

# UNIT

# 7

# Boom and Bust

1920–1941

## Why It Matters

After World War I, the United States enjoyed a time of prosperity and confidence. The decade of the 1920s saw rising stock prices and increased consumer spending. It also witnessed cultural innovations such as jazz music and motion pictures. At the end of the 1920s, however, several economic problems combined to trigger the Great Depression that began in 1929. Understanding the events of these decades will help you understand American society today. The following resources offer more information about this period in American history.

### Primary Sources Library

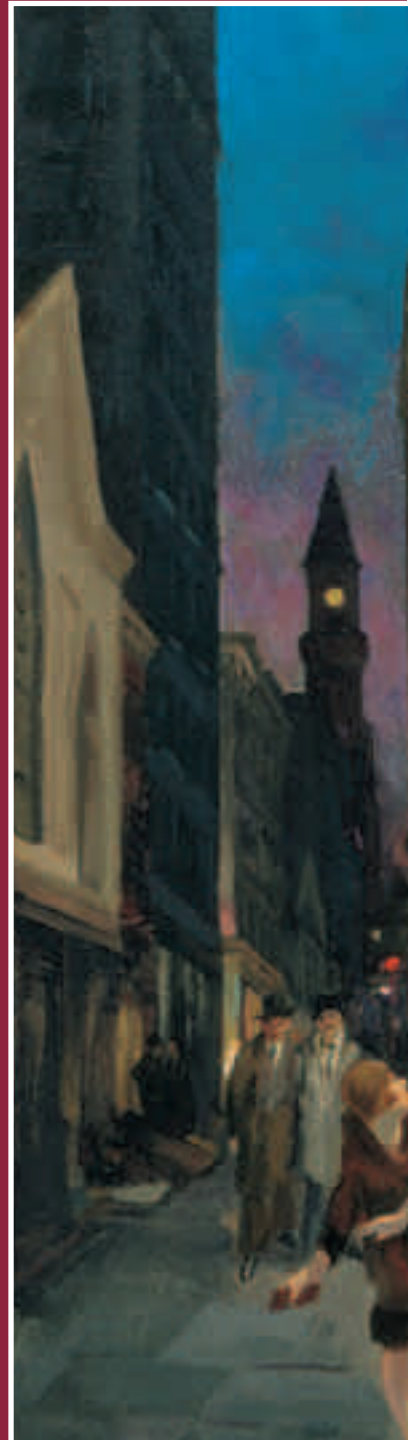
See pages 1054–1055 for primary source readings to accompany Unit 7.

 Use the **American History Primary Source Document Library CD-ROM** to find additional primary sources about the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression.



Hatbox depicting a New York street scene

*Sixth Avenue Elevated at Third St.*  
by John Sloan, 1928





*“I have no fears for the future of our country. It is bright with hope.”*

—Herbert Hoover, 1929



**CONTENTS**



# The Jazz Age

1921–1929

## Why It Matters

The 1920s was an era of rapid change and clashing values. Many Americans believed society was losing its traditional values, and they took action to preserve these values. Other Americans embraced new values associated with a freer lifestyle and the pursuit of individual goals. Writers and artists pursued distinctively American themes, and the Harlem Renaissance gave African Americans new pride.

## The Impact Today

The 1920s left permanent legacies to American culture.

- National celebrities in sports and film emerged.
- Jazz music became part of American culture.
- F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway wrote classics of American literature.



**The American Vision Video** The Chapter 20 video, “The Harlem Renaissance,” focuses on Harlem’s lively arts and music scene and the movement’s contributions to American culture.



Wilson  
1913–1921

1915

- New Ku Klux Klan founded



1920

- Marcus Garvey leads march through Harlem

1921

- Emergency Quota Act passed, limiting immigration

1922

- Antilynching bill passes in House

Harding  
1921–1923

1915

1920



1917

- British government’s Balfour Declaration supports national home for Jewish people in Palestine

1921

- Ireland becomes an independent country

1922

- Mussolini and Fascists take power in Italy



This photograph of jazz musicians captures the boisterous spirit of the 1920s.

**1925**

- Scopes trial begins
- F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* published



**1924**

- National Origins Act passed

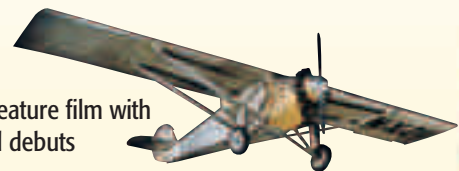


**1926**

- Langston Hughes's *The Weary Blues* published

**1927**

- First feature film with sound debuts
- Lindbergh completes first solo transatlantic flight



Coolidge  
1923–1929

Hoover  
1929–1933

1925

1930

**1923**

- Turkish Republic founded

**1924**

- Britain recognizes the USSR

**1926**

- Pavlov's *Conditioned Reflexes* published

**1928**

- Chiang Kai-shek elected president of China

**HISTORY Online**

**Chapter Overview**  
Visit the *American Vision* Web site at [tav.glencoe.com](http://tav.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter Overviews—Chapter 20** to preview chapter information.

**CLICK HERE**

# SECTION 1 A Clash of Values

## Guide to Reading

### Main Idea

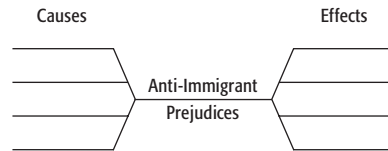
During the 1920s, clashes between traditional and modern values shook the United States.

### Key Terms and Names

anarchist, eugenics, Ku Klux Klan, Emergency Quota Act, flapper, Fundamentalism, evolution, creationism, police powers, speakeasy

### Reading Strategy

**Organizing** As you read about Americans' reactions to immigrants in the 1920s, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by filling in the causes and effects of anti-immigrant prejudices.



### Reading Objectives

- **Explain** the rise in racism and nativism in the 1920s.
- **Describe** the clash of values in the 1920s and the changing status of women.

### Section Theme

**Continuity and Change** The rapid changes of the early 1900s challenged Americans who wanted to preserve traditional values.

### Preview of Events



## ★ An American Story ★



Alfred Levitt (standing)

In 1911 Alfred Levitt left a small town in Russia to immigrate to New York City. Like many immigrants before and since, he had big ambitions, despite his poor English and lack of education. He wanted to forget his Russian heritage and become a successful American:

“My conscious drive when I got here was to escape the rigors of poverty, to become somebody of importance. This I don't mean economically, but someone who can justify his presence on the planet. I wonder: Who am I? What am I here for? At seventeen years, the first question for me, though, was: What was I going to do? What will I become? . . . I made up my mind, as young as I was, that I'm going to amount to something in the world, and I'm not going to continue being one of those who starve.”

—quoted in *Centenarians: The Story of the Twentieth Century by the Americans Who Lived It*

Levitt did indeed “amount to something.” A successful artist, he lived the rest of his life in New York City. Twenty of his paintings are part of the permanent collection of the city's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

## Nativism Resurges

As the 1920s opened, an economic recession, an influx of immigrants, and racial and cultural tensions combined to create an atmosphere of disillusionment and intolerance. The fear and prejudice many felt toward Germans and Communists expanded to include all immigrants. This triggered a general rise in racism and in nativism, the desire to protect the interests of old-stock Americans against those of immigrants.



During World War I, immigration to the United States had dropped sharply. By 1921, however, it had returned to prewar levels, with the majority of immigrants at this time coming from southern and eastern Europe. Many Americans saw immigrants as a threat to stability and order. The arrival of millions of immigrants also seemed to pose a threat to the four million recently demobilized military men and women searching for work in an economy with soaring unemployment and rising prices.

As the new immigrants, many of whom were unskilled workers, sought to enter the workforce and establish a foothold in American life, many of them encountered ethnic and religious prejudices. The experience of two Italian immigrants, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, exemplified the prejudices and fears of the period.

**The Sacco-Vanzetti Case** Shortly after 3:00 P.M. on April 15, 1920, two men shot and killed two employees of the Slater & Morrill Shoe Company in South Braintree, Massachusetts, and robbed the company of its \$15,000 payroll. Police subsequently arrested Nicola Sacco, a shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, a fish peddler.

The **Sacco and Vanzetti case** created a furor, as newspapers around the country revealed that the two immigrants were **anarchists**, or people who oppose all forms of government. They also discovered that Sacco owned a gun similar to the murder weapon and that the bullets used in the murders matched those in Sacco's gun. Although no one at the time knew if Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty, many people leaped to that conclusion because the two men were Italian immigrants and anarchists. Others viewed the case as an example of prejudice against people based on their ethnic origin and political beliefs.

On July 14, 1921, a jury found Sacco and Vanzetti guilty, and the judge sentenced them to death. Many Americans, caught up in the antiforeign fever of the time, applauded the verdict and the penalty. Over the next six years, lawyers filed numerous appeals for a new trial, but all were denied. In April 1927, a special Massachusetts commission studied the case and upheld the verdict. Four months later, on August 23, 1927, Sacco and Vanzetti were executed, proclaiming their innocence all the while. 📖 (See *You're the Historian* on pages 618–619 for more information on Sacco and Vanzetti.)

**Pseudo-Scientific Racism** Nativist and racist feelings in the 1920s were reinforced by the beliefs of the eugenics movement. **Eugenics** is a pseudo-science (or false science) that deals with improving hereditary traits. Developed in Europe in the early 1900s, eugenics emphasized that human inequalities were inherited and warned against breeding the “unfit” or “inferior.” Eugenics fueled the nativists' argument for the superiority of the “original” American stock—white Protestants of northern European descent. Political, intellectual, and cultural figures like Woodrow Wilson and Henry Cabot Lodge embraced eugenics. By doing so, they lent authority to racist theories, which reinvigorated the nativist argument for strict immigration control.

**Return of the Ku Klux Klan** At the forefront of the movement to restrict immigration was the **Ku Klux Klan**, or KKK. The old KKK had flourished in the South after the Civil War and used threats and violence to intimidate newly freed African Americans. The new Klan had other targets as well—Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and other groups believed to represent “un-American” values.

William J. Simmons founded the new Ku Klux Klan in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1915. A former circuit-riding Methodist preacher, Simmons pledged to preserve America's white, Protestant civilization. In the 1920s, Klan publicity claimed that the organization was fighting for “Americanism.”

The Klan attracted few members until 1920, when Simmons hired public relations entrepreneurs Edward Young Clarke and Elizabeth Tyler, paying



### Analyzing Political Cartoons

**New Immigrants** This cartoon portrays the feelings of many Americans who were opposed to immigration. **What comment does the cartoon make about immigrants?**



them a commission of \$8 of every \$10 initiation fee for a new Klan recruit. Clarke and Tyler divided the nation into regions and paid more than 1,000 “sales-people” to promote the Klan. As a result of their strategy, membership in the Ku Klux Klan exploded, reaching nearly 4 million by 1924 as it spread beyond the South and into Northern cities.

The Klan began to decline in the late 1920s, however, largely as a result of scandals and power struggles involving its leaders. Membership shrank, and politicians whom the Klan supported were voted out of office. The sharp reduction in immigrants due to new immigration laws further disabled the Klan, depriving it of a major issue. The Klan never again had a major impact on politics.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did many Americans oppose immigration after World War I?

## Controlling Immigration

After World War I, American immigration policies changed in response to the postwar recession and nativist pleas to “Keep America American.” Even big business, which previously favored unrestricted immigration as a source of cheap labor, now feared the new immigrants as radicals.

In 1921 President Harding signed the **Emergency Quota Act**, which established a temporary quota system, limiting immigration. According to this act, only three percent of the total number of people in any ethnic group already living in the United States, as indicated in the 1910 census, could be admitted in a single year. This theoretically restricted the number of immigrants from all countries, but in practice it discriminated heavily against people from southern and eastern Europe. Ethnic identity and national origin thus determined admission to the United States.

Henry Curran, the commissioner of Ellis Island from 1922 to 1926, commented on the heartbreak caused by the Emergency Quota Act:

“The hardest quota cases were those that separated families. When part of the family had been born in a country with a quota still open, while the other part had been born in a country whose quota was exhausted, the law let in the first part and deported the other part. Mothers were torn from children, husbands from wives. The law came down like a sword between them.”

—quoted in *Ellis Island: Echoes from a Nation's Past*

## GOVERNMENT

**The National Origins Act of 1924** In 1924 the National Origins Act made immigrant restriction a permanent policy. The law also tightened the quota system, setting quotas at two percent of each national group residing in the country in 1890. By moving back the year to 1890, an even larger proportion of the quotas were allotted to immigrants from northwestern Europe.

A second part of the act, which took effect in 1929, replaced the 1924 quotas with a limit of 150,000 immigrants admitted per year. In addition, the percentage allotted to each nationality would now be based on the 1920 census. This resulted in northwestern European countries accounting for 87 percent of the total immigration quota.

**Hispanic Immigration to the United States** The immigration acts of 1921 and 1924 reduced the available labor pool in the United States. While workers and unions rejoiced at the reduction in competition for jobs, employers desperately needed laborers for agriculture, mining, and railroad work. Mexican immigrants helped to fill this need.

The first wave of Mexican immigration to the United States followed the passage of the Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902, which provided funds for irrigation projects in the arid Southwest. Factory farms soon dominated the landscape, and they needed large numbers of agricultural laborers. By 1914 more than 70,000 Mexican immigrants had poured into the United States, many of them fleeing the terror and aftermath of the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

A larger wave of immigration brought more than 600,000 Mexicans to the United States between 1914 and the end of the 1920s. The National Origins Act of 1924 exempted natives of the Western Hemisphere from the quota system. As the demand for cheap farm labor in California and the Southwest steadily increased, Mexican immigrants crossed the border in record numbers.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** How did Hispanic immigrants help shape the national identity of the United States?

## The New Morality

Many groups that wanted to restrict immigration also wanted to preserve what they considered to be traditional values. They feared that a “new morality” was taking over the nation. Challenging traditional

ways of seeing and thinking, the new morality glorified youth and personal freedom and influenced various aspects of American society.

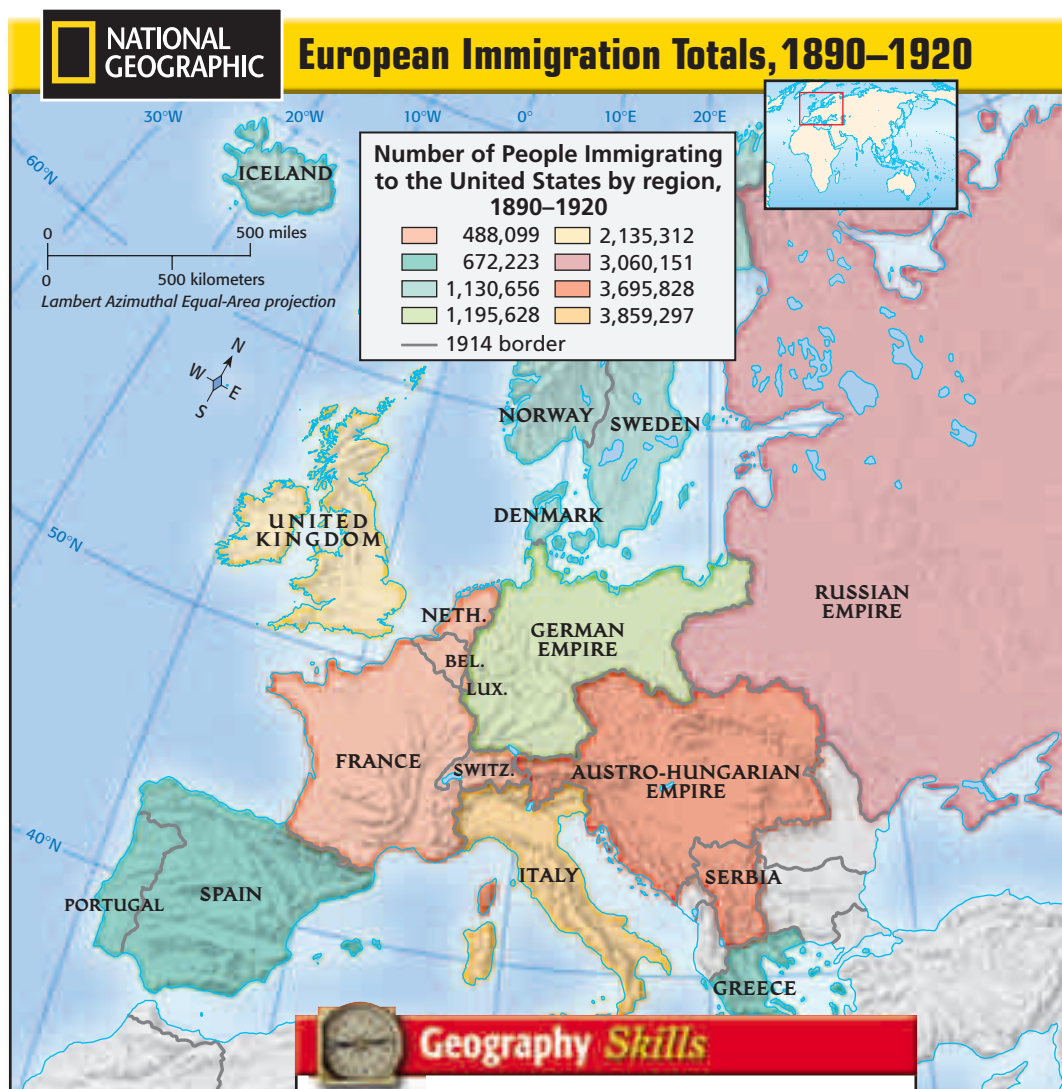
**The New Morality** Ideals of the loving family and personal satisfaction—views popularized in magazines and other media—influenced popular views on relationships. As the loving and emotional aspects of marriage grew in importance, the ideas of romance, pleasure, and friendship became linked to successful marriages. Advice books in the 1920s dispensed such hints as, “Have lots of pleasure that both husband and wife enjoy . . . and above all, be good friends.”

Women in the workforce also began to define the new morality. Many single, working-class women held jobs simply because they needed the wages for themselves or for their families. For some young, single women, work was a way to break away from parental authority and establish a personal identity. Work also provided the wages that allowed women to participate in the consumer culture.

Women who attended college in the 1920s often found support for their emerging sense of independence. Women’s colleges, in particular, encouraged their students to pursue careers and to challenge traditional ideas about the nature of women and their role in society.

The automobile also played a role in encouraging the new morality. The nation’s youth loved cars because cars made them more independent and allowed them to escape the careful watch of their parents. Instead of socializing at home with the family, many youths could now use cars to seek new forms of entertainment with their friends and to find privacy.

**Women in the 1920s** Fashion took on a modern look during the 1920s, as women “bobbed,” or shortened, their hair and wore flesh-colored silk stockings. It also emphasized the youthful appearance of



**Geography Skills**

- 1. Interpreting Maps** Between 1890 and 1920, what European regions sent more than three million immigrants to the United States?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Why were so many people willing to leave their homelands to come to the United States?

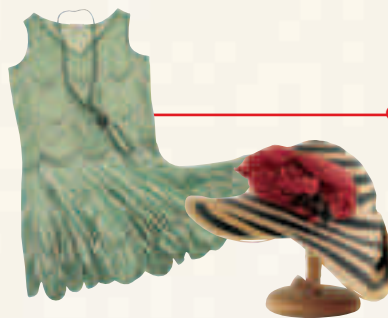
glamorous stage and screen stars. In this new culture, the carefree, chic “flapper” played a prominent role.

Though hardly typical of American women at the time, the **flapper**—a young, dramatic, stylish, and unconventional woman—personified women’s changing behavior in the 1920s. The flapper smoked cigarettes, drank prohibited liquor, and dressed in attire considered too revealing by previous generations.

While flappers pursued social freedoms, other women sought financial independence by entering the workforce, many of them as salesclerks, secretaries, or telephone operators. A few made contributions in science, medicine, law, or literature. In science, Florence Sabin’s medical research led to a



# What Life Was Like...



## Modern Clothing

Women's clothing changed significantly in the 1920s. Hemlines were much shorter and showed more of the body. Stylish new hats also emphasized bold colors and a freer design.

## Flappers

Perhaps no other symbol of the 1920s captured the spirit of the time like the flapper. Psychologist G. Stanley Hall wrote his observation of a typical flapper:

“She wore a knitted hat, with hardly any brim, of a flame or bonfire hue; a henna scarf; two strings of Betty beads, of different colors, twisted together; an open short coat, with ample pockets; a skirt with vertical stripes. . . . Her stockings were woolen and of brilliant hue. But most noticeable of all were her high overshoes, or galoshes. One seemed to be turned down at the top and entirely unbuckled, while the other was fastened below and flapped about her trim ankle in a way that compelled attention.”

—quoted in *We, the American Women*

## New Forms of Expression

Rebelling against older, more formal dancing styles, these Charleston dancers perform steps that one observer described as “knock-kneed and pigeon-toed.”



dramatic drop in death rates from tuberculosis. In literature, Edith Wharton received the Pulitzer Prize for her novel *The Age of Innocence*. Public health nurse Margaret Sanger, believing that the standard of living could be improved if families limited the number of children they had, founded the American Birth Control League in 1921. This organization became Planned Parenthood in the 1940s. In 1928 **Margaret Mead**, one of the first woman anthropologists, published the highly regarded study, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, which described life in a Pacific island culture.

**Reading Check** **Identifying** What political, social, and economic contributions did women make to American society in the 1920s?

## The Fundamentalist Movement

While many Americans embraced the new morality, millions more feared that the country was losing its traditional values. To these Americans, the modern consumer culture, relaxed ethics, and growing urbanism symbolized the nation's moral decline. Many of these people, especially those in small rural

towns, responded by joining a religious movement known as **Fundamentalism**—a name derived from a series of pamphlets titled *The Fundamentals*, published by oil millionaire Lyman Stewart.

**Fundamentalist Beliefs** Fundamentalists believed that the Bible was literally true and without error. They defended the Protestant faith against ideas that implied that human beings derived their moral behavior from society and nature, not God. In particular, Fundamentalists rejected Charles Darwin's theory of **evolution**, which said that human beings had developed from lower forms of life over the course of millions of years. Instead, they believed in **creationism**—the belief that God created the world as described in the Bible.

Two popular evangelical preachers, **Billy Sunday** and **Aimee Semple McPherson**, stirred Fundamentalists' passions by preaching traditional religious and moral values in very nontraditional ways. A former professional baseball player, Sunday drew huge crowds with his rapid-fire sermons and on-stage showmanship. McPherson conducted her revivals and faith healings in Los Angeles in a



### ● Charleston

The Charleston, named after the city of Charleston, South Carolina, was the dance craze of the 1920s. Women who did the Charleston were called flappers, perhaps because of the way they flapped their arms while doing the dance.



flamboyant theatrical style, using stage sets and costumes that expressed the themes of her highly emotional sermons.

**The Scopes Trial** Evolutionists and creationists eventually clashed in a historic trial. In 1925 Tennessee passed the Butler Act, which outlawed any teaching that denied “the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible,” and taught instead that “man descended from a lower order of animals.” The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) advertised for a teacher who would be willing to be arrested for teaching evolution. John T. Scopes, a high school biology teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, volunteered to be the test case. He taught evolution and was subsequently arrested and put on trial.

The trial took place in the summer of 1925. William Jennings Bryan, a three-time Democratic presidential candidate, was the prosecutor and represented the creationists. Clarence Darrow, one of the country’s most celebrated trial lawyers, defended Scopes. After eight days of trial, Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100, although the conviction was later overturned on a technicality. Parts of the trial had been broadcast over

the radio, and Darrow’s blistering cross-examination of Bryan did little for the Fundamentalist cause. Increasingly, Fundamentalists found themselves isolated from mainstream Protestantism, and their commitment to political activism declined.

**✓ Reading Check Explaining** What were the major beliefs of Fundamentalists?

## Prohibition

The movement to ban alcohol had been building throughout the late 1800s. By the early 1900s, many progressives and traditionalists supported prohibition. Many people believed the prohibition of alcohol would help reduce unemployment, domestic violence, and poverty. Their support helped pass the Eighteenth Amendment, which took effect in January 1920.

To try to enforce the amendment, Congress passed the National Prohibition Act, also known as the **Volstead Act**. Enforcing Prohibition became the responsibility of the U.S. Treasury Department. Treasury agents had enforced federal tax laws for many years, but **police powers**—a government’s power to control people and property in the interest of public safety, health, welfare, and morals—had generally been reserved for the state governments. The Eighteenth Amendment granted federal and state governments the power to enforce Prohibition, marking a dramatic increase in federal police powers.

The Treasury Department’s new Prohibition Unit struggled to enforce Prohibition. During the 1920s, treasury agents made more than 540,000 arrests, but Americans persisted in blatantly ignoring the law. People flocked to secret bars called **speakeasies**, where they could purchase alcohol. In New York City alone, an estimated 32,000 such bars sold liquor illegally. Liquor also was readily available in rural

### Fact

### Fiction

### Folklore

**New Words** The youth culture of the twenties produced a number of new words and phrases that became a part of their own language. In the mid-1920s, partygoers urged fellow dancers to “Get hot! Get hot!” Young Americans also invented such terms as *beauts*, *cat’s pajamas*, and *cat’s whiskers* to describe attractive young women. The terms *lounge lizards*, *jelly beans*, and *jazzbos* described attractive young men, while the phrase *hard-boiled eggs* described tough guys.





### **Picturing History**

**Prohibition in Action** Federal revenue agents carried out the laws of Prohibition by destroying barrels of alcohol. **How successful were their enforcement efforts?**

America, where bootlegging—the illegal production and distribution of liquor—was common.

Organized crime specialized in supplying and often running these speakeasies, which popped up all over the country. The huge profits that could be made supplying liquor encouraged some people to become smugglers, bringing liquor into the United States

from Canada and the Caribbean. Smuggling and the consumption of liquor by millions helped create an illegal billion-dollar industry for gangsters. More than 70 federal agents were killed while enforcing Prohibition in the 1920s.

Crime became big business, and some gangsters had enough money to corrupt local politicians. Al Capone, one of the most successful and violent gangsters of the era, had many police officers, judges, and other officials on his payroll. Capone dominated organized crime in Chicago, where he ran bootlegging and other criminal rackets. Finally, Eliot Ness, the leader of a special Treasury Department task force, brought Capone to justice.

The battle to repeal Prohibition began almost as soon as the Eighteenth Amendment was ratified. Supporters of repeal associated Prohibition with “priggish fanaticism.” The ratification of the Twenty-first Amendment in 1933

repealed the Eighteenth Amendment and ended federally-mandated Prohibition. It was a victory for the forces of modernism and a defeat for the supporters of traditional moral values.

**✓ Reading Check Analyzing** Analyze the reasons for the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment.

## SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- Define:** anarchist, eugenics, flapper, evolution, creationism, police powers, speakeasy.
- Identify:** Ku Klux Klan, Emergency Quota Act, Fundamentalism.
- Explain** why the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed.

### Reviewing Themes

- Continuity and Change** How did the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act change the federal government’s role?

### Critical Thinking

- Synthesizing** Why were immigrants from Mexico not included in the quota system set by the immigration acts?
- Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the provisions of the immigration acts passed in the 1920s.

Act	Provisions

### Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Photographs** Study the image on this page of the federal agent destroying barrels of alcohol. Why do you think the barrels were destroyed in public with a crowd watching?

### Writing About History

- Persuasive Writing** Imagine it is the 1920s. Write a letter to your senator to persuade him or her to either continue to support Prohibition or to work for its repeal.

# Critical Thinking SKILLBUILDER

## Synthesizing Information

### Why Learn This Skill?

The authors of this book gathered information from many sources to present a story of how the United States came about and how the country's people lived. To combine the information into a logical story, the authors used a process called *synthesis*. Being able to synthesize information can be a useful skill for you as a student when you need to gather data from several sources for a report or a presentation.

### Learning the Skill

The skill of synthesizing involves combining and analyzing information gathered from separate sources or at different times to make logical connections. Follow these steps to synthesize information:

- Select important and relevant information.
- Analyze the information and build connections.
- Reinforce or modify the connections as you acquire new information.

Suppose you need to write a research paper on the status of women in the 1920s. You would need to synthesize what you learn to inform others. You could begin by detailing the ideas and information you already have about the status of women in the 1920s. A graphic organizer such as the one on this page could help categorize the facts.

Then you could select an article about women in the 1920s, such as the following:

*In 1923 the National Woman's Party first proposed an equal rights amendment to the Constitution. This amendment stated that "men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction." The National Woman's party pointed out that legislation discriminating against women existed in every state. . . .*

*Some progressive women reformers, however, opposed the goals of the National Woman's Party. These progressives favored protective legislation, which had brought shorter hours and better working conditions for many women. The efforts of the progressives helped defeat the equal rights amendment.*

### Women's Status in the 1920s

<b>Economic:</b>	Many more women worked in factories and other jobs outside the home.
<b>Social:</b>	Women had much more social freedom, including greater choices in clothing styles and public behavior.
<b>Educational:</b>	Many women had a high school education, and more than ever were attending college.

### Practicing the Skill

Use the graphic organizer and the passage on this page to answer the following questions.

- 1 What information is presented in the table?
- 2 What is the main idea of the passage? What information does the passage add to your knowledge of this topic?
- 3 By synthesizing the two sources and using what you know from reading Section 1 of this chapter, what conclusions can you draw about the role of women in 1920s society?

### Skills Assessment

Complete the Practicing Skills questions on page 633 and the Chapter 20 Skill Reinforcement Activity to assess your mastery of this skill.

### Applying the Skill

**Synthesizing Information** Find two sources of information on the same topic and write a short report. In your report, answer these questions: What kinds of sources did you use—primary or secondary? What are the main ideas in these sources? How does each source add to your understanding of the topic? Do the sources support or contradict each other?



Glencoe's **Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook CD-ROM, Level 2**, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.



# You're *the* Historian



Painting supporting the accused

## The Sacco-Vanzetti Case

**O**n April 15, 1920, in South Braintree, Massachusetts, armed robbers murdered two factory employees during a payroll holdup. Police arrested two Italian immigrants and anarchists—Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti—as suspects. After a court found the two men guilty, defense attorneys fought for six years for a new trial. The attorneys believed the trial had shown signs of prejudice, intimidation, and dishonesty. Did Sacco and Vanzetti receive a fair trial, or were they victims of the troubled atmosphere in the United States at the time? You're the historian.

Read the following excerpts from testimony and evidence. Then complete the questions and activities that follow.

### From trial testimony

The defense produced several people who supported the defendants' alibis. When arrested, Nicola Sacco had been carrying a pistol. The prosecuting attorney questioned Captain Proctor, a Massachusetts State Police ballistics expert, about the gun.

**Q.** Captain Proctor, have you an opinion as to whether bullet three was fired from the Colt automatic which is in evidence [Sacco's pistol]?

**A.** I have.

**Q.** And what is your opinion?

**A.** My opinion is that it is consistent with being fired by that pistol.

Defense experts, however, testified that in their judgment, bullet three had not been fired from Sacco's gun. The defense called on Sacco to testify, which gave the prosecution an opportunity to ask Sacco about his political beliefs.

**Q.** Did you say yesterday you love a free country?

**A.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** Did you love this country in the month of May 1917? [At this time, Sacco had gone to Mexico to escape military service.]

**A.** If you can, Mr. Katzman, if you give me that, —I could explain.

**Q.** There are two words you can use, Mr. Sacco, yes or no.

**A.** Yes.

[later]

**Q.** What did you mean when you said yesterday you loved a free country?

**A.** . . . When I came to this country I saw there was not what I was thinking before. . . . I could see the best men, intelligent, education, they been arrested and sent to prison and died in prison . . . and Debs, one of the great men in his country, he is in prison . . . because he is a socialist. He wanted the laboring class

to have better conditions . . . but they put him in prison. . . . They want the working class to be low all the times.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty. In the sentencing phase, Bartolomeo Vanzetti was asked to explain why he should not be sentenced to death.

I am suffering because I am a radical, and indeed I am a radical. I have suffered because I am an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian. I have suffered more for my family and for my beloved than for myself, but I am so convinced to be right that if you could execute me two times, and if I could be reborn two other times, I would live again to do what I have done already. . . . You know I am innocent. That is the same words I pronounced seven years ago. You condemn two innocent men.



Headline announcing the execution

## Comments on the case

The Sacco-Vanzetti case aroused indignation among intellectuals from the 1920s on. They generally agreed that the two were found guilty because they were Italian radicals, not because there was clear evidence against them. However, two students of the case, Robert Hanson, a local historian, and Francis Russell, who wrote two books on the case, believe Sacco and Vanzetti received a fair trial. Russell cites James Graham, an attorney for Sacco:

We spent considerable time with him [Vanzetti] at the Plymouth County Jail as the case was drawing to a close. . . . Toward the end of the discussion Mr. Vahey said to Vanzetti, in substance, "I can advise you as to what the District Attorney may inquire about the effect of your failure to take the stand, but you are the one who has to make the decision as to whether you will testify or not."

Workers showing support for Sacco (right) and Vanzetti (center)



Vanzetti replied,

I don't think I can improve on the alibi which has been established. I had better not take the stand.

Russell also reports that Carlo Tresca, an anarchist who had supported the two Italians, told friends that Sacco was guilty, Vanzetti innocent. Then Russell quotes a letter from labor writer Paul Jacobs:

. . . I had a close friend, Anthony Ramuglia. . . . One day he came to me and said he had a story he wanted me to write. . . . The story was that when he was a young man around the anarchist movement in Boston, he had been approached by one of Sacco's witnesses for his alibi in the restaurant at lunch. My friend Tony agreed, and evidently, was carefully coached in what he was to say, when suddenly he remembered that on the day in question

he had actually been in jail in St. Louis and so might obviously be found out as a perjurer. He told someone about this and was relieved of his responsibilities. . . . I asked Tony whether he thought Sacco and Vanzetti were really guilty, and he replied in much the same way as you quote Tresca. "Sacco could have done it but Vanzetti was never capable of such a thing."

### Understanding the Issue

1. Why did the defense attorneys believe that the defendants were not given a fair trial?
2. Why do you think the prosecution questioned Sacco on his political beliefs?
3. After studying the historical context of the case and the frame of reference of the jury, how might a modern historian argue that Sacco and Vanzetti did not receive a fair trial?

### Activities

1. **Investigate** Check your local library or the Internet and prepare a report on the latest information on the case.
2. **Create a Simulation** Recreate the trial. Research the testimony and the people involved in the case. Assign roles to class members, including witnesses, jury members, a prosecutor, a defense attorney, and a judge.





## Guide to Reading

**Main Idea**

An era of exciting and innovative cultural trends, the 1920s witnessed changes in art and literature. This period also saw a dramatic increase in the country's interest in sports and other forms of popular culture.

**Key Terms and Names**

Bohemian, Carl Sandburg, Eugene O'Neill, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, mass media

**Reading Strategy**

**Organizing** As you read about the 1920s, complete a graphic organizer like the one below by filling in the main characteristics of art, literature, and popular culture that reflect the era.

Cultural Movement	Main Characteristics
Art	
Literature	
Popular Culture	

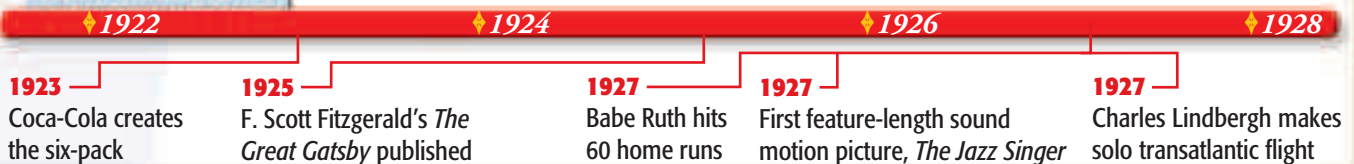
**Reading Objectives**

- **Describe** the explosion of art and literature and the disillusionment of 1920s artists.
- **Summarize** the effects of sports, movies, radio, and music on popular culture.

**Section Theme**

**Culture and Traditions** American culture in the 1920s saw a rise in both the arts and popular entertainment.

## Preview of Events

★ *An American Story* ★

On May 20, 1927, a lanky, sandy-haired young man named Charles Lindbergh took off from an airfield on Long Island, New York, in a small, single-engine plane called the *Spirit of St. Louis* and headed east across the Atlantic Ocean. The next evening—more than 33 hours after Lindbergh left New York—thousands of people waited anxiously at the small Le Bourget airfield outside Paris, France. Attention was riveted on the sky, and the spectators strained their eyes as they watched Lindbergh's small airplane softly slip out of the darkness. When the plane landed, the crowd ecstatically greeted the pilot, who had just completed a historic event—the first solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

In an era when people questioned ideals and heroes, Lindbergh's historic flight symbolized American progress in the modern age, and his solo triumph restored Americans' belief in the courageous, pioneering individual. American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald said of Lindbergh:

“A young Minnesotan who seemed to have nothing to do with his generation did a heroic thing, and for the moment people set down their glasses in country clubs and speakeasies and thought of their old dreams.”

—quoted in *Echoes of the Jazz Age*

**Art and Literature**

The modern age symbolized by Lindbergh's historic transatlantic flight was reflected strongly in American art, literature, and popular culture. During the 1920s, American artists and writers challenged traditional ideas. These artists explored what

Charles Lindbergh and his *Spirit of St. Louis*

it meant to be “modern,” and they searched for meaning in the emerging challenges of the modern world.

**Greenwich Village and the South Side** Many artists, writers, and intellectuals of the era flocked to Manhattan’s Greenwich Village and Chicago’s South Side. As writer Brooks Atkinson noted in a memoir,

“The Village was no prude . . . no matter what you did you could hardly be conspicuous. On my street the middle-aged lady in knickers who aired her cat on a pink ribbon twice a day and the rosy-cheeked damsel in overalls who split kindling wood on the side walk . . . were hardly more conspicuous than the formal citizenry. To become conspicuous you would probably have to shoot someone in the street.”

—from *New York’s Greenwich Village*

The artistic and unconventional, or **Bohemian**, lifestyle of these neighborhoods offered young artists and writers new lifestyles.

**Modern American Art** European art movements greatly influenced the modernists of American art. Perhaps most striking was the diverse range of artistic styles, each attempting to express the individual, modern experience.

Taking his cue from the bold and colorful Impressionism of French artist Paul Cézanne, American painter John Marin drew on nature as well as the urban dynamics of New York for inspiration, explaining, “the whole city is alive; buildings, people, all are alive; and the more they move me the more I feel them to be alive.” Painter Charles Scheeler applied the influences of photography and the geometric forms of Cubism to urban and rural American landscapes. **Edward Hopper** revived the visual accuracy of Realism in his haunting scenes. His paintings conveyed a modern sense of disenchantment and isolation.

**Poets and Writers** Poets and writers of the 1920s varied greatly in their styles and subject matter. Chicago poet **Carl Sandburg** used common speech to glorify the Midwest and the expansive nature of American life. In Greenwich Village, Edna St.

Vincent Millay, in her poem “First Fig,” expressed women’s freedom and equality and praised a life intensely lived:

“My candle burns at both ends;  
It will not last the night;  
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—  
It gives a lovely light.”

Several poets of this time had an important impact on the literary culture. Gertrude Stein, for example, was supposed to have been able to make or break a writer’s career with a few well-placed remarks. Poets such as Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and William Carlos Williams used clear, concise images to express moments in time.

Some poets concentrated on what they considered the negative effects of modernism. In his poem “The Hollow Men,” for example, **T.S. Eliot** described a world filled with empty dreams and “hollow men,” and he foresaw a world that would end “not with a bang but a whimper.”

Among playwrights, one of the most innovative was **Eugene O’Neill**. His plays, filled with bold artistry and modern themes, portrayed realistic characters and situations, offering a vision of life that sometimes touched on the tragic.

Many novelists, affected by the experiences of World War I, wrote about disillusionment and reevaluated the myths of American heroes. They often created characters who were “heroic antiheroes”—flawed individuals who still had heroic qualities of mind and spirit. **Ernest Hemingway**, who served as an ambulance driver in Italy during World War I, was one such writer. His fiction presented a new literary style characterized by direct, simple, and concise prose, as when he wrote about war in such works as *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *A Farewell to Arms*.

### History Through Art

**Lonely People** Like many of his works, Edward Hopper’s *Nighthawks* depicts isolated people. [How do you think this painting reflects the experience of small-town people who moved to the cities?](#)





John Dos Passos, a critic of America's capitalist culture, experimented with the form of the novel in his innovative trilogy *U.S.A.*, which combined fiction, biography, news headlines, and prose poems. Sinclair Lewis wrote about the absurdities of traditional life in small-town America in his novels *Main Street* and *Babbitt*. **F. Scott Fitzgerald**, perhaps the most famous writer of the era, created colorful, glamorous characters who chased futile dreams in *The Great Gatsby*, a novel that poignantly exposed the emptiness and superficiality of much of modern society.

 **Reading Check** **Examining** Why did many artists, writers, and intellectuals flock to New York City's Greenwich Village and Chicago's South Side during the 1920s?

## Popular Culture

The economic prosperity of the 1920s provided many Americans with more leisure time and more spending money, which they devoted to making their lives more enjoyable. Millions of Americans eagerly

watched and participated in sports and enjoyed music, theater, and other forms of popular entertainment. They also fell in love with radio shows and motion pictures.

**Baseball, Boxing, and Other Sports** Thanks to radio and motion pictures, sports such as baseball and boxing reached new heights of popularity in the 1920s. Baseball star **Babe Ruth** became a national hero, famous for hitting hundreds of home runs. As one broadcaster later remarked, "He wasn't a baseball player. He was a worldwide celebrity, an international star, the likes of which baseball has never seen since."

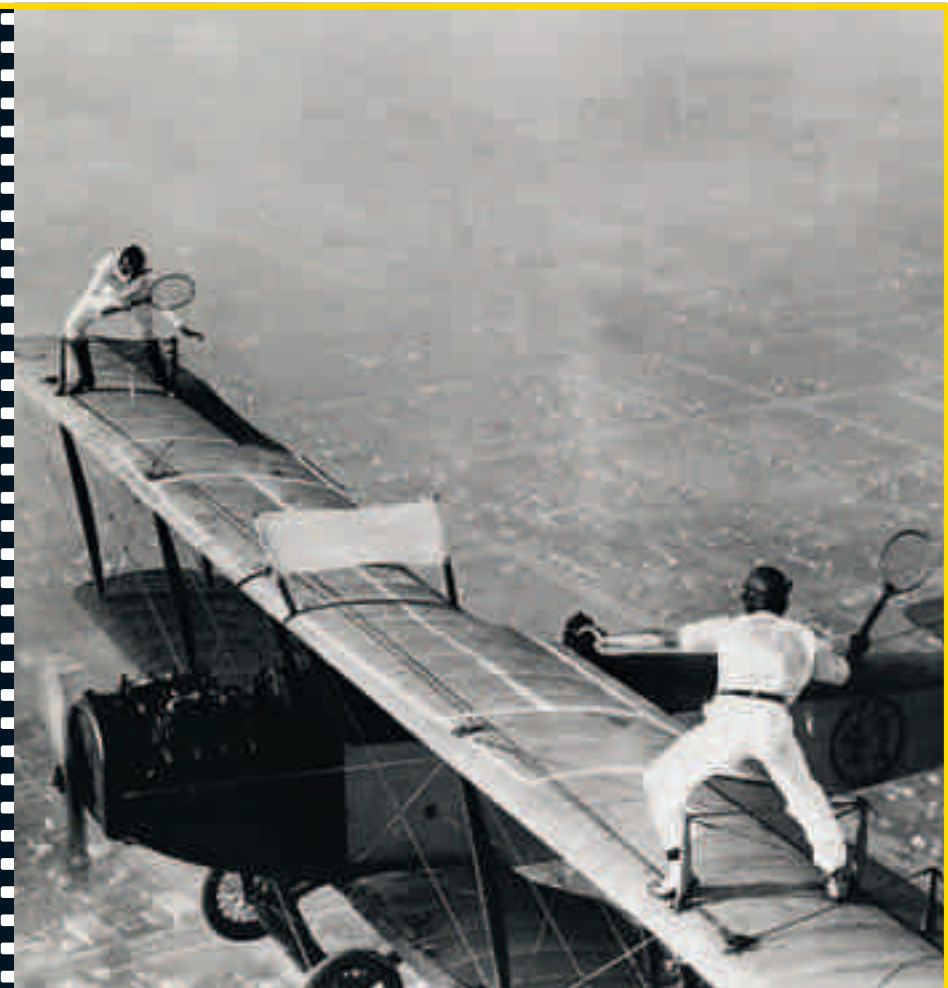
Sports fans also idolized boxer Jack Dempsey. Dempsey held the title of world heavyweight champion from 1919 until 1926, when he lost it to Gene Tunney. When Dempsey attempted to win back the title in 1927, fans' enthusiasm for the rematch reached such a frenzy that one store sold \$90,000 worth of radios—an incredible sum at that time—in the two weeks before the event.

 NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

## MOMENT in HISTORY

### ENTERTAINMENT FOR A NEW ERA

In the 1920s, the United States developed an almost insatiable appetite for daredevils and death-defying stunts. Itinerant pilots, known as "barnstormers," crisscrossed the country offering airplane rides for a dollar and performing dangerous aerial maneuvers for delighted spectators. Some pilots banded together to form "flying circuses." Competition was fierce as these troupes dreamed up ever more complex and hair-raising stunts to thrill audiences. Here, the "Flying Black Hats" engage in an airborne tennis match.



Americans eagerly followed other sports and sports figures, too. Newspaper coverage helped generate enthusiasm for college football. One of the most famous players of the 1920s was Red Grange of the University of Illinois. Grange was known as the “Galloping Ghost” because of his speed and ability to evade members of opposing teams.

Millions of sports fans also were thrilled by the achievements of Bobby Jones, the best golfer of the decade, and tennis players Bill Tilden and Helen Wills, who dominated world tennis. In 1926 Jones became the first golfer to win the U.S. Open and the British Open in the same year. In 1927 swimmer Gertrude Ederle enchanted Americans when she shattered records by swimming the English Channel in a little over 14 hours.

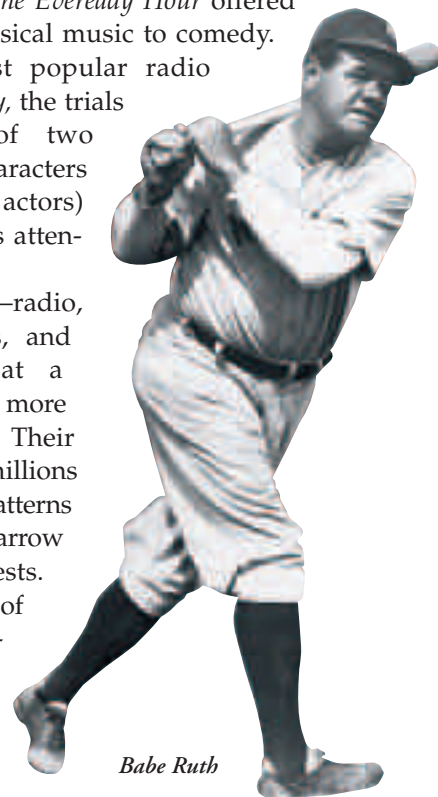
**The Rise of Hollywood** Although sports became increasingly popular in the 1920s, nothing quite matched the allure of motion pictures. Technology had not yet made sound possible in films, so theaters hired piano players to provide music during the feature, while subtitles revealed the plot. Audiences thronged to see such stars as Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Tom Mix, Douglas Fairbanks, Gloria Swanson, Rudolph Valentino, and Clara Bow. In 1927 the first “talking” picture—*The Jazz Singer*—was produced, and the golden age of Hollywood began.

**Popular Radio Shows and Music** Radio also enjoyed a large following during the Jazz Age. In 1920, in one of the first commercial radio broadcasts in history, listeners of station KDKA in Pittsburgh learned the news of Warren G. Harding’s landslide

victory in the presidential election. Within two years, Americans could turn the dial to more than 400 different radio stations around the country.

Most stations in the 1920s played the popular music of the day, such as “Yes! We Have No Bananas” and “Lover Come Back Again.” Broadcasts such as *The Eveready Hour* offered everything from classical music to comedy. In one of the most popular radio shows, *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, the trials and tribulations of two African American characters (portrayed by white actors) captured the nation’s attention every evening.

The **mass media**—radio, movies, newspapers, and magazines aimed at a broad audience—did more than just entertain. Their easy availability to millions helped break down patterns of provincialism, or narrow focus on local interests. They fostered a sense of shared national experience that helped unify the nation and spread the new ideas and attitudes of the time.



Babe Ruth

**Reading Check Summarizing** How did the American economy of the 1920s affect popular culture?

## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

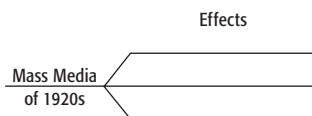
- Define:** Bohemian, mass media.
- Identify:** Carl Sandburg, Eugene O’Neill, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald.
- Describe** the main themes of artists and writers during the 1920s.

### Reviewing Themes

- Culture and Traditions** How did writers, artists, and popular culture of the 1920s affect traditional ideas in the United States?

### Critical Thinking

- Synthesizing** How did World War I influence the literature written during the 1920s?
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the effects of mass media on American culture.



### Analyzing Visuals

- Interpreting Art** Study the Edward Hopper painting, *Nighthawks*, on page 621. How do different elements of this piece work to convey a sense of isolation?

### Writing About History

- Descriptive Writing** Imagine that you have moved to New York’s Greenwich Village in the 1920s. Write a letter to a friend describing the atmosphere in your neighborhood.



## Appreciation

**LOUIS DANIEL ARMSTRONG** *Writer Stanley Crouch remembers Louis Armstrong, a Jazz Age great.*

Pops. Sweet Papa Dip. Satchmo. He had perfect pitch and perfect rhythm. His improvised melodies and singing could be as lofty as a moon flight or as low-down as the blood drops of a street thug dying in the gutter. The extent of his influence across jazz and across American music continues to this day.

Not only do we hear Armstrong in trumpet players who represent the present renaissance in jazz, we can also detect his influence in certain rhythms that sweep from country-and-western music to rap.

Louis Daniel Armstrong was born in New Orleans on August 4, 1901. It was at a home for troubled kids that young Louis first put his lips to the mouthpiece of a cornet and later, a trumpet.

In 1922 Armstrong went to Chicago, where he joined King Oliver and his Creole Jazz Band. The band brought out the people and all the musicians, black and white, who wanted to know how it was truly done.

When he first played in New York City in 1924, his improvisations set the city on its head. The stiff rhythms of the time were slashed away by his combination of the percussive and the soaring. He soon returned to Chicago, perfected what he was doing, and made one record after another.

Louis Armstrong was so much, in fact, that every school of jazz since has had to address how he interpreted the basics of the idiom—swing, blues, ballads, and Afro-Hispanic rhythms. His freedom, his wit, and his discipline give his music a perpetual position in the wave of the future that is the station of all great art.

## VERBATIM

**“The great creators of the government . . . thought of America as a light to the world, as created to lead the world in the assertion of the right of peoples and the rights of free nations.”**

**WOODROW WILSON,**  
*in defense of the League of Nations, 1920*

**“We seek no part in directing the destinies of the Old World.”**

**WARREN G. HARDING,**  
*Inaugural Address, 1921*

**“Here was a new generation, . . . dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find . . . all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken.”**



*F. Scott Fitzgerald*

**F. SCOTT FITZGERALD,**  
*author, This Side of Paradise*

**“There has been a change for the worse during the past year in feminine dress, dancing, manners and general moral standards. [One should] realize the serious ethical consequences of immodesty in girls’ dress.”**

*from the* **PITTSBURGH OBSERVER**

**“[In New York] I saw 7,000,000 two-legged animals penned in an evil smelling cage, . . . streets as unkempt as a Russian steppe, . . . rubbish, waste paper, cigar butts. . . . One glance and you know no master hand directs.”**

*article in Soviet newspaper* **PRAVDA**  
*describing New York City in 1925*





BROWN BROTHERS

## Hide the Hooch

Ingenious Americans are finding unusual places to store their liquor under Prohibition:

- canes
- hot water bottles
- shoe heels
- rolled newspaper
- folds of coats
- perfume bottles

## Milestones

**EMBARRASSED, 1920.** TEXAS SENATOR MORRIS SHEPPARD, a leading proponent of the Eighteenth Amendment, when a large whiskey still is found on his farm.

**ERASED, 1922.** THE WORD “OBEY,” from the Episcopal marriage ceremony, by a vote of American Episcopal bishops.

**DIED, 1923.** HOMER MOREHOUSE, 27, in the 87th hour of a record-setting 90-hour, 10-minute dance marathon.

**EXONERATED, 1921.** EIGHT CHICAGO WHITE SOX PLAYERS charged with taking bribes to throw the 1919 World Series. The players were found “not guilty” when grand jury testimony disappeared. Newly appointed commissioner of baseball Kenesaw Mountain Landis banned the “Black Sox” from baseball.



QUINER PICTURES

**MAKING A COMEBACK.** SANTA CLAUS, after falling into low favor in the last decade. Aiming at children, advertisers are marketing St. Nick heavily.



BROWN BROTHERS

### WHAT'S NEW

## Invented This Decade

*How did we live without . . .*

- push-button elevators
- neon signs
- oven thermostats
- electric razors
- tissues
- spiral-bound notebooks
- motels
- dry ice
- zippers
- pop-up toasters
- flavored yogurt
- car radios
- adhesive tape
- food disposals
- water skiing
- automatic potato peeler
- self-winding wristwatch

## NUMBERS

**60,000**

Families with radios in 1922

**9,000,000**

Motor vehicles registered in U.S. in 1920

**\$2,467,946**

Income tax paid by Henry Ford in 1924

**500,000**

People who wrote to Henry Ford in 1924 begging for money

**33.5**

Number of hours Charles Lindbergh spent in his nonstop flight from New York to Paris on May 20, 1927

**1,800**

Tons of ticker tape and shredded paper dropped on Charles Lindbergh in his parade in New York City

**\$16,000**

Cost of cleaning up after the parade

**7,000**

Job offers received by Lindbergh

**3.5 million**

Number of letters received by Lindbergh



Charles Lindbergh

BROWN BROTHERS

# African American Culture

## Guide to Reading

### Main Idea

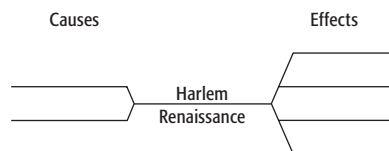
During World War I, the prospect of employment and greater freedoms spurred the “Great Migration” of African Americans from the rural South to industrial cities in the North.

### Key Terms and Names

Great Migration, Harlem Renaissance, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, jazz, Cotton Club, blues, Marcus Garvey

### Reading Strategy

**Organizing** As you read about the African American experience in the 1920s, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by filling in the causes and effects of the Harlem Renaissance.



### Reading Objectives

- **Describe** the Harlem Renaissance and the rediscovery of African American cultural roots.
- **Explain** the increase in African American political activism.

### Section Theme

**Groups and Institutions** African Americans played stronger political and cultural roles in the 1920s than they had in previous decades.

### Preview of Events



## ★ An American Story ★



Louis Armstrong

On August 8, 1922, a young cornet player named Louis Armstrong took the train from New Orleans to Chicago. His hero, the bandleader Joe “King” Oliver, had sent a telegram to Armstrong offering him a job. Here, Armstrong recalls his trip:

“When I got to the station in Chicago, I couldn’t see Joe Oliver anywhere . . . I’d never seen a city that big. All those tall buildings, I thought they were universities. I said, no, this is the wrong city. I was just fixing to take the next train back home . . . when a red cap [train porter] Joe had left word with came up to me. He took me to the Lincoln Gardens and when I got to the door there and heard Joe and his band wailing so good, I said to myself, ‘No, I ain’t supposed to be in this band. They’re too good.’”

The next night, near the end of the show, Oliver let Armstrong perform a solo. Armstrong later recalled his feelings: “I had hit the big time. I was up North with the greats. I was playing with my idol, the King, Joe Oliver. My boyhood dream had come true at last.”

—quoted in *The African American Family Album*

## The Harlem Renaissance

Louis Armstrong’s first impressions of Chicago and his desire to fulfill a dream were probably similar to the first impressions and desires of hundreds of thousands of other African Americans who joined in what was called the **Great Migration** from the rural



**HISTORY**  
*Online*

**Student Web Activity**

 Visit the *American Vision* Web site at [tav.glencoe.com](http://tav.glencoe.com) and click on **Student Web Activities—Chapter 20** for an activity on the Jazz Age.

South to industrial cities in the North. By moving north, African Americans sought to escape the segregated society of the South, to find economic opportunities, and to build better lives. After World War I, black populations swelled in large northern cities. The cities were full of nightclubs and music, particularly in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem—the heart and soul of the African American renaissance. It was there that African Americans created an environment that stimulated artistic development, racial pride, a sense of community, and political organization. The result was a flowering of African American arts that became known as the **Harlem Renaissance**.

**The Writers** Considered the first important writer of the Harlem Renaissance, **Claude McKay** emigrated from Jamaica to New York. There, he translated the shock of American racism into *Harlem Shadows*, a collection of poetry published in 1922. In such poems as “The Lynching” and “If We Must Die,” McKay’s eloquent verse expressed a proud defiance and bitter contempt of racism—two striking characteristics of Harlem Renaissance writing.

One of the most prolific, original, and versatile writers of the Harlem Renaissance was **Langston Hughes**. Born in Joplin, Missouri, Hughes became a leading voice of the African American experience in the United States.  (See *American Literature on page 631* for more information on Langston Hughes.)

Harlem Renaissance authors continue to influence writers today. **Zora Neale Hurston** published her first novels, *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, in the 1930s. These works influenced such contemporary authors as Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison. Hurston’s personal and spirited portrayals of rural African American culture, often set in Florida where she grew up, were also the first major stories featuring African American females as central characters. Other notable writers of the Harlem Renaissance include Countee Cullen, Alain Locke, Dorothy West, and Nella Larsen.

**Jazz, Blues, and the Theater** Shortly after **Louis Armstrong** arrived in Chicago from New Orleans, he introduced an improvisational, early form of **jazz**, a style of music influenced by Dixieland music and ragtime, with its ragged rhythms and syncopated melodies.

In 1925, three years after joining Joe “King” Oliver’s band, Armstrong awed fellow musicians with a series of recordings made with his group, the “Hot Five.” In these recordings, especially in the song “Cornet Chop Suey,” Armstrong broke away from the

New Orleans tradition of ensemble or group playing by performing highly imaginative solos. He became the first great cornet and trumpet soloist in jazz music.

Ragtime also influenced the composer, pianist, and bandleader **Duke Ellington**, who listened as a teenager to ragtime piano players in Washington, D.C. In 1923 Ellington formed a small band, moved to New York, and began playing in speakeasies and clubs. He soon created his own sound, a blend of improvisation and orchestration using different combinations of instruments. The Ellington style appeared in such hits as “Mood Indigo” and “Sophisticated Lady.”

Like many other African American entertainers, Ellington got his start at the **Cotton Club**, one of the most famous Harlem nightspots. Years later, reflecting on the music of this era, Ellington said, “Everything, and I repeat, *everything* had to swing. And that was just it, those cats really had it; they had that soul. And you know you can’t just play some of this music without soul. Soul is very important.”


**Picturing History**

**Renaissance Writers** Claude McKay wrote about his Jamaican homeland, while Zora Neale Hurston celebrated the courage of African Americans in the rural South. [How did these writers contribute to African Americans’ cultural identity?](#)





**Bessie Smith** seemed to symbolize soul. Her emotional singing style and commanding voice earned her the title “the Empress of the Blues.” Smith sang of unfulfilled love, poverty, and oppression—the classic themes of the **blues**, a soulful style of music that evolved from African American spirituals. Born in Tennessee, Smith started performing in tent shows, saloons, and small theaters in the South. Discovered by Ma Rainey, one of the first great blues singers, Smith later performed with many of the greatest jazz bands of the era, including those of Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, and Benny Goodman. Her first recorded song, “Down Hearted Blues,” became a major hit in 1923.


While jazz and blues filled the air during the Harlem Renaissance, the theater arts were also flourishing. *Shuffle Along*, the first musical written, produced, and performed by African Americans, made its debut on Broadway in 1921. The show’s success helped launch a number of careers, including those of Florence Mills and Paul Robeson.

**Paul Robeson**, a celebrated singer and actor, received wide acclaim in the title role of a 1924 New York production of *Emperor Jones*, a play by Eugene

O’Neill. In 1928 Robeson gained fame for his work in the musical *Show Boat*. He also often appeared at the Apollo Theater, another famous entertainment club in Harlem. Robeson’s fame ultimately spread to Europe, where he became well known as a singer and actor.

Perhaps the most daring performer of the era, Josephine Baker transformed a childhood knack for flamboyance into a career as a well-known singer and dancer. Baker performed on Broadway but went to Paris to dance in 1925. Baker took Paris by storm, launching an international career.

The Harlem Renaissance succeeded in bringing international fame to African American arts. It also sparked a political transformation in the United States.

 **Reading Check Analyzing** Analyze how African Americans helped shape the national identity through the use of music.



### Picturing History

**Harlem Renaissance** The growing fame of African American artists, who often performed (but could not be patrons) at Harlem’s “Cotton Club,” encouraged a flamboyant lifestyle.

**What conditions encouraged the growth of African American art?**



## African American Politics

The racial pride that sparked the artistic achievements of the Harlem Renaissance also fueled the political and economic aspirations of many African Americans. The postwar years saw the development of new attitudes among African Americans, who forged new roles in life and in politics. For many, the sight of the 1,300 African American men of the Fifteenth Regiment of New York's National Guard, returning from the war and marching through Manhattan and home to Harlem, symbolized these aspirations. W.E.B. Du Bois, editor of *The Crisis*, captured the new sense of dignity and defiance of African Americans:

“We return.

We return from fighting.

We return fighting.

Make way for democracy! We saved it in France, and

by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United

States of America, or know the reason why.”

—from *When Harlem Was in Vogue*

**The Black Vote in the North** The Great Migration had a significant impact on the political power of African Americans in the North. As their numbers grew in certain city neighborhoods, African Americans became a powerful voting bloc that could sometimes sway the outcome of elections.

At election time, most African American voters in the North cast their votes for Republicans, the party of Abraham Lincoln. In 1928 African American voters in Chicago achieved a significant political breakthrough. Voting as a bloc, they helped elect **Oscar DePriest**, the first African American representative in Congress from a Northern state. During his three terms in Congress, DePriest introduced laws to provide pensions to formerly enslaved African Americans over 75 years old, to declare Lincoln's birthday a public holiday, and to fine and imprison officials who allowed lynchings of prisoners.

**The NAACP Battles Lynching** On the legal front, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) battled valiantly but often unsuccessfully against segregation and discrimination against African Americans. Its efforts focused primarily on lobbying public officials and working through the court system.

From its beginning in 1909, the NAACP lobbied and protested against the horrors of lynching. The NAACP's persistent efforts led to the passage of anti-lynching legislation in the House of

### Jazz's Global Roots

Jazz may be an American creation, but its roots stretch across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe and Africa. The music Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington helped to make famous originated from the spirituals and work songs of African slaves. These songs were a blend of African rhythms and European melodies and harmonies, which African slaves encountered after arriving in North America. This music evolved into ragtime during the late 1800s and early 1900s. By the 1920s, artists had combined aspects of ragtime with the uniquely African American sounds of the blues, and thus jazz was born.

**Why do you think music often spreads easily across different cultures?**

Representatives in 1922. The Senate defeated the bill, but the NAACP continued to lobby against lynching throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Its ongoing efforts kept the issue in the news and probably helped to reduce the number of lynchings that took place.

One of the NAACP's greatest political triumphs occurred in 1930 with the defeat of Judge John J. Parker's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. The NAACP joined with labor unions to launch a highly organized national campaign against the North Carolina judge, who allegedly was racist and anti-labor. By a narrow margin, the Senate refused to confirm Parker's nomination. His defeat demonstrated that African American voters and lobby groups had finally begun to achieve enough influence to affect national politics and change decisions in Congress.

While some people were fighting for integration and improvement in the economic and political position of African Americans, other groups began to emphasize black nationalism and black pride. Eventually, some began to call for black separation from white society.

**Black Nationalism and Marcus Garvey** A dynamic black leader from Jamaica, **Marcus Garvey**, captured the imagination of millions of African Americans with his call for "Negro Nationalism," which glorified the black culture and traditions of the past.

Inspired by Booker T. Washington's call for self-reliance, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), an organization aimed at promoting black pride and unity. The central message of Garvey's Harlem-based movement was that African Americans could gain economic and





### **Picturing History**

**Black Nationalism** Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association advocated African American self-reliance and separation from whites and white society. [What eventually happened to Garvey and his movement?](#)

political power by educating themselves. Garvey also advocated separation and independence from whites.

In 1920, at the height of his power, Garvey presided over an international conference in the UNIA Liberty Hall in Harlem. After the convention, about 50,000 people, led by Garvey, marched through the streets of

Harlem in a show of support. Garvey told his followers they would never find justice or freedom in America, and he proposed to lead them to Africa.

Garvey's plan to create a settlement in the African country of Liberia alarmed France and Great Britain, which governed surrounding territories. In the United States, the emerging African American middle class and intellectuals distanced themselves from Garvey and his push for racial purity and separation. FBI officials saw UNIA as a dangerous catalyst for black uprisings in urban areas. Garvey also alienated key figures in the Harlem Renaissance by characterizing them as "weak-kneed and cringing . . . [flatterers of] the white man."

Garvey was convicted of mail fraud in 1923 and served time in prison. In 1927 President Coolidge commuted Garvey's sentence and used Garvey's immigrant status to have him deported to Jamaica. Garvey's subsequent attempts to revitalize his movement from abroad failed.

Despite Garvey's failure to keep his movement alive, he inspired millions of African Americans with a sense of pride in their heritage and hope for the future. That sense of pride and hope survived long after Garvey and his "back to Africa" movement was gone. This pride and hope reemerged strongly during the 1950s and played a vital role in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

**✓ Reading Check Summarizing** How did World War I change attitudes among African Americans toward themselves and their country?

## SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

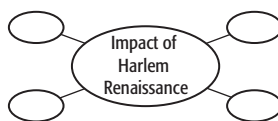
- Define:** jazz, blues.
- Identify:** Great Migration, Harlem Renaissance, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Cotton Club, Marcus Garvey.
- Explain** how Bessie Smith's blues music conveyed universal themes.
- Explain** the importance of the defeat of Judge John Parker's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Describe** the goals of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.

### Reviewing Themes

- Groups and Institutions** What actions did the NAACP take to expand political rights for African Americans?

### Critical Thinking

- Synthesizing** How did the Great Migration affect the political power of African Americans in the North?
- Analyzing** How did Duke Ellington create a new musical style that grew out of the ragtime tradition?
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to describe the impact of the Harlem Renaissance on U.S. society.



### Analyzing Visuals

- Examining Photographs** Study the pictures on page 628 of the Cotton Club and African Americans posing by their car. What are some elements of these pictures that show African Americans adopting parts of the 1920s social culture?

### Writing About History

- Descriptive Writing** Imagine that you witnessed the African American men of the Fifteenth Regiment of New York's National Guard, who had come back from the war, march through Manhattan and home to Harlem. Write a paragraph describing your feelings upon seeing these men.

# American LITERATURE



**Langston Hughes** was born in Joplin, Missouri, in 1902. After high school Hughes went on to Columbia University to study engineering, but he soon dropped out to pursue his first love—poetry. Hughes eventually became known as the “Poet Laureate of Harlem.” The following poems are representative of Hughes’s work. In “I, Too” he describes the disenfranchisement many African Americans felt in the United States in the 1920s, and their willingness to stand up and take pride in their heritage. In “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” Hughes reveals a profound love of his heritage.

### Read to Discover

What is Hughes’s perception of the place of African Americans in society at the time he wrote these poems?

### Reader’s Dictionary

**Euphrates:** River in the Middle East

**Congo and Nile:** Rivers in Africa

**lulled:** calmed; soothed

## Selected Poems by Langston Hughes

### The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I’ve known rivers:  
I’ve known rivers ancient as the  
world and older than the  
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the  
rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when  
dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it  
lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised  
the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi  
when Abe Lincoln went down to  
New Orleans, and I’ve seen its  
muddy bosom turn all golden in  
the sunset.

I’ve known rivers:  
Ancient, dusky rivers

My soul has grown deep like the  
rivers.



### I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I’ll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody’ll dare  
Say to me,  
“Eat in the kitchen,”  
Then.

Besides,  
They’ll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

## Analyzing Literature

- 1. Recall and Interpret** How do you think Hughes’s use of punctuation and line breaks helps convey his point?
- 2. Evaluate and Connect** Do you think these poems convey a positive message or a negative one? Why?

### Interdisciplinary Activity

**Response Writing** The poem “I, Too” is a response to Walt Whitman’s poem, “I Hear America Singing.” Using the Internet or other resources, find and read Whitman’s poem. In small groups, try to figure out how Hughes’s poem ties in to Whitman’s. Then write your own response poem to “I Hear America Singing.”



**Reviewing Key Terms**

On a sheet of paper, use each of these terms in a sentence.

- 1. anarchist
- 2. eugenics
- 3. flapper
- 4. evolution
- 5. creationism
- 6. police powers
- 7. speakeasy
- 8. Bohemian
- 9. mass media
- 10. jazz
- 11. blues

**Chapter Summary**

**Cultural Changes**

- The “new morality” emphasized youth and beauty
- Young people and women gained more independence
- The working class enjoyed more leisure time
- The mass media expanded

**African American Renaissance**

**Harlem Renaissance**

- Breakthrough period for African American arts
- Literature revealed racial pride and contempt of racism
- Jazz and blues popularized

**Political Renaissance**

- Great Migration created strong African American voting blocs in northern cities
- First African American elected to Congress from a northern state
- NAACP battled segregation and discrimination

**Revitalized Traditional Values**

- Fundamentalists preached traditional religious values
- Emphasis on family and moral values
- Traditionalists supported Prohibition

**Nativism**

- Nativists used eugenics as a pseudo-scientific basis for ethnic and religious prejudice
- The new Ku Klux Klan targeted African Americans, Jews, Catholics, immigrants, and other groups they considered to be “un-American”
- Congress established immigration quotas

**Reviewing Key Facts**

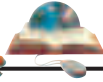
- 12. **Identify:** Emergency Quota Act, Fundamentalism, Carl Sandburg, Eugene O’Neill, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Great Migration, Harlem Renaissance, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Marcus Garvey.
- 13. Why was there a rise in racism and nativism in the 1920s?
- 14. What actions did Congress and the president take during the first half of the 1920s to restrict immigration?
- 15. What national groups were affected most by the new restrictions on immigration?
- 16. What role did the automobile play in changing the way that young people in the United States lived and socialized?
- 17. What was the Fundamentalist movement?
- 18. Why did artists and writers move to Greenwich Village and Chicago’s South Side in the 1920s?
- 19. Why was Harlem the center of the African American renaissance?
- 20. What were two reasons for the rise in African American political activism?

**Critical Thinking**

- 21. **Analyzing Themes: Groups and Institutions** In what ways did the new morality change American family life?
- 22. **Interpreting** Why was Charles Lindbergh a symbol of modern America?
- 23. **Determining Cause and Effect** Analyze the causes and effects of the changing role of women in the 1920s.
- 24. **Identifying** List three works of American art or literature that convey universal themes.
- 25. **Analyzing** Analyze the impact that Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan had on American society as the lawyers in the Scopes trial.
- 26. **Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the major organizations and movements of the 1920s and their goals or purposes.

Organizations/Movements	Goals/Purposes

- 27. **Interpreting Primary Sources** Arna Bontemps was a poet who started his writing career during the Harlem Renaissance. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.



Self-Check Quiz

Visit the *American Vision* Web site at [tav.glencoe.com](http://tav.glencoe.com) and click on **Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 20** to assess your knowledge of chapter content.

**A Black Man Talks of Reaping**

I have sown beside all waters in my day.  
I planted deep, within my heart the fear  
That wind or fowl would take the grain away.  
I planted safe against this stark, lean year.

I scattered seed enough to plant the land  
In rows from Canada to Mexico  
But for my reaping only what the hand  
Can hold at once is all that I can show.

Yet what I sowed and what the orchard yields  
My brother's sons are gathering stalk and root,  
Small wonder then my children glean in fields  
They have not sown, and feed on bitter fruit.

- What does Bontemps mean by “what the hand can hold at once is all that I can show” and “bitter fruit”?
- What major theme of Harlem Renaissance writing is evident in this poem?

**Practicing Skills**

- Synthesizing Information** Read the subsections titled “Nativism Resurges” and “Pseudo-Scientific Racism” at the beginning of Section 1. What information is presented in the first subsection? The second? Synthesize the information in these two subsections and write a short statement that describes American attitudes toward immigrants during the 1920s.

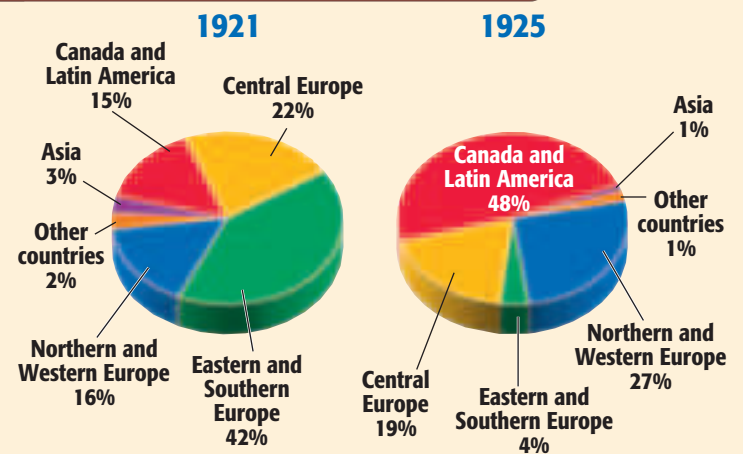
**Chapter Activities**

- Research Project** Work with another student to research the art of Georgia O’Keeffe made in the 1920s. Examine how her efforts reflect the characteristics of the Jazz Age, such as experimentation and innovation. Present your findings to the class.
- American History Primary Source Document Library CD-ROM** Under *The Roaring Twenties*, read “The Movies” by Preston William Slossen. Work with a few of your classmates to write an article that compares and contrasts the motion picture industry in the 1920s with the motion picture industry today.

**Writing Activity**

- Persuasive Writing** Imagine that you are living during the early 1920s. Marcus Garvey is campaigning to lead African Americans to a new settlement to be founded in Liberia.

**U.S. Immigration, 1921 and 1925**



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*

Write a letter to a newspaper editor in which you take a position on the merits of Garvey’s plan. In your letter, describe how you think this plan will affect the nation and your own community.

**Geography and History**

- The circle graphs above show immigration numbers in the United States in 1921 and 1925. Study the graphs and answer the questions below.
  - Interpreting Graphs** What significant changes in immigration do the circle graphs show?
  - Applying Geography Skills** Why did these changes in immigration occur between 1921 and 1925?



**Standardized Test Practice**

**Directions:** Choose the best answer to the following question.

Which of the following trends of the 1920s did NOT contribute to a renewed nativist movement?

- Economic recession
- Influx of immigrants
- Fear of radicals and Communists
- Prohibition

**Test-Taking Tip:** First you must be clear on the meaning of nativism. Then use the process of elimination to rule out the one answer that seems the least related to the definition of nativism.