

America: A Nation of Contrasts,

1910-1929



Your exam is 1 hour long and you must answer all questions on your paper. Question 5 also marks your SPAG so you must check this over at the end.

Your exam paper will consist of the following:

1. Use source _ and your own knowledge to describe _____ (5 marks)
2. What was the purpose of source _ ? (8 marks)
3. Do the interpretations support the view that _____? (10 marks)
4. Which of the sources is more useful to an historian studying _____? (11 marks)
5. Read the interpretation provided below and answer the question which follows.

" _____ "

To what extent do you agree with this interpretation? (16 + 3 VCOP)

Free revision:

Visit the BBC Bitesize History revision page:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/tch_wjec/usa19101929/

Good luck!

America in Contrast knowledge check

Topic area	Red	Amber	Green
Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?			
America after WWI			
The Open Door immigration policy			
Restricting immigration, government legislation and xenophobia			
Fear of Anarchists			
The Red Scare and the Palmer Raids			
The Sacco and Vanzetti case			
Was America a country of religious and racial intolerance during this period?			
Religious fundamentalism			
The Bible Belt and the Monkey Trial			
The treatment of Native Americans			
Segregation and the Jim Crow laws			
The Ku Klux Klan and black reaction; migration			
Role of NAACP and UNIA			
Was the 1920s a decade of organised crime and corruption?			
Prohibition - WCTU, Anti-Saloon league and the 'Dry' campaign			
Effects of Prohibition - Speakeasy culture			
Organised crime and Al Capone			
St Valentine's Day Massacre			
Corruption			
President Harding, The 'Ohio Gang' and the Teapot Dome Scandal			
What were the causes of the economic boom experienced in the 1920s?			
America's economic position in 1910 - assets and natural resources			
Impact of the First World War			
Impact of hire purchase			
New industries and technologies			
Mass production and Laissez faire			
Individualism, protectionism and isolation			
What factors led to the end of prosperity in 1929?			
Overproduction and the impact on old industries			
Falling customer demands and effects of trade tariffs			
Over speculation of the stock market			
The Wall Street Crash - Panic selling and Black Thursday			
How did popular entertainment develop during this period?			
Silent movies			
Popularity of the cinema and movie stars			
Development of talkies			
Role of popular music - Jazz, the radio and gramophone			
Speakeasy culture			
How did the lifestyle and status of women change during this period?			
Role of women before WWI			
Impact of the First World War on women's roles			
Influence of Jazz culture			
Flappers, feminism and new fashions			
Opposition to the flapper lifestyle			

Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?

Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?

The Open Door

The purpose of the **Open Door** policy was to make immigration as easy as possible. There was a mixture of people living in America during this period.

- The Early Immigrants
- Native Americans
- Black Americans
- Eastern and southern Europeans
- Hispanics
- Asian people

Why did people want to come?

A combination of **push and pull** factors made people immigrate to the USA. The push factors made people want to leave their own countries, and the pull factors attracted them to the USA. For example:

- escaping from poverty in their own country
- escaping from political and economic persecution
- a promise of religious tolerance and a chance to practice their faith safely
- a plentiful supply of land and the hope of owning property
- creating a better life
- a spirit of adventure, going to a country of opportunity
- equal opportunity

Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island near New York

Most of the immigrants travelled by sea, and more than 70 per cent arrived on **Ellis Island** near New York. During the busiest periods, as many as 5,000 people a day arrived there. Most were young - in 1900 the average age was 24. The first view the immigrants saw as they arrived in America on their way to Ellis Island was the Statue of Liberty.

As soon as they arrived, everyone had to be processed in the Great Hall. Then they would have to undergo a series of medical tests. There was a particular emphasis on eye tests because of a disease called 'trachoma'. Ellis Island was given the name the Island of Tears after these eye tests. Anyone suffering from the disease would be kept on Ellis Island for days or perhaps even weeks.

Also, everyone was questioned about their work and financial situation, and were given literacy tests. The aim of the tests was to ensure that immigrants could work after they arrived and that they would not be a burden on society. All this took between three and five hours. Some had to wait longer to undertake more tests, while others who were more unlucky were refused entry and had to face the journey back home.



"Putting his foot down" Uncle Sam in 1899 demands Open Door while major powers plan to cut up China for themselves; Germany, Italy, England, Austria, Russia & France are represented by Wilhelm II, Umberto I, John Bull, Franz Joseph I (in rear) Uncle Sam, Nicholas II, and Emile Loubet. *Punch* Aug 23, 1899 by [J. S. Pughe](#)

The Red Scare

Following the Russian Revolution in 1917 Communism terrified Americans; a number of bombs were planted in 1919-21, one by an immigrant Italian. Immigrants were suspected of being communists and anarchists. Workers involved in strikes and trade unions were also accused of being communists. Americans believed that communism went against the ideas of the American Dream, which celebrated and encouraged capitalism and the pursuit of wealth.

The courts clamped down harshly on political crimes by immigrants at this time.



The case you **MUST** know about is the trial of **Sacco and Vanzetti** - two immigrants from Italy who were anarchists - who in 1920 were found guilty of armed robbery and murder (and executed in 1927), even though the defence produced 107 witnesses that they were elsewhere at the time, and in 1925 the actual murderer came forward and gave himself up ... the jury did not believe the defence witnesses because they were all Italian immigrants.

Immigrants

ALL Americans were immigrant families, of course, but until 1890 most immigrants were 'WASPs' (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) from the wealthier countries of Europe such as Britain, Germany and Sweden. After 1890, more immigrants started arriving from Eastern Europe and Asia.

Demand was growing, however, to slow down immigration and there followed a number of laws and quotas to restrict immigration:

a. 1917: Immigration Law

This required all immigrants to prove they could read English, banned all immigration from Asia, and charged an immigration fee of \$8.

b. 1921: Emergency Quota Act

This stated that the number of immigrants from 'the eastern hemisphere' could not be more than 3% of the number already in America in 1910. It set the maximum number of immigrants in any year at 357,000.

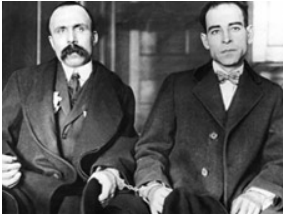
c. 1924: Reed-Johnson Act

Maximum number of immigrants in any year at 154,000. Quota from eastern hemisphere reduced to 2% of those already in America in 1890; the South and the East of Europe were thus only allowed to send 20,000 immigrants per year, and non-Europeans only 4,000.

Who were Sacco and Vanzetti?

Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian immigrants. The two men acknowledged that they were radicals and that they had avoided serving in the First World War. On Christmas Eve 1919 in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, an attempted armed-robbery took place. The perpetrators failed and fled from the site. A similar incident happened in the South Braintree area in April 1920. Five men got away with \$15,000 in a stolen car, killing two men including the postmaster.

In May 1920 Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested and accused of armed-robbery on a shoe factory, during which two people were killed. They had radical anti-government pamphlets in the car when they were arrested and they could not prove where they had been on the day of the murders. From the beginning, public opinion was against them because of their political ideas and because they were immigrants. They both had guns when they were arrested.



Key word: Anarchist

An Anarchist is somebody whose beliefs go against the Government or ruler of a country. For example, a Communist could be classes as an Anarchist in 1920's America. Sacco and Vanzetti were suspected Anarchists.

Although 61 witnesses said they had seen them, the defence had 107 witnesses alleging that they had seen them somewhere else when the crime was committed. During the court case in May 1921, Judge Webster Thayer was prejudiced against the two men. Although a man named Celestino Madeiros later admitted that he had committed the crime, Sacco and Vanzetti lost their appeal. In August 1927 they were both executed by electrocution in Charlestown prison.

The Palmer Raids

In 1919 Woodrow Wilson appointed A. Mitchell Palmer as his attorney general. Palmer recruited John Edgar Hoover as his special assistant and together they used the Espionage Act (1917) and the Sedition Act (1918) to launch a campaign against radicals and left-wing organizations.

Worried by the revolution that had taken place in Russia, Palmer became convinced that Communist agents were planning to overthrow the American government. His view was reinforced by the discovery of thirty-eight bombs sent to leading politicians and the Italian anarchist who blew himself up outside Palmer's Washington home. Palmer recruited John Edgar Hoover as his special assistant and together they used the Espionage Act (1917) and the Sedition Act (1918) to launch a campaign against radicals and left-wing organizations.

A. Mitchell Palmer claimed that Communist agents from Russia were planning to overthrow the American government. On 7th November, 1919, the second anniversary of the Russian Revolution, over 10,000 suspected communists and anarchists were arrested. Palmer and Hoover found no evidence of a proposed revolution but large number of these suspects were held without trial for a long time. The vast majority were eventually released but Emma Goldman and 247 other people, were deported to Russia.

On 2nd January, 1920, another 6,000 were arrested and held without trial. These raids took place in several cities and became known as the Palmer Raids. A. Mitchell Palmer and John Edgar Hoover found no evidence of a proposed revolution but large number of these suspects, many of them members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), continued to be held without trial. When Palmer announced that the communist revolution was likely to take place on 1st May, mass panic took place. In New York, five elected Socialists were expelled from the legislature.

When the May revolution failed to materialize, attitudes towards Palmer began to change and he was criticised for disregarding people's basic civil liberties. Some of his opponents claimed that Palmer had devised this Red Scare to help him become the Democratic presidential candidate in 1920.



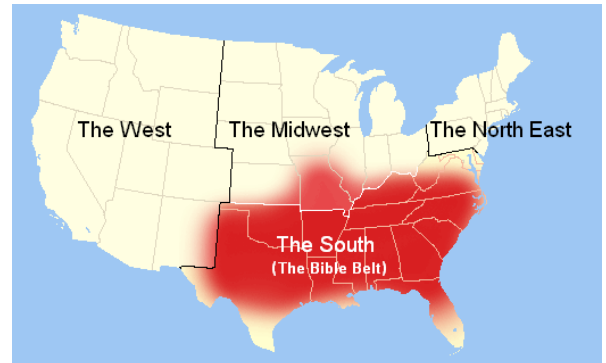
A Mitchell Palmer organised attacks against left wing organisations. Palmer spread rumours about the **Red Scare** saying that there were around 150,000 communists living in the country (0.1 per cent of the population). He stated that these communists were working on behalf of the government to spread communism. As many as 6,000 were arrested and held in a prison without a hearing and hundreds were deported. The Palmer Raids were a response to imaginary threats. Most immigrants were peaceful people. Eventually they were released and the Red Scare receded.

Was America a country of religious and racial intolerance during this period?

Religious Intolerance

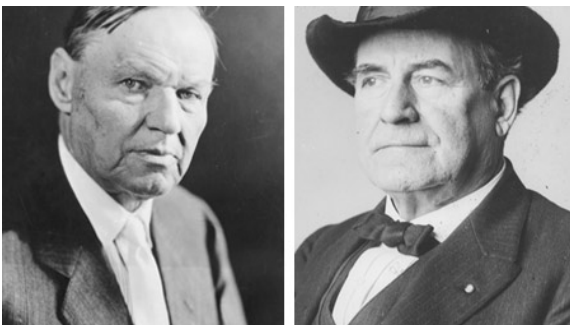
Religious fundamentalist: Someone who takes the Bible literally and holds extreme views on religion.

- The Southern States of America in the 1920s were known as the Bible Belt.
- They were traditionally religious and many people here did not like the changes brought about by the 'Jazz Age'
- They thought flappers (fashionable women who often drank and smoked) were immoral and didn't agree with the emphasis on sex, material goods and 'loose morals.'
- They passed laws banning wearing of 'indecent' bathing costumes and gambling on Sunday.



What was the 'Monkey Trial'?

- In 1925 the ideas of the Fundamentalists gained much publicity in America. A new law was passed in six states, including Tennessee, prohibiting the teaching of Charles Darwin's **evolution** ideas in schools because those ideas contradicted the story of the Creation in the Bible.
- Darwin said that humans had evolved from apes over millions of years, and when one Biology teacher ignored the new law and taught his pupils Darwin's ideas, he was taken to court.
- The Fundamentalists launched a fierce attack on Charles Darwin's ideas of evolution in his book *On the Origin of Species*. They strongly believed that God had created the world in six days.
- As a result, a major Biblical Conference organised a campaign against the teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution in American schools and especially the idea that men and monkeys had evolved from the same creature. The campaign succeeded in prohibiting the use of Darwin's books in schools in several states across the country.
- John Scopes and The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) from Dayton, Tennessee, were outraged by the new act. Scopes took the decision to teach his pupils about Darwin and evolution in his biology lessons in order to make a political point. He was arrested for breaking the law.
- The court case received a great deal of publicity in the media, on the radio and in newspapers. **Clarence Darrow** was Scopes' lawyer, while the lawyer for the Fundamentalists was **William Jennings Bryan**. The case was known informally as **The Monkey Trial**.



'The Monkey Trial' solicitors: Clarence Darrow (left) and William Jennings Bryan

Results of the Monkey Trial:

To many people living outside the Bible Belt, the ideas of the Fundamentalists seemed irrational.

John Scopes was found guilty of teaching the theory of evolution to his pupils and was fined \$100.

William Bryan died suddenly just a few days after winning the case for the Fundamentalists.

By 1929, six states in the Bible Belt, in the most southern parts of the country, had passed laws against teaching the theory of evolution. It was now possible that some children in America would grow up not knowing anything about this theory.

How were minorities treated in American society?



Throughout the 18th Century the USA imported slaves from Africa to work on the cotton plantations of the American South. Families were often torn apart and their basic freedoms were taken away from them. Treated as a form of property they were made to work extremely long hours in brutal conditions for no pay.

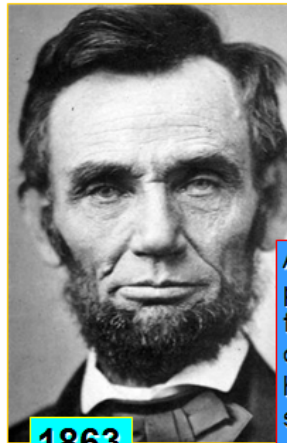
By the 1860s calls for the ending of slavery were growing louder. Britain had banned the 'peculiar' institution but the American South couldn't afford to let them go. When the anti-slavery Republican Party came into power in 1861 the South could take it no longer. They left the Union, formed the Confederacy and sparked the American Civil War.

1861



Jim Crow Laws

Jim Crow laws were state and local laws enforcing racial segregation in the Southern United States. From 1877 to 1965, it was the law that black and white people used separate facilities. The law stated that these facilities should be 'separate but equal'. Black people had to use separate rest rooms, drinking fountains, lunch counters and sit at the back of busses. The Jim Crow Laws legalised inequality as the black and white services were not equal. Black schools were further away, and black facilities were at a poorer standard than the white counterpart.



1863

During the Civil War President Abraham Lincoln decided that ending slavery would help the North win the war. He freed the slaves in the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863

After the war many black people looked forward to freedom but sadly they soon discovered that white America had enough tricks up their sleeves to 'keep them in their place.'

Migration to the north and west

Industrial development had created a demand for manufactured goods and jobs were created in the industrial cities of the north. As a result, black people from the south started to migrate north and west to look for work. Most of them moved to cities such as New York, Chicago and Detroit. The relationship between black and white people deteriorated as people moved into the cities of the north. Black areas developed within these cities which were called ghettos, such as Harlem in New York. This was one of the factors that sparked the increase in the membership of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

The treatment of Native Americans

During the late C19th, the US government introduced laws to force Native Americans to live like the white settlers.

- Forced to live on reservations, set aside for them, but the land was often of poor quality
- Poor housing and not enough food
- Children sent to boarding schools and taught the lifestyle of white pupils
- Not allowed to continue customs and traditions
- Men forced to cut their hair
- Women forbidden to paint their faces
- Tried to convert them to Christianity



1924 - Granted US Citizenship. Could vote and be protected by the US legal system BUT still faced segregation and discrimination

Treatment of Black Americans

The Ku Klux Klan was a white supremacist movement. They accepted only WASPs as 'true Americans' and launched a moral crusade to 'save the USA'. It used violence to intimidate black Americans as well as Jews, Catholics and Eastern and Southern Europeans, Asians and anyone else who deviated from their narrow mind-set.

- It had been in decline, but was revived after the release of the film *The Birth of Nation* in 1915. The film was set in the 1860s just after the Civil War and it glorified the Klan as defenders of decent American values against renegade black Americans and corrupt white businessmen. It was so popular it was even screened at the White House.
- Thousands of African Americans were murdered by lynchings in this period. Many reports describe appalling atrocities at which whole families, including young children, clapped and cheered.
- Membership of the Klan grew from 5000 in 1920 to 5 million in 1925 (its popularity declined after 1925 when it's Grand Wizard David Stephenson was convicted of a vicious, sexually motivated murder.)
- Faced with such intimidation, discrimination and poverty, many black Americans moved north. Through the 1920s the black American population of both Chicago and New York doubled.
- Klansmen who committed violence were often protected by police or judges who were themselves Klansmen. In addition white juries were reluctant to find people guilty of Klan activities.



2. The movement was revived in 1915 by William J Simmons. It grew quickly and by 1921 it had over 100,000 members. By the mid 1920s the movement was at its strongest with five million members.

3. Only WASPS could join the Klan.

4. The KKK discriminated against black people, Roman Catholics, Jews and Mexicans.

1. A racist group established by people who believed that white people were better and who wanted to see black people remaining slaves. It began in the southern states at the end of the American Civil War in 1865.

5. Members of the Klan killed black people by **hanging without trial** (lynch), taking the law into their own hands very often - 'Rope Law'.

10. The membership of the Klan reduced by 1928; they only had a few hundreds of thousands of members.

6. Sometimes the local police could not protect the victims and even took part in the killings.

9. In 1925 David Stephenson, Grand Dragon of Klan Indiana, was found guilty of causing serious injuries to a woman on a train in Chicago.

8. It was difficult for the government to change the attitudes of the white people in the south in case it lost votes.

7. Those responsible were not brought before court very often, and Klan members knew that their friends in the courts would not find them guilty.

KKK



**Who were the KKK?
What did they do?**

The Birth of a Nation

Birth of a Nation, based on Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansman*, tells the turbulent story of American history in the 1860s, as it followed the fictional lives of two families from the North and the South. Throughout its three hours, African Americans are portrayed as brutish, lazy, morally degenerate, and dangerous. In the film's climax, the Ku Klux Klan rises up to save the South from the Reconstruction Era-prominence of African Americans in Southern public life.

Riots and protests broke out at screenings of *Birth of a Nation* in a number of Northern cities, and the recently formed National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) embarked on a major campaign to have the film banned. It eventually was censored in several cities, and Griffith agreed to change or cut out some of the film's especially offensive scenes.

Nevertheless, millions of people happily paid to witness the spectacle of *Birth of a Nation*, which featured a cast of more 10,000 people and a dramatic story line far more sophisticated than anything released to that date. For all the gross historical inaccuracies, certain scenes, such as meetings of Congress, Civil War battles, and the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, were meticulously recreated, lending the film an air of legitimacy that made it so effective as propaganda.

The Ku Klux Klan, suppressed by the federal government in the 1870s, was refounded in Georgia in December 1915 by William J. Simmons. In addition to being anti-black, the new Klan was anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant, and by the early 1920s it had spread throughout the North as well as the South. At the peak of its strength in 1924, membership in the KKK is estimated to have been as high as three million. There is no doubt that *Birth of a Nation* played no small part in winning wide public acceptance for an organization that was originally founded as an anti-black and anti-federal terrorist group.



The Ku Klux Klan and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The response of the black people

By 1900 a former slave, **Booker T. Washington**, was fighting the cause of the black people. He opened the **Tuskegee Institute** in Alabama to provide education and training for black people, believing that they had to make economic progress before making political progress.

A different view was taken by two organisations that were trying to highlight the way in which black Americans were being unfairly treated:

- **The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP)**, established in 1909 by **William du Bois**. The NAACP focussed on opposing racism and segregation through litigation and holding non-violent activities, such as marches and protests.
- **The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)**, established in 1914 by **Marcus Garvey**. UNIA members were more militant. Garvey encouraged black people to establish their own businesses and to employ black people only. He also encouraged them to return to their homeland, Africa. "Black is beautiful" was his most famous slogan.

William du Bois and Marcus Garvey both tried to improve conditions for black people, but their methods were so different that they became sworn enemies.

NAACP, which stands for National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, campaigned for the rights of coloured people. The Jim Crow laws had ushered in an era of two tier rights - black people had inferior access to public services like education and transport. And because they didn't have the right to vote, it was difficult to get any official support. On the other hand, the KKK had many members who had positions of power and authority. It was difficult for the government to try to change the attitudes of white people in the south in case it lost votes. KKK members would murder black people by lynching them. Those responsible were not brought before court very often, and Klan members knew that if they were arrested their friends in the courts would not find them guilty. But in 1925 David Stephenson, Grand Dragon of Klan Indiana, was found guilty of causing serious injuries to a woman on a train in Chicago. By 1928 the membership of the Klan was on the decline.

NAACP

- Objected to the persecution under the Jim Crow laws and protested against segregation.
- Held non-violent activities, including protesting and arranging marches.
- In 1920 they chose Atlanta as the venue for their conference, in order to make a stand against segregation in the state.
- They protected the rights of black people using the law and law courts, helping to fund and fight legal cases.
- Established by William Du Bois.

KKK

- The police were associated with their actions so it was not possible to punish perpetrators.
- Populated by WASPs - white Anglo-Saxon protestants.
- The movement was revived in 1915 by William J Simmons. It grew quickly and by 1921 it had over 100,000 members. By the mid 1920s the movement was at its strongest with five million members.
- Discriminated against Roman Catholics, Jews and Mexicans.
- Were known for hanging without trial (lynch), taking the law into their own hands - 'Rope Law'.

MARCUS GARVEY

He founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914 and its first congress in New York in 1920 attracted 25,000 people. This gained its own newspaper The Negro World and had 1,100 branches in 40 countries, although it was based in the USA. He combined politics with business, e.g. Black Star Line, African Communities League and the Negro Factories Corporation. In the end he was caught out for postal fraud, given a 5 year sentence and jailed. He was released in 1927 and deported by order of Calvin Coolidge. He went to England and died in 1940 after a stint in Jamaican politics.

Was the 1920s a decade of organised crime and corruption?

Prohibition

What does prohibition mean?

Prohibition was introduced to the USA in January 1920 - it banned the sale and production of alcohol.

What were the names of the two main movements that wanted prohibition?

The Anti-Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

What were the illegal bars and illegal drinks called?

Speakeasies and moonshine.

In what areas were the temperance (anti-alcohol) movements strongest?

In rural areas. The movement also had a great deal of support among women.

What were supporters of prohibition known as?

Dries.

What arguments did prohibition supporters use against alcohol?

- 3000 infants a year were smothered in bed by drunk parents.
- WWI - drinkers were accused of being unpatriotic cowards. Most big breweries were run by German immigrants who were portrayed as the enemy.
- Dries claimed that drink caused lawlessness.
- Drinking was said to encourage the spread of communism after the Russian revolution.
- Saloons were seen as dens of vice that destroyed family life.



Success argument - ALE

Alcohol destroyed: in 1929, 50 million litres of illegal alcohol were discovered and destroyed.

Legacy: the actual consumption of alcohol fell, not just during prohibition, but for many years after - did not reach pre-1914 levels until 1971.

Einstein and Smith (Izzy and Moe): became famous as examples of the high standards police SHOULD achieve.

Failure Argument - DAMAGE

Drinking continued: impossible to enforce (not enough police - only 4000 agents, many of whom were sacked for taking bribes).

Available: the liquor trade just 'went underground'. **speakeasies** (illegal bars), **moonshine** (illegally-made alcohol), **bootlegging** (smuggling alcohol to sell).

Made criminals of ordinary people

Adverse effects: moonshine was poor quality and sometimes killed people. 'Jackass brandy' caused internal bleeding, 'Soda Pop Moon' contained poisonous alcohol.

Gangsterism flourished running the illegal trade: It became hugely profitable, and led to a growth of violence, protection rackets etc. associated with the illegal trade. The general flouting brought the rule of law in general into disrepute as police 'turned a blind eye'. Corruption grew due to famous gangsters like Al Capone.

End: in 1933 the **21st Amendment** abolished Prohibition (= 'proved' that it failed).

Organised crime and corruption

Source H:

Capone controlled the mayor 'Big Bill' Thompson and senior police officers, and fixed local elections. In Chicago, he controlled speakeasies, bookmakers' joints, gambling houses, brothels, horse and race tracks, nightclubs, distilleries and breweries. He drove around in a bullet proof Cadillac, which always contained his bodyguards who were armed with machine guns. Capone had more than 200 of his rivals killed in the years 1925 – 1929. There were no convictions for any of these murders.

From a WJEC school textbook (2010)



Born in 1899 in Brooklyn, New York, to poor immigrant parents, Al Capone went on to become the most infamous gangster in American history. In 1920 during the height of Prohibition, Capone's multi-million dollar Chicago operation in bootlegging, prostitution and gambling dominated the organized crime scene. Capone was responsible for many brutal acts of violence, mainly against other gangsters. The most famous of these was the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929, in which he ordered the assassination of seven rivals. Capone was never indicted for his racketeering but was finally brought to justice for income-tax evasion in 1931. After serving six-and-a-half years, Capone was released. He died in 1947 in Miami. Capone's life captured the public imagination, and his gangster persona has been immortalized in the many movies and books inspired by his exploits.

Criminals like Al Capone, Bonnie and Clyde and John Dillinger were headliners of the era.

Jobs were scarce and people needed to provide for their families, gangsterism was dangerous but provided an easy way to make money. When the American government passed the Eighteenth amendments outlawing alcohol, people who enjoyed a drink became criminal for doing so.

It was organized crime who supplied the booze. In January of 1920 the American government banned the sale and supply of alcohol, the government thought that this would curb crime and violence, prohibition did not achieve it's goals, leading more toward higher crime rates and excessive violence.

Alcohol was seen as the devils advocate and banning the substance would help improve the quality of American lives. It caused an explosive growth in crime with more than double the amount of illegal bars and saloons operating than before prohibition.

The government set up the "Federal Prohibition Bureau" to police prohibition, this did not deter people and organized crime continued to be the main supplier of booze.

With a large coastline it was almost impossible to police with only five percent of alcohol ever being confiscated.



Bribing government officials was common, and people were increasingly crafty in the way they would hide alcohol such as hollowed out canes, false books and hip flasks. Violence on the streets increased as did unemployment.

The closure of all alcohol related industries was the main reason behind increased unemployment, hard working Americans suddenly were drinking a banned substance.

Police resources used to fight other crime were diverted to the prevention of alcohol consumption. The Criminal gangs that supplied the booze were ruthless with over inflated prices, often fighting each other for control of the trade. A whole black market was created around alcohol.

The quality of alcohol was poor and many people became sick, deaths from alcohol poisoning had risen 400%, people will argue that alcohol was less easily obtainable before prohibition since the bootlegging industry was so immense, you could purchase alcohol on almost any street in America, many home products were of poor quality however people were very inventive about the making of home alcohol.

Although a great idea in concept, prohibition was ultimately a failure; the public grew less respectful of the law. Drink driving increased and public drunkenness also increased.

After thirteen long years the government finally saw that prohibition was not working, it had infact created more of a problem than it solved, finally the government abolished the prohibition laws.

Crime decreased and the criminal element was taken out of the industry, organized crime in the 1920's flourished in America because of prohibition and it did not stop there, after the prohibition era they simply went on to other markets with their new found wealth.

Had prohibition never happened organized crime syndicates may not have become so wealthy or powerful.

St Valentines Day Massacre

Gang warfare ruled the streets of Chicago during the late 1920s, as chief gangster Al Capone sought to consolidate control by eliminating his rivals in the illegal trades of bootlegging, gambling and prostitution. This rash of gang violence reached its bloody climax in a garage on the city's North Side on February 14, 1929, when seven men associated with the Irish gangster George "Bugs" Moran, one of Capone's longtime enemies, were shot to death by several men dressed as policemen. The St. Valentine's Day Massacre, as it was known, was never officially linked to Capone, but he was generally considered to have been responsible for the murders.

Corruption: President Harding and the Tea Pot Dome Scandal

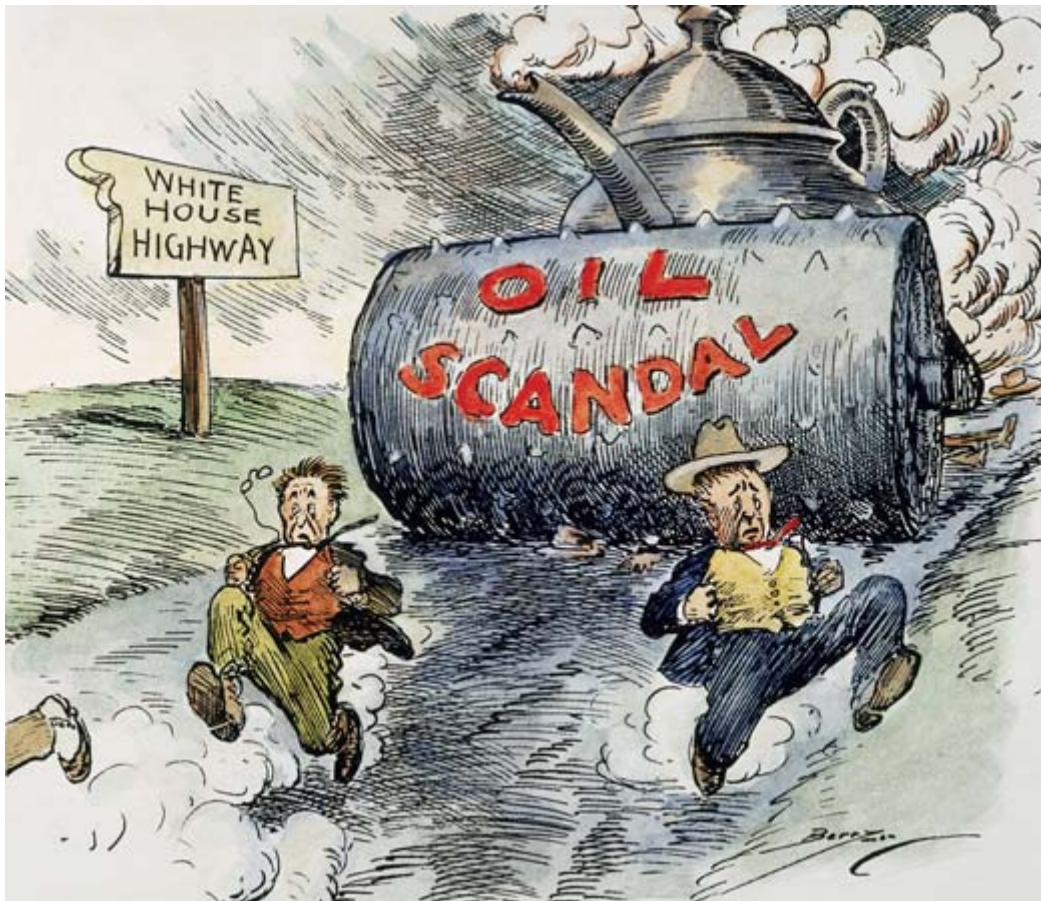
Harding and his 'Ohio Gang'

In 1920 Warren Harding was elected President of the USA. He gained a reputation as a weak manager for giving important and influential posts to friends and peers who were members of his cabinet. **The Ohio Gang** was a group of politicians who were in positions of power during Warren O Harding's administration. They betrayed the public's trust in several scandals.

At the beginning of 1924, soon after Harding's death, Congress began investigating reports of corruption and bribery during Harding's administration. Several members of the Gang were charged and imprisoned for corruption:

- Charles R. Forbes was found guilty of fraud, conspiracy and bribery in the **Veterans' Bureau**.
- Albert B Fall was found guilty and imprisoned for his part in the **Teapot Dome scandal** and the **Elk-Hills oil fund** scandal.
- Harry M. Daugherty was found guilty of selling alcohol illegally and giving licences and pardons to offenders.

Source A



A 1924 cartoon depicting Washington officials racing down an oil-slicked road to the White

Exam preparation: What was the purpose of source A?

To answer this question remember to put your COAT on!

Content

Origin

Author

Time

What were the causes of the economic boom experienced in the 1920s?

After WWI, the American economy was very strong. America did not lose as many men during the conflict, and due to the return of war loans and the boost in war time industry, America had lots of money and a strong economy.

Causes of the Boom - ACCESS

Automobiles (1919 = 9m, 1929 = 26m)

Cycle of prosperity (more sales = more production = more wages = more spending)

Consumer goods/Credit (fridges, radios, telephones etc)

Entertainment (Hollywood, cinemas, jazz clubs, speakeasies)

Stock market (Wall Street)

Sky scrapers

KEY TERM

Boom - an economic state of growth with rising profits and full employment

Plus

WWI - During WWI the USA had made a lot of money through loans to Europe and by selling weapons and exporting food to European countries.

Republican economic policies

Laissez-faire - literally meaning 'leave alone'. The Republicans believed that businessmen should be left alone by the government to get on with making money and so they made as few restrictive laws as possible.

Tariffs - in order to encourage consumers to buy American goods the government put a tax on foreign goods that entered the USA so that they would be more expensive than domestic products.

Low taxation - The Republicans believed that if people were able to keep more money then they would spend it on American goods and wealthy people would reinvest their money in industries.

Trusts - These were super-corporations which dominated certain industries (Carnegie - steel, Rockefeller - oil). The Republicans allowed the trusts to do what they wanted as they believed that the 'captains of industry' knew better than politicians what was good for America.

Henry Ford and the car

Henry Ford had a dream of producing a cheap car which could be afforded by ordinary Americans. He pioneered the development of the **assembly line**. This reduced the time it took to make a car from **13 hours to 1 hour and 33 minutes**. The assembly line meant that the cost of the car decreased. **1908 = \$850 by 1925 = \$290**. To make up for the boredom of the work **Ford doubled workers wages to \$5 a day**. That meant they could buy more consumer goods.

The Impact on other Industries

Glass

Rubber

Holidays

Garages



Ford Model T

Petrol

Road Building

Steel

Motels

Advertising

The 1920s saw a massive increase in advertising, including a massive growth in advertising on the **radio** and in the **cinema**.

Adverts were aimed at men and women and showed people what new **consumer goods** were available for them.

Credit

Many people did not have the money saw advertised. They got around things from **catalogues** on credit, but would eventually pay for the known as **instalment plan buying**.



needed to buy the many new consumer goods that they this problem by spending on **credit** and by buying This meant they **paid for consumer goods bit by bit** whole amount and some more in **interest**. It was also

This led to many Americans being in **debt**. It wasn't seen as a problem by many people, however, because the economy was **booming** and people had **jobs** and so could make the **repayments**.



The Building Boom

The 1920s was also a decade of **building** and **construction**. By 1929 the amount of **roads had doubled**. There was a demand for **new factories, offices and shops**. As towns grew in size then they needed **public buildings** such as **schools and hospitals**. The 1920s were the decade of the **skyscraper** and companies competed with each other to have the grandest and largest.

Hollywood and the rise of cinema

Cinema was the main form of entertainment in America by the end of the 1920s. Many Americans went to the cinema a few times every week. Until **1927** all of the movies were silent and the sound came from a **piano accompaniment**. The movies were made in **Hollywood**. Comedies, romance, westerns and slapstick comedies were all popular. **Mass market advertising** built up the reputations of movie stars. They came to symbolize the "**roaring twenties**."

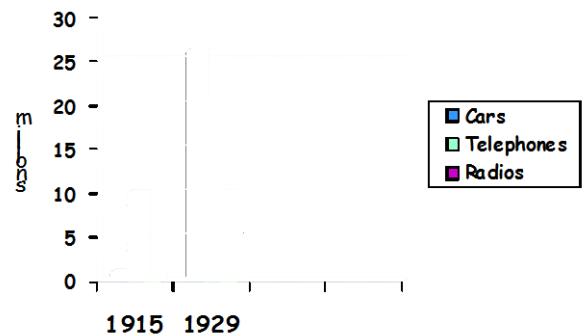
Why was the cinema so popular?

- **Advertising** made heroes of actors and actresses like Gloria Swanson, Rudolph Valentino and Charlie Chaplin.
- Advertising was used by the emerging companies like **MGM and Warner**.
- America was quite **prosperous** and going to the cinema was **cheap**.
- People had more **leisure time** because of the new **consumer goods**.
- **Talkies** were invented in **1929** and this made cinema even more for people.

Did everyone approve?

A **celebrity culture** developed in the 1920s and stars had their whole lives under **scrutiny**. Some people were

Evidence of growth



The ideas of the assembly line were used in many different industries and the development of electricity in factories also helped to increase production.

"The motion picture industry is already the fourth largest in the country"



Joseph Kennedy
writing in 1927

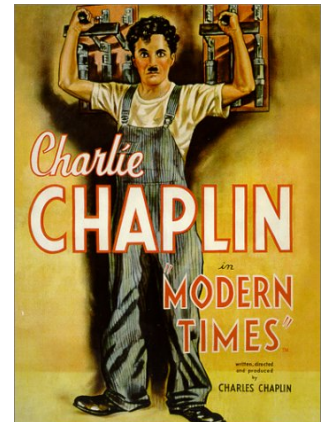
shocked by the films and thought they **lowered moral standards**. The public expected very high standards from their movie stars and **scandals** had to be covered up and the real lives of the stars **censored** as well as the movies.

One of the rules about kisses on screen was they could not last for more than 10 feet of film. This meant quite a short kiss...

Case Study

Charlie Chaplin became one of the greatest comedians in cinema history and one of its most famous stars. He was a living example of the "American Dream". The idea that anyone can make it in America if they have talent and work hard enough. He was born in London to a very poor family but moved to the USA to make his fortune.

His famous films include "The kid", "The Great Dictator" and "The Vagabond". His films and characters were influenced by other cultural developments in America, including the economic boom and the impact it had on the lives of ordinary people.



What were the causes of the economic boom experienced in the 1920s?

Core goods

America had plenty of necessary core goods eg, coal and oil.

Effect of the First World War

America was in a strong position after the war compared to European countries. America had plenty of money to invest.

Mass-production

Henry Ford developed a new form of production. He produced the same type of goods on a large scale. This meant that the price of the goods fell.

Advertising

People had to be told about the new goods. The method of shopping by ordering from catalogues developed.

Why did a boom happen in America during the 1920s?



Technological development

In order to mass-produce, the production line system had to be used. The line was a means of creating goods more quickly.

Taxes

Taxes were reduced so that business people would invest in factories.

Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act

A toll was imposed on imports. This was a way of persuading people to buy goods from America.

Laissez-faire

The Republican Presidents believed in giving the economy freedom to develop itself.

America's assets and development

The United States of America had an essential supply of natural resources such as timber, iron, coal, minerals, oil and land. This enabled America to become a huge economic power at the beginning of the twentieth century. These resources were an important foundation for the economy.

In order to help American people to purchase the new goods that were available, systems of **hire-purchase and credit** were introduced. This meant that a person could buy something by paying for it on a monthly basis. As a result, the majority of Americans could afford expensive goods. In order to encourage Americans to take advantage of the scheme, **advertisements** were placed on roadsides, on the radio, in newspapers and in cinemas.

During the same period, chain stores appeared for the first time, eg J P Penney. Catalogue shopping also became fashionable as it was a convenient way of buying goods.

Electricity developed slowly before the war but during the 1920s the electricity industry experienced a huge **boom**. By 1929 the majority of houses in America had electricity and 70 per cent of them used it for lighting purposes. As a result of the development of factories to produce consumer goods for the American people, the demand for electricity doubled. Electrical power was introduced in factories to drive machinery, and thus it became possible to introduce **mass-production** to a number of factories, eg refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and radio sets.

The car industry is the best example of mass-production during the period. **Henry Ford** was a pioneer with his idea of producing affordable cars for the people of America. He set about realising his dream by producing his early cars in small workshops. He had groups of men working for him and gradually the cars were built.

Henry Ford's hard work bore fruit. As he produced more and more cars, he could reduce his prices. By 1925 the price of a car was around \$290, which was much cheaper than the price of \$850 in 1908. Henry Ford was of the opinion that it was better to sell more cars for a small profit, as that meant employing more workers.

By 1929 Americans owned 23 million cars. The workers earned good wages (\$5 per day), thousands of jobs were created, roads were built, petrol stations were built, as were hotels and restaurants. Therefore the **entire** economy was given a substantial boost due to the car industry.



Henry Ford and his son posing in the model F Ford car in 1905

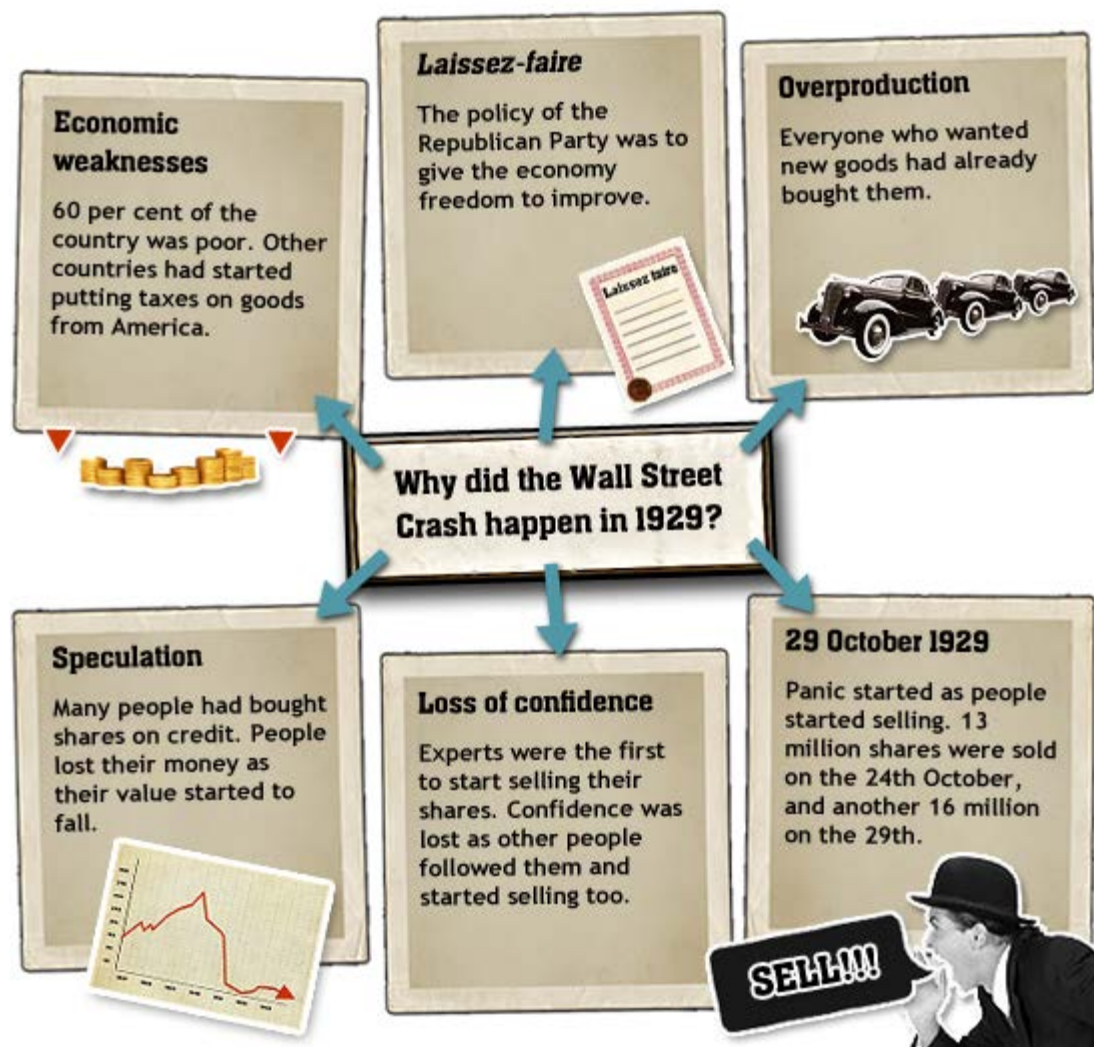
What factors led to the end of prosperity in 1929?

The Wall Street Crash

The crash happened in 1929.

Causes:

1. **over-production** - companies were making more consumer goods than they could sell which then caused prices to fall and unemployment to rise.
2. **unequal distribution of wealth** - even though there had been lots of money in the 1920s it had not been shared out fairly, the rich had got richer and the poor often got poorer.
3. **high import tariffs on American goods** - meant that countries outside of the US made their own tariffs that made American goods too expensive to buy in the rest of the world. So when the domestic market became saturated there was nowhere else for the American companies to sell to.
4. **speculation on the stock market** - inexperienced people had invested heavily in the shares during the 1920s hoping to make some fast money. Once companies started to fall in value panic selling began and this then finally triggered the crash.
5. **Loss of confidence**. Stock traders lost confidence when there was a slight dip in the value of their shares. This led to panic selling.



The causes of the Wall Street Crash can be sorted into long and short term factors...

Longer term reasons for the end of prosperity

1. **Overproduction in industry** - By the end of the 1920s there were too many **consumer goods** unsold in the USA. The supply was bigger than the demand.
2. **Overproduction in agriculture** - As farming techniques improved, farmers started producing too much food. There was less demand from Europe for food from America because they could grow their own crops. An abundance of crops led to falling prices and thousands of farmers became unemployed after having to sell their farms.
3. **Commerce** - By the end of the 1920s, America tried to sell its surplus goods to European countries. But, in response to the **Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act**, European countries had imposed a tax on American goods. So American goods were too expensive to buy in Europe and, as a result, there wasn't much trade between America and European countries.
4. **Property prices** - House prices increased a great deal in the early 1920s. But after 1926, house prices fell leaving a number of Americans owning houses that were worth less money than what they had paid for them.
5. **Falling demand for goods** - It should be remembered that not everyone was rich in America in the 1920s. A lot of the country's poorer people bought goods on credit and as a result, a great deal of them owed money to shops and large companies. Many of these companies subsequently went into financial difficulties as the poor failed to pay their debts.
6. **Too many small banks** - The financial sector was not very tightly regulated. There were no large banks in America, but rather an abundance of small banks. These small banks did not have the financial resources to cope with the rush for money when the **Wall Street Crash** happened. A number of banks had to close leaving thousands of customers with no money at all.

Short term reasons for the end of prosperity

1. **The Stock Market** - Throughout the 1920s the prices of **shares** had increased to unrealistic levels. People continued to buy shares as they were making huge profits from them. By 1929 over 20 million people had invested in shares.
2. **Over speculation** - As it was easy to borrow money, some people would buy shares **on the margin** - ie, borrowing money to buy shares and then holding on to them until they were worth more than the debt. Then they would sell the shares, pay off the original debt and make a profit.
3. **Loss of confidence and a sudden fall in prices** - The Wall Street Crash.

A number of financial experts warned that the American economy was slowing down and in September 1929 some investors started selling **shares** in large numbers. Many people started feeling nervous and investors went into panic and rushed to sell their shares. On 24 October, now referred to as **Black Thursday**, 12.8 million shares were sold. Thousands of people saw their fortune, or any money they had in the bank, disappear. On 29 October 1929, 16 million shares were sold at very low prices. **The Stock Market** New York in had collapsed.

The Roaring Twenties came to a sudden end. Investors lost their money in the Crash and could not pay their debts. Many banks closed, ordinary people lost their savings and people lost all hope for the future. People could no longer buy consumer goods like cars and clothes. As a result, workers were made redundant, other workers' wages was cut and unemployment rose to very high levels. This was the start of **The Great Depression** of the 1930s.



How did popular entertainment develop during this period?

The Jazz Age

And all that Jazz!

Jazz

Jazz came from traditional black music such as blues and ragtime. By the 1920s it was very popular and was the music of choice in most clubs and speakeasies. As racism continued, however, often the only black people let into these clubs were the musicians themselves.

The Radio and the Gramophone

By the end of the 1920s radio was one of the most popular forms of entertainment, reaching over 50 million people. This led to more advertising to fund programmes. People also became more socially and politically aware as they no longer had to be able to read to get the news. The popularity of new music like Jazz also meant that radio sales increased which led to more interest in the gramophone.

Clubs and Dancing

New dances like the Charleston and the Black Bottom were much faster and more suggestive than more traditional slow dances. As a result some people claimed jazz and dancing was causing a moral decline.

Fads and Crazes

During the 1920s lots of short-lived crazes swept across America. They ranged from unusual interests and entertainment, like Shipwreck Kelly, to crosswords. Beauty contests became popular, dance marathons were held across the country and there were even live goldfish eating competitions!

Louis Armstrong was the first important soloist in jazz, and he became the most influential musician in the music's history. He was a talented trumpet player and was famous for his distinctive voice and fun personality.



During the 1920's many people, especially whites, were better off, and had more leisure time. More money was spent on entertainment stimulating industry and business. All part of the "roaring 20's" Jazz was popular and developed out of ragtime and blues music among the black people in southern parts of the USA. It gave a way of black musicians gaining self-respect and admiration. Jazz clubs developed where young people would go. The Cotton Club in New York became a famous nightclub. Black musicians such as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong became famous. Jazz style also spread with the availability of radio and early gramophone records. By 1929 10 million homes had a radio, local and national stations were set up. Radios increased the popularity of sports; baseball, boxing, and American football. More money and more leisure time meant more people watched sports and the increased ownership in cars meant more could travel to watch matches. New dances became fashionable. The Charleston, tango and the black Bottom became popular among the young. These were sexually suggestive and frowned on by older generations. In the 1920's dance marathons became popular as did other stunts including sitting on a flag pole or climbing the outside of a tall building. 1927 Charles Lindbergh was the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic.

Women in the 1920s

Flappers - these were fashionable women. They usually came from the cities or from the suburbs. Flappers usually cut their hair short, wore heavy make-up and shorter dresses. They shocked many older Americans and people that were religious or lived in rural areas. This was because they were far more independent than had traditionally been the case. Flappers usually had jobs which gave them more freedom because they had more money. They then used their money and free time to socialise by going to the cinema and jazz clubs where they would drink and apply their make-up in public! Flappers could also play sports in public.

In addition to the social changes, women were also given the vote for the first time in 1920, so this also helped them to gain more power in society.

HOWEVER not all women benefitted from these changes. Life only really changed for white, middle or upper class women. Poor people could not afford to live the lifestyle or a flapper and neither could women from ethnic minorities.

The Cinema

This was the most glamorous aspect of the Roaring 20's.

By 1929 going to the movies was a national habit. 110 million people each week. Before late 20's movies were Silent. There were only captions. Emotions needed to be conveyed through body language, Charlie Chaplin, and Rudolf Valentino were famous actors.

Some were romantic others slapstick. Piano players provided appropriate background music. Most film studios were in Hollywood, a suburb of Los Angeles. Big Film companies developed, such as Warner Bros, Paramount and MGM. Each had large publicity departments.

The First 'talkie' was in 1927 with Al Johnson starring in *The Jazz Singer*. After this, silent screen stars tried to adapt their skills to the new era, many failed. Their voices were unattractive and often didn't match their 'silent' reputation.



The influence of movie stars

The stars also contributed to the increase in the popularity of the cinema.



The Italian, Rudolph Valentino, was a very popular actor and his role in *The Sheik* (1921) made him a sex symbol. He was a star and appeared in many of the early films, earning \$1 million. When he died suddenly in 1926 his fans were grief-stricken and a number of women committed suicide.

Charlie Chaplin was a very influential figure and was one of the founders of the United Artists film company with **Mary Pickford** and **Douglas Fairbanks** in 1919. He was also a famous actor, starring in **silent films** such as *The Tramp* (1915) and *The Kid* (1921). He preferred the craft of the silent movie rather than the 'talkies' that came later.



But it may be that women like **Clara Bow**, *The It Girl*, were the Hollywood stars that had the most influence on society at the time. She played the part of a **flapper** in a number of films, and influenced many young girls to behave in the same way. She was the most popular actress in 1928 and 1929.

Actors such as **Gloria Swanson** and **Buster Keaton** were also influential.

Speakeasy Culture

Speakeasies were found everywhere in the United States of America. Whether they were established underground, or hidden within stores and other businesses, in every urban establishment you entered, you were most likely not far off from an illegal party. These "secret gin joints" were most common in New York, especially in between 45th and 52nd street on 5th and 6th avenues, where almost every single building contained illegal liquor. Manhattans "21" club was probably the most secure club, with four safety switches that could be used during a raid to short circuit and cut the access to all of the doors that contained alcohol. Jazz had been prohibited in a number of cities, for example New York and Detroit. So, the performances moved to the speakeasies, making the young people even more determined to rebel.



The impact of the radio and gramophone

Before the cinema became popular during the 1920s, the radio was the main medium of entertainment in America. By the end of the 1920s, 50 million people had a radio set.

- Not everyone could read, so the radio became a very important means of communicating news and information to the people.
- Also, as the popularity of jazz increased, more people bought radios, records and gramophones so that they could listen to jazz any time they wanted to.
- People could also listen to their favourite team taking part in sports matches, especially if it was not possible for them to travel to the game or if they couldn't afford the cost.
- The radio was able to grow and succeed because companies paid to advertize their products on the medium.

How did the lifestyle and status of women change during this period?

Changing attitudes towards women

The impact of the First World War

- Before the war, girls were expected to behave modestly and wear long dresses. When they went out, they had to be accompanied by an older woman or a married woman.
- It was totally unacceptable for a woman to smoke in public. Women were employed in jobs that were traditionally associated with men eg servants, seamstresses, secretaries, nursing.
- During the war, women started to be employed in different types of jobs eg factory work, replacing the men who had gone to fight in the war in Europe.
- Organisations such as the **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)** had been fighting for decades to get the vote for women. As women had contributed so much to the war effort, it was difficult to refuse their demands for political equality. As a result, the **Nineteenth Amendment** to the constitution became law in 1920, giving women the right to vote.
- There was a change as far as work was concerned too, with an increase of 25 per cent in the number of women working during the 1920s. By 1929, 10.6 million women were working.
- By now, independent women of the middle classes and above had more money to spend. Because of this, advertising companies started targeting women in their campaigns to encourage them to buy their new products.

Changing attitudes towards social etiquette

Women started to smoke in public. It became acceptable for women to drive cars and take part in energetic sports.

The young women of the 1920s were referred to as **flappers**.

Hollywood films of the period characterised them, and as a result, their behaviour and dress sense was imitated by millions around the world.

In 1919 womens' skirts were about six inches above ground level, but by 1927 the hems of skirts were up to knee-level. Young women rebelled against the old-fashioned clothes of their mothers' era.

The corset went out of fashion, and it became all the rage for women to cut their hair in a bob and wear a lot of make-up and jewellery.

One famous flapper of the time was **Joan Crawford**. She started her career as a dancer on Broadway before moving to Hollywood to make a name for herself. She starred in films such as *Paris* (1926) and *The Unknown* (1927) in which she became famous for her flapper style.

Many young girls admired and copied her style. In 1929, she married **Douglas Fairbanks Jr**, son of **Douglas Fairbanks**, which proved her important status in society.



The influence of Jazz culture

The Jazz Clubs played a crucial role in allowing the flappers to express themselves. This is where they could smoke and dance. They also drank illegal alcohol in the **speakeasies**.

Instead of dancing the waltz that was popular in the period before the war, people started to enjoy more daring dances such as the **Shimmy** and the **Bunny Hug**.

Petting Parties began where the flappers would kiss men in public.

The flappers had their own slang too. "I have to go see a man about a dog" was slang for going to buy whisky, and a 'handcuff' or 'manacle' was an engagement or wedding ring.

A number of the flappers' terms are still used today, eg 'big cheese' for an important person, 'bump off' for killing someone and 'hooch' for alcohol.

But not every girl enjoyed the flappers' way of life. Poor women could not afford the new fashions and they didn't have the time to go out and enjoy social events. Black women could not benefit from the changing lifestyle either.

Women in ***the Bible Belt*** did not adopt the new way of life. Also, many older women were outraged and some formed the **Anti-Flirt Club**.



