

Roaring Twenties Notes

EQ: Why was the “Roaring Twenties” such a time of prosperity?

During WWI, there was a high need for weapons and supplies. The production of these materials created lots of jobs for Americans. This led us into the decade of the Roaring 1920's.

- As production and jobs increased, so did prosperity (wealth & success).
- Returning WWI soldiers went back to work.
- Factories turned from making tools & weapons of war, to mass producing cars, radios, and cosmetics. Mass production made products faster and cheaper for consumers.
- Shoes & clothes were much more affordable for the average person, and working people could now afford items such as cars, washing machines, Refrigerators, and radios.

- As consumers bought products, business profits escalated, and wages increased.
- **Consumers:** People who purchase goods & services for a purpose.
- **Producers:** A person, company, or country that makes, grows, or supplies goods or services for sale.
- **Credit:** Buy now, pay later method- ability to obtain goods or services before payment; based on the trust that payment will be made in the future
- **Installment payments:** a system for paying for goods through small payments over a period of time. Payments are usually made monthly (Ex. car note, or mortgage).
- **Specialization:** When companies focus on a few products or services to become better at what they do.

Examples:

- Ford Motor Company only produces cars and they are not in the business of serving food.
- McDonalds focuses on fast food, mainly hamburgers and fries, and does not sell dishes.

E.Q. What was the Jazz Age?

- The first years of the 1920s were called the Jazz age. Also known as the “Pop Culture” of the 1920s
- Jazz was a new form of music created by African American musicians. Jazz was brought to Northern cities from New Orleans, LA. Its freestyle and fast & spirited beat quickly became popular with both white and black listeners.
- The mass production of radios made it more affordable for the average person. People now got their news and entertainment (music, comedies, talk shows, etc.) through radio.
- The use of radios quickly spread Jazz music throughout the country.
- Jazz led to the creation of several new dances during the 1920s- “The Charleston”.
- **Musicians** include:
 - **Louis Armstrong** –Famous trumpeter who focused on improvisation (A creation either spoken, written, or composed that is not previously prepared)
 - **Duke Ellington** – Famous composer & pianist
 - **Bessie Smith** – Famous jazz-blues singer

Movies: During this time, many people also went to the movies, which had music, but no voices. Words would appear as captions on the screen and you would have



to read what actors were saying to each other. In 1927, the first movie with sound was made. **Movies with sound were called “talkies”**.

EQ: What was the Harlem Renaissance?

Harlem Renaissance -An important African-American movement during the 1920s in Harlem, NY. The **Harlem Renaissance** involved black **writers** and **artists** including:

- **Langston Hughes**- Famous Poet and story writer
- **Zora Neal Hurston** – Famous female author



EQ: What was the impact of the Automobile industry and airplanes during the 1920s?

- **Henry Ford** founded the Ford Motor Company and created the modern assembly line that is still used in factories today.
- Ford created the Model T car, which led to the establishment of gas stations, tire shops, and repair shops.
- The automobile changed people’s lives as they were able to travel almost anywhere quickly and easily.
- After WWI, factories also mass produced. Planes used in WWI, were used for mail delivery after the war. People also paid to travel on these mail delivery planes.
- **Charles Lindbergh**: Famous pilot who was the first to travel solo, nonstop across the Atlantic Ocean (from NY to Paris).

EQ: How did the lives of women change during the 1920s?

- After WWI, more women entered the work force (teaching, nursing, & factory jobs). Women even took jobs that were traditionally for men
- Fashion changed from long conservative dresses to short, flashy, loose fitting “flappers”
- Women went from having long hair to short cuts, and wore brilliant colored makeup, and engaged in behavior that was considered radical (Ex. drinking, smoking, attending lively parties, etc.)

