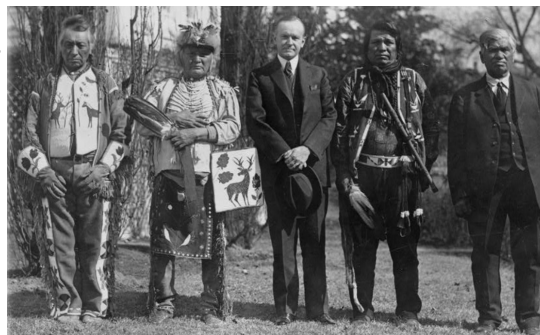
1. Highlight 3 key ideas in each.

2. Circle if the effect of this event is primarily political, economic, social, or cultural.

3. Write one sentence explaining your choice.

Passage of the American Indian Citizenship Act of 1924

The intent of the 1887 Dawes Act was to solve the problems of Native Americans by helping them assimilate into American culture. Prior to that, Native American policies moved them to reservations. The Dawes Act provided for the head of each Native American household to receive 160 acres of farmland, carved out of reservation land. It also stated that each person allotted land, and adopted the "habits of civilized life," would be given American citizenship. Finally, reservation land left over after these allotments would be available for sale to settlers. The law proved harmful to Native Americans. Many were not familiar with farming; others did not want to give up their traditional tribal life for American citizenship. Eventually, as a result of the sale of tribal lands, Native Americans lost about 90 million of the 140 million acres of land set aside for reservations. The 1924 American Indian Citizenship Act was passed to correct some of the problems created by the Dawes Act and to recognize the service of Native Americans who volunteered during World War I. The law granted full U.S. citizenship to Native Americans born in the U.S. after the law was passed. Native Americans did not have to relinquish their tribal land to accept this citizenship. Later, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 repealed the Dawes Act and ended the assimilation policy. This act attempted to address the damage by returning lands to tribal control and preserving Native American culture.



President Coolidge and Native Americans
Image from Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94508991/>

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Political

Economic

Social

Cultural



I circled the concept above because.....

A Look at the 20s Socially, Politically, Economically, and Culturally



As you read each of the excerpts from the 1920s,

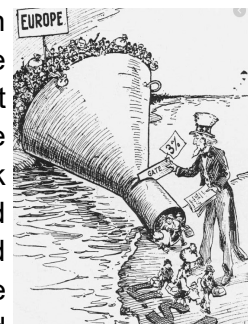
1. **Highlight 3 key ideas in each.**

2. **Circle if the effect of this event is primarily political, economic, social, or cultural.**

3. **Write one sentence explaining your choice.**

Passage of the National Origins Act of 1924

Prior to the 1880s, most immigrants arriving on the east coast came from Northern Europe. Few restrictions were placed on them because they were predominantly literate and adapted easily to American culture. In the 1880s, immigration on the east coast shifted when immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe came to the U.S. to escape hardships and persecution in their home country. These new immigrants did not speak English, came with little education or skills necessary in an industrialized economy, and were often viewed as socialists. This influx of new immigrants caused resentment and increased nativism. This situation put both social and economic pressure on the country. Beginning in 1921 and continuing in 1924 and 1929, Congress passed immigration quota acts that specified who could come into the United States. The acts were designed to control the number of immigrants coming from Southern and Eastern Europe. Immigrants coming from Northern Europe faced few restrictions, but immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe was severely restricted. The ethnic quota system remained in place until the 1965 Immigration Act replaced quotas with a preference system that focused on immigrants' skills and established family relationships with current U.S. residents.



1921 Political Cartoon

[https://
www.nps.gov/](https://www.nps.gov/)

Political Economic Social Cultural

I circled the concept above because.....

Red Scare

As a result of the Communist take-over in Russia, and the assassination of the Russian czar and his family, Americans feared that communist and socialist ideas would spread in the United States. When the Communist Labor Party formed in the United States in 1919, Americans responded to this fear, known as the "Red Scare," by taking action. When a series of bombs were set off in eight American cities by an Italian Anarchist, including one at the home of the Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, the fear deepened. Palmer reacted by conducting raids and arresting thousands of suspects thought to be foreign anarchists living in the United States who were planning to overthrow the U.S. government. Often these arrests occurred without a warrant or probable cause. Palmer's plan was to deport these suspects. While many of those arrested were released, several hundred were actually deported. This fear of Communists led to a fear of immigrants coming into the United States at this time, especially if they came from Eastern and Southern Europe. In 1927, two Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were arrested and tried for committing a murder during a robbery where the money was believed to be used for future anarchist revolts. Both were convicted and later executed for the crime, even though many believed the evidence presented in the trial did not rise to the level of "beyond a reasonable doubt" needed for a conviction.

Political Economic Social Cultural

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A Look at the 20s Socially, Politically, Economically, and Culturally



As you read each of the excerpts from the 1920s,

1. Highlight 3 key ideas in each.
2. Circle if the effect of this event is primarily political, economic, social, or cultural.
3. Write one sentence explaining your choice.

Ratification of the 18th Amendment

Technological innovations during the Gilded Age led to the growth of the brewing industry in the United States. With the increased volume and distribution of alcohol, retail establishments called saloons were created to sell to the public. In 1893, the Anti-Saloon League formed. This group focused on prohibition, the prevention by law of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. The Anti-Saloon League joined forces with the Women's Christian Temperance Union, led by Frances Willard, to eliminate the consumption of alcohol in the United States. Alarmed by the increased alcohol consumption and the behavior they saw as a result of drinking, they worked hard to get Congress to pass the 18th Amendment to the



United States Constitution. It was intended to protect people from "the evils of Confiscated alcohol--demon rum." Some historians have even called it "our noble experiment." Ratified Image from Library in 1919, the 18th Amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquor in the United States. The amendment had a huge impact during the 1920s. The government passed the Volstead Act to enforce the amendment. However, alcohol could be used for medicinal purposes, which was just one of the ways used to get around the amendment. Neither state nor federal authorities would commit enough resources to make the law stick. Corruption, the rise of organized crime, and problems with enforcement eventually led to its repeal. In fact, it is the only amendment added to the Constitution to be repealed by a subsequent amendment, which took place when the 21st Amendment was ratified in 1933.

Political Economic Social Cultural

I circled the concept above because.....

The Rise of Intolerance

As the United States navigated multiple changes in the first years of the 20th century, one change included the rise of intolerance. The Great Migration and increased immigration led to a rise in intolerance, including an increase in the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Formed after the Civil War, membership in the Klan had declined toward the end of the 19th and first of the 20th centuries. However, in the 20s membership grew after the Klan pledged to achieve white supremacy. Supporters of the Klan and nativism believed that white Protestant Americans were superior to others. These people also supported the idea of Social Darwinism, which applied the concept that only the strongest would survive in society. Therefore, the practice of eugenics or forced sterilization was utilized to produce superior genetic characteristics. Faced with increasing prejudice and intimidation, African American leader Marcus Garvey led a "Back to Africa" movement, believing African Americans would never achieve equality in the United States.

Political Economic Social Cultural

I circled the concept above because.....

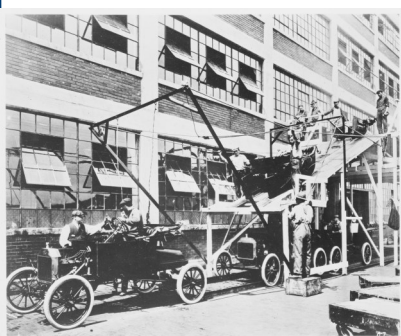
A Look at the 20s Socially, Politically, Economically, and Culturally



As you read each of the excerpts from the 1920s,

1. Highlight 3 key ideas in each.
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3. Write one sentence explaining your choice.

Changes in Transportation



While railroads changed the U.S. transportation industry in the 19th century, the automobile and airplane had the same effect in the early years of the 20th century. In 1908, Henry Ford began manufacturing the Model-T automobile. By 1913, he streamlined the process by introducing the first moving assembly line, which maximized production in the automotive industry. The assembly line allowed Ford to produce cars that were much more affordable. By 1927, the Ford Motor Company had produced 15 million Model-T cars. In addition to revolutionizing the automobile industry with the use of the assembly line, Henry Ford introduced the concept of the eight-hour workday. Reducing the workday for his employees allowed Ford to run three shifts of workers on his assembly lines. He also increased his workers' wages to \$5 per day—doubling the existing pay rate. Ford's increase in wages made it possible for his employees to purchase the cars they produced. The convenience of automobile transportation provided Americans with the ability to live and travel where they wanted. The automobile industry eventually fueled the growth of suburbs in the 1950s because residents had the means of traveling back into the city for work.

Ford Assembly Line; ca. 1914

Political Economic Social Cultural

I circled the concept above because.....

The beginnings of aviation took place on December 17, 1903, when Orville and Wilber Wright completed the first successful airplane flight, and again in 1908 with Glenn Curtiss's first publicly viewed flight. However the role of aviation changed in 1927 when Charles Lindbergh became a hero as the first person to successfully cross the Atlantic Ocean in a plane. By 1928, forty-eight airlines were in operation. World War I was the first time airplanes were used in war. During World War I, aircraft primarily flew reconnaissance missions or were used to dump out canisters of poison gases. Eventually some had machine guns attached. Advancements during and after the war made planes safer and more effective. Many WWI pilots served as leaders during World War II, bringing their knowledge of flight tactics to a new generation of pilots. This knowledge significantly changed the way World War II was fought in the air.



Charles A. Lindbergh
Loading Cargo, Lambert
Field,
St. Louis; 1925

Political Economic Social Cultural

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A Look at the 20s Socially, Politically, Economically, and Culturally



As you read each of the excerpts from the 1920s,

1. **Highlight 3 key ideas in each.**

2. **Circle if the effect of this event is primarily political, economic, social, or cultural.**

3. **Write one sentence explaining your choice.**

Traditionalism vs. Modernism

In the 1920s people with traditional values often clashed with those with the new and more modern values. In an effort to restore what many white Americans believed to be traditional values, there was a backlash against Charles Darwin's scientific theory of evolution. State legislatures got involved by prohibiting the teaching of Darwin's evolution in public schools. When John Scopes, a biology teacher in Tennessee, was arrested and tried for teaching evolution in his classroom, the clash between science and religion came to a head in the Scopes "Monkey Trial." This trial brought two of the nation's most prominent attorneys and orators together. William Jennings Bryan argued for the state and Clarence Darrow for the defense. The trial reached the entire nation due to the fact it was broadcast on national radio. Even though Clarence Darrow is thought to have bested Bryan in the trial, Scopes was convicted and fined \$100. However, this fine was later set aside in an appeal to a higher court.

Political Economic Social Cultural

I circled the concept above because.....

The role of women who now could vote, work outside the home, and go to college also characterized the changing picture of America. As a result, many women became more assertive and demonstrated their independence. "Flappers," as these women were called, wore shorter dresses, shorter hair, make-up, and were often seen out in public enjoying life.

Political Economic Social Cultural

I circled the concept above because.....

The arts also symbolized the changes occurring in the 20s. A section of New York City, called Tin Pan Alley, became a place where musicians and songwriters formed the beginnings of American jazz, blues, and ragtime. Harlem, a section of New York City where many African Americans settled after the Great Migration, was the center of the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem became a showcase of African American art, literature, and music. The poetry, novels, essays, and plays of Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Claude McKay symbolized what it was like to be African American in the United States by portraying the racial struggles they often faced. The Twenties also produced many of America's greatest novels. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* are but a few novels written in the 20s. They became classics and went on to define the Roaring Twenties.

Political Economic Social Cultural

I circled the concept above because.....

The 1920s Conclusion



Clarence Darrow (standing) and William Jennings Bryan (seated) at the 1925 Scopes Trial--Image from Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95513804/>

➔ *Select one of the following questions to answer using evidence from your study of the 1920s to support your answer.*

- 1. Is the U.S. more tolerant today than it was in the 1920s?*
- 2. Did the 1920s have a positive or a negative impact on the history of the United States?*