

The Roaring Twenties

*The Emergence of Modern
America (1890–1930)*



Economic growth

Consumerism and culture

Social intolerance

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will be able to explain how the 1920s contributed to these changes in U.S. society:

- The birth and growth of consumer culture
- A shift in popular culture and a booming entertainment industry
- Changes in the role and status of black people and women.



The increasing availability of domestic electricity created an infrastructure for a new consumer culture. As factories churned out cheap electric goods, higher wages allowed people to afford them. Press on each consumer good to find out more information about it.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The car was one of the greatest symbols of consumerism and the economic prosperity of the 1920s.



In 1908 the average cost of a car was \$850, but by the mid-1920s it had fallen to \$290. The Ford Model T was the first modern car because it was mass produced on assembly lines and marketed to the middle classes.

Over 15 million Model T cars were sold between 1908 and 1927. Ford's success was replicated by other car companies, such as General Motors and Chrysler.



How did the popularization of cars impact on U.S. life?





In the 1920s, with new goods entering the market at affordable prices, advertising became big business. Ads no longer just gave information, but appealed to customers' needs and wants, enticing them to buy products.

The main methods of advertising were:

- newspapers and magazines
- signs on streetcars
- outdoor posters.



As more people began to own automobiles, advertising on billboards alongside highways became increasingly popular. The first radio commercial was broadcast in 1922.



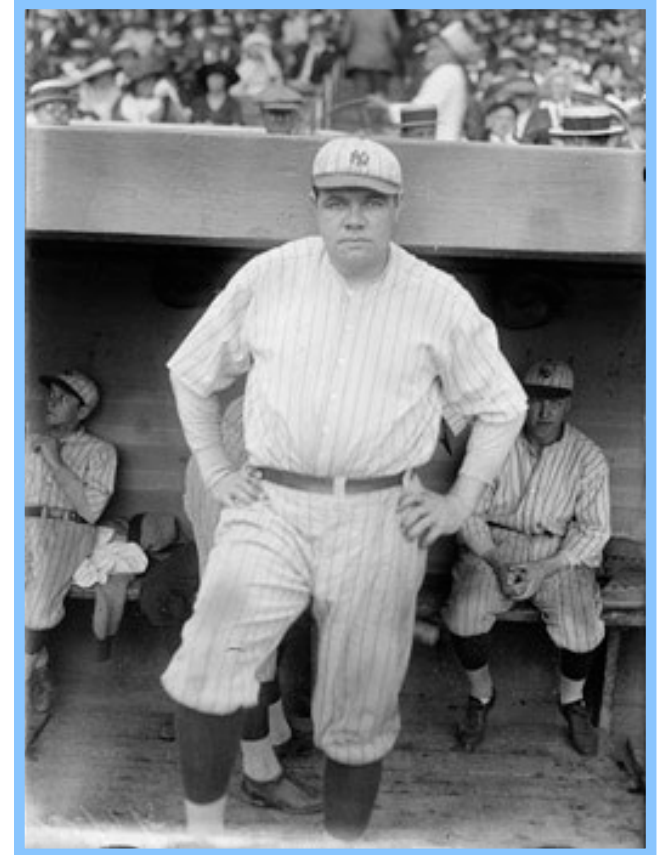
A booming entertainment industry



As people had both more disposable income and more free time, the entertainment industry became extremely successful.

Radio shows provided the first form of mass entertainment. Over 10 million radio sets were in use by the end of the 1920s.

The sports industry boomed too. The NFL was founded in 1920, the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team was formed in the 1920s and George “Babe” Ruth became an American hero for his exploits in baseball.



How did these things contribute to national identity?



Going to the movies became an extremely popular leisure activity in the 1920s. People had more time and money and the modern film industry was born in this era. Watch this animation to find out more.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The Great Migration



The **Great Migration** was the movement of thousands of black people from the South to the industrial North in search of jobs between 1910 and 1920. By the end of the Migration, over 40% of black Americans lived in cities.

Harlem in New York City became the largest black urban community. Black culture expressed itself in the creativity of the **Harlem Renaissance**, which produced many famous authors, musicians and political thinkers.



Was the Harlem Renaissance representative of a new social tolerance in the 1920s?



The Harlem Renaissance



The Harlem Renaissance produced many important black musicians and writers in the 1920s.

Drag each person to the correct place, depending on whether they were a musician or a writer.

Press **start** to begin.

start

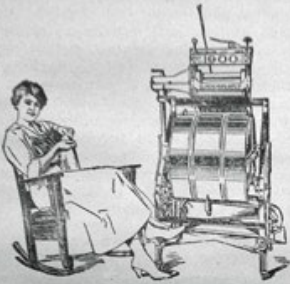




In 1920, Congress passed the 19th Amendment. This gave women the right to vote in all local and national elections.

Women also had other new opportunities available to them. Many women entered the workforce in search of increased independence and professional opportunity brought on by mass production and consumerism.

Consumerism helped women due to the affordability of labor-saving devices. Women also benefitted from increased educational opportunities. By 1928, 39% of all college degrees were earned by women.



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SEATTLE ELECTRIC WASHER CO.

Main 1432 720 Second Avenue



Women's rights campaigners



Although women achieved the vote in 1920, they did not have equal rights in all areas of life. Can you match these key figures in women's rights to what they are famous for?

Press the information panels on the right to see a photograph and a quote from each of them.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Some women, usually from the middle and upper classes, were determined to break traditional women's roles. These women were known as **flappers** and had new attitudes and social habits. Press on the image to find out more about flapper fashions and behaviors. Press **start** to begin.

start



How much did women's lives change in the 1920s?



Literature can offer a great deal of insight into the society and culture of a specific time period. *The Great Gatsby* successfully does this for the 1920s. Explore this famous novel to see how it reflects the attitudes and issues of the Roaring Twenties.
Press **start** to begin.

start

