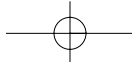


# Roaring Life of the 1920s



CHAPTER 13

# THE ROARING LIFE OF THE 1920s



Blues singer Gertrude "Ma" Rainey performs with her Georgia Jazz Band in Chicago, Illinois, 1923.

**1920** Nineteenth Amendment gives women the right to vote.



**1922** Louis Armstrong plays for King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band in Chicago.

**1923** *Time* magazine begins publication.



**1924** Calvin Coolidge is elected president.

USA WORLD

1920

1922

1924

**1921** China's Communist Party is founded.



**1922** King Tut's tomb is discovered in Egypt.

**1923** Mustafa Kemal becomes first president of new Republic of Turkey.



## INTERACT WITH HISTORY

The year is 1920. The World War has just ended. Boosted by the growth of the wartime industry, the U.S. economy is flourishing. Americans live life to the fullest as new social and cultural trends sweep the nation.

*How might the new prosperity affect your everyday life?*

### Examine the Issues

- As Americans leave farms and small towns to take jobs in the cities, how might their lives change?
- How will economic prosperity affect married and unmarried women?
- How might rural and urban areas change as more and more families acquire automobiles?



RESEARCH LINKS [CLASSZONE.COM](http://CLASSZONE.COM)

Visit the Chapter 13 links for more information about The Roaring Life of the 1920s.

**1925** The Scopes trial takes place in Tennessee.

**1927** Charles Lindbergh makes the first nonstop solo transatlantic flight.

**1928** Herbert Hoover is elected president.

**1926**

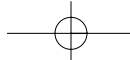
**1926** Hirohito becomes emperor of Japan.



**1928**

**1928** President Álvaro Obregón of Mexico is assassinated.

**1930**



# Changing Ways of Life

## MAIN IDEA

Americans experienced cultural conflicts as customs and values changed in the 1920s.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The way in which different groups react to change continues to cause conflict today.

## Terms & Names

- Prohibition
- speakeasy
- bootlegger
- fundamentalism
- Clarence Darrow
- Scopes trial

## One American's Story

As the 1920s dawned, social reformers who hoped to ban alcohol—and the evils associated with it—rejoiced. The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, banning the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol, took effect in January of 1920. Billy Sunday, an evangelist who preached against the evils of drinking, predicted a new age of virtue and religion.

### A PERSONAL VOICE BILLY SUNDAY

**“The reign of tears is over! The slums will soon be only a memory. We will turn our prisons into factories and our jails into storehouses and corncribs. Men will walk upright now, women will smile and the children will laugh. Hell will be forever for rent!”**

—quoted in *How Dry We Were: Prohibition Revisited*

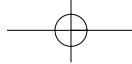
Sunday's dream was not to be realized in the 1920s, as the law proved unenforceable. The failure of Prohibition was a sign of cultural conflicts most evident in the nation's cities. Lured by jobs and by the challenge and freedom that the city represented, millions of people rode excitedly out of America's rural past and into its urban future.



▲ 1920s evangelist  
Billy Sunday

## Rural and Urban Differences

America changed dramatically in the years before 1920, as was revealed in the 1920 census. According to figures that year, 51.2 percent of Americans lived in communities with populations of 2,500 to more than 1 million. Between 1922 and 1929, migration to the cities accelerated, with nearly 2 million people leaving farms and towns each year. “Cities were the place to be, not to get away from,” said one historian. The agricultural world that millions of Americans left behind was largely unchanged from the 19th century—that world was one of small towns and farms bound together by conservative moral values and close social relationships. Yet small-town attitudes began to lose their hold on the American mind as the city rose to prominence.



**THE NEW URBAN SCENE** At the beginning of the 1920s, New York, with a population of 5.6 million people, topped the list of big cities. Next came Chicago, with nearly 3 million, and Philadelphia, with nearly 2 million. Another 65 cities claimed populations of 100,000 or more, and they grew more crowded by the day. Life in these booming cities was far different from the slow-paced, intimate life in America's small towns. Chicago, for instance, was an industrial powerhouse, home to native-born whites and African Americans, immigrant Poles, Irish, Russians, Italians, Swedes, Arabs, French, and Chinese. Each day, an estimated 300,000 workers, 150,000 cars and buses, and 20,000 trolleys filled the pulsing downtown. At night people crowded into ornate movie theaters and vaudeville houses offering live variety shows.

*“How ya gonna  
keep ‘em down  
on the farm,  
after they’ve  
seen Paree?”*

POPULAR SONG OF THE 1920s

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Contrasting

**A** How did small-town life and city life differ?

For small-town migrants, adapting to the urban environment demanded changes in thinking as well as in everyday living. The city was a world of competition and change. City dwellers read and argued about current scientific and social ideas. They judged one another by accomplishment more often than by background. City dwellers also tolerated drinking, gambling, and casual dating—worldly behaviors considered shocking and sinful in small towns. **A**

For all its color and challenge, though, the city could be impersonal and frightening. Streets were filled with strangers, not friends and neighbors. Life was fast-paced, not leisurely. The city demanded endurance, as a foreign visitor to Chicago observed.

#### A PERSONAL VOICE WALTER L. GEORGE

**“It is not for nothing that the predominating color of Chicago is orange. It is as if the city, in its taxicabs, in its shop fronts, in the wrappings of its parcels, chose the color of flame that goes with the smoky black of its factories. It is not for nothing that it has repelled the geometric street arrangement of New York and substituted . . . great ways with names that a stranger must learn if he can. . . . He is in a [crowded] city, and if he has business there, he tells himself, ‘If I weaken I shan’t last long.’”**

—Hail Columbia!

## History Through

## Art

### SONG OF THE TOWERS

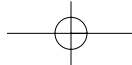
This mural by Aaron Douglas is part of a series he painted inside the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library to symbolize different aspects of African-American life during the 1920s. In this panel, *Song of the Towers*, he depicts figures before a city backdrop. As seen here, much of Douglas's style was influenced by jazz music and geometric shapes.

#### SKILLBUILDER Analyzing Visual Sources

1. What is the focal point of this panel?
2. What parts of this painting might be symbolic of African Americans' move north?
3. How does Douglas represent new freedoms in this mural? Support your answer with examples.

 SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R23.





## DIFFICULT DECISIONS

### TO PROHIBIT ALCOHOL OR NOT?

The question of whether to outlaw alcohol divided Americans. Many believed the government should make alcohol illegal to protect the public, while others believed it was a personal decision, and not morally wrong.

1. Examine the pros and cons of each position. Which do you agree with? What other factors, if any, do you think would influence your position?
2. If you had been a legislator asked to vote for the Eighteenth Amendment, what would you have said? Explain.
3. What happens when the government legislates moral values? Give contemporary examples to support your answer.

In the city, lonely migrants from the country often ached for home. Throughout the 1920s, Americans found themselves caught between rural and urban cultures—a tug that pitted what seemed to be a safe, small-town world of close ties, hard work, and strict morals against a big-city world of anonymous crowds, moneymakers, and pleasure seekers.

**THE PROHIBITION EXPERIMENT** One vigorous clash between small-town and big-city Americans began in earnest in January 1920, when the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect. This amendment launched the era known as **Prohibition**, during which the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages were legally prohibited.

Reformers had long considered liquor a prime cause of corruption. They thought that too much drinking led to crime, wife and child abuse, accidents on the job, and other serious social problems. Support for Prohibition came largely from the rural South and West, areas with large populations of native-born Protestants. The church-affiliated Anti-Saloon League had led the drive to pass the Prohibition amendment. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which considered drinking a sin, had helped push the measure through.

At first, saloons closed their doors, and arrests for drunkenness declined. But in the aftermath of World War I, many Americans were tired of making sacrifices; they wanted to enjoy life. Most immigrant groups did not consider drinking a sin but a natural part of socializing, and they resented government meddling.

Eventually, Prohibition's fate was sealed by the government, which failed to budget enough money to enforce the law. The Volstead Act established a Prohibition Bureau in the Treasury Department in 1919, but the agency was underfunded. The job of enforcement involved patrolling 18,700 miles of coastline as well as inland borders, tracking down illegal stills (equipment for distilling liquor), monitoring highways for truckloads of illegal alcohol, and overseeing all the industries that legally used alcohol to be sure none was siphoned off for illegal purposes. The task fell to approximately 1,500 poorly paid federal agents and local police—clearly an impossible job.

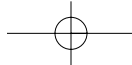
**SPEAKEASIES AND BOOTLEGGERS** To obtain liquor illegally, drinkers went underground to hidden saloons and nightclubs known as **speakeasies**—so called because when inside, one spoke quietly, or “easily,” to avoid detection.

Speakeasies could be found everywhere—in penthouses, cellars, office buildings, rooming houses, tenements, hardware stores, and tearooms. To be admitted to a speakeasy, one had to present a card or use a password. Inside, one would find a mix of fashionable middle-class and upper-middle-class men and women.

Before long, people grew bolder in getting around the law. They learned to distill alcohol and built their own stills. Since alcohol was allowed for medicinal and religious purposes, prescriptions



◀ A young woman demonstrates one of the means used to conceal alcohol—hiding it in containers strapped to one's legs. ▶


**MAIN IDEA**
**Developing Historical Perspective**

**B** Why do you think the Eighteenth Amendment failed to eliminate alcohol consumption?

for alcohol and sales of sacramental wine (intended for church services) skyrocketed. People also bought liquor from **bootleggers** (named for a smuggler's practice of carrying liquor in the legs of boots), who smuggled it in from Canada, Cuba, and the West Indies. "The business of evading [the law] and making a mock of it has ceased to wear any aspects of crime and has become a sort of national sport," wrote the journalist H. L. Mencken. **B**

**ORGANIZED CRIME** Prohibition not only generated disrespect for the law, it also contributed to organized crime in nearly every major city. Chicago became notorious as the home of Al Capone, a gangster whose bootlegging empire netted over \$60 million a year. Capone took control of the Chicago liquor business by killing off his competition. During the 1920s, headlines reported 522 bloody gang killings and made the image of flashy Al Capone part of the folklore of the period. In 1940, the writer Herbert Asbury recalled the Capone era in Chicago.

**A PERSONAL VOICE HERBERT ASBURY**

**"The famous seven-ton armored car, with the pudgy gangster lolling on silken cushions in its darkened recesses, a big cigar in his fat face, and a \$50,000 diamond ring blazing from his left hand, was one of the sights of the city; the average tourist felt that his trip to Chicago was a failure unless it included a view of Capone out for a spin. The mere whisper: 'Here comes Al,' was sufficient to stop traffic and to set thousands of curious citizens craning their necks along the curbing."**

—*Gem of the Prairie*

By the mid-1920s, only 19 percent of Americans supported Prohibition. The rest, who wanted the amendment changed or repealed, believed that Prohibition caused worse effects than the initial problem. Rural Protestant Americans, however, defended a law that they felt strengthened moral values. The Eighteenth Amendment remained in force until 1933, when it was repealed by the Twenty-first Amendment. **C**

**MAIN IDEA**
**Analyzing Effects**

**C** How did criminals take advantage of Prohibition?

**HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT**



**AL CAPONE**

By age 26, Al Capone headed a criminal empire in Chicago, which he controlled through the use of bribes and violence. From 1925 to 1931, Capone bootlegged whiskey from Canada, operated illegal breweries in Chicago, and ran a network of 10,000 speakeasies. In 1927, the "Big Fellow," as he liked to be called, was worth an estimated \$100 million.

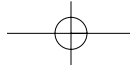
The end came quickly for Capone, though. In 1931, the gangster chief was arrested for tax evasion and went to jail. That was the only crime of which the authorities were ever able to convict him. Capone was later released from jail, but he died several years later at age 48.

**Prohibition, 1920–1933**
**Causes**

- Various religious groups thought drinking alcohol was sinful.
- Reformers believed that the government should protect the public's health.
- Reformers believed that alcohol led to crime, wife and child abuse, and accidents on the job.
- During World War I, native-born Americans developed a hostility to German-American brewers and toward other immigrant groups that used alcohol.

**Effects**

- Consumption of alcohol declined.
- Disrespect for the law developed.
- An increase in lawlessness, such as smuggling and bootlegging, was evident.
- Criminals found a new source of income.
- Organized crime grew.



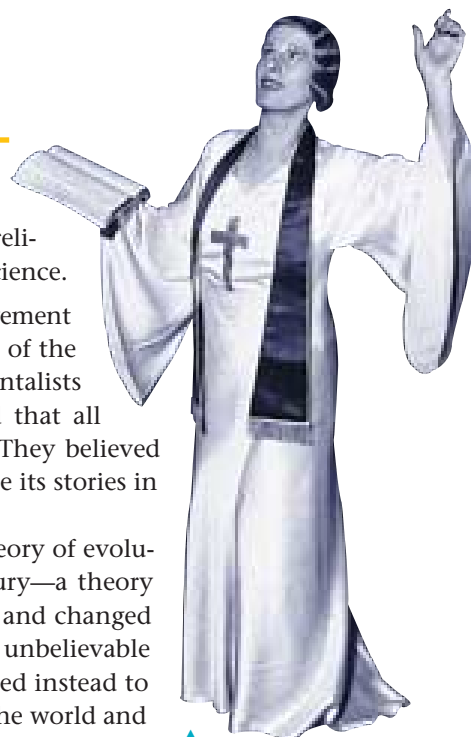
## Science and Religion Clash

Another bitter controversy highlighted the growing rift between traditional and modern ideas during the 1920s. This battle raged between fundamentalist religious groups and secular thinkers over the truths of science.

**AMERICAN FUNDAMENTALISM** The Protestant movement grounded in a literal, or nonsymbolic, interpretation of the Bible was known as **fundamentalism**. Fundamentalists were skeptical of scientific knowledge; they argued that all important knowledge could be found in the Bible. They believed that the Bible was inspired by God, and that therefore its stories in all their details were true.

Their beliefs led fundamentalists to reject the theory of evolution advanced by Charles Darwin in the 19th century—a theory stating that plant and animal species had developed and changed over millions of years. The claim they found most unbelievable was that humans had evolved from apes. They pointed instead to the Bible’s account of creation, in which God made the world and all its life forms, including humans, in six days.

Fundamentalism expressed itself in several ways. In the South and West, preachers led religious revivals based on the authority of the Scriptures. One of the most powerful revivalists was Billy Sunday, a baseball player turned preacher who staged emotional meetings across the South. In Los Angeles, Aimee Semple McPherson, a theatrical woman who dressed in flowing white satin robes, used Hollywood showmanship to preach the word to homesick Midwestern migrants and devoted followers of her radio broadcasts. In the 1920s, fundamentalism gained followers who began to call for laws prohibiting the teaching of evolution. **D**



▲ The evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson in 1922

### MAIN IDEA

#### Summarizing

**D** Summarize the beliefs of fundamentalism.

#### Vocabulary

**culminate:** to come to completion; end

## NOW & THEN

### EVOLUTION, CREATIONISM, AND EDUCATION

There is still great controversy today over the teaching of evolution in the public schools. Some people believe that creation theory should be taught as a theory of the origin of life, along with evolution. As recently as 1999, the Kansas State School Board voted to eliminate the teaching of evolution from the curriculum.

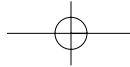
The issue of what should be taught about the origin of life—and who should decide this issue—continues to stir up debate. Some have suggested that science and religion are not necessarily incompatible. They believe that a theory of the origin of life can accommodate both the scientific theory of evolution and religious beliefs.

**THE SCOPES TRIAL** In March 1925, Tennessee passed the nation’s first law that made it a crime to teach evolution. Immediately, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) promised to defend any teacher who would challenge the law. John T. Scopes, a young biology teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, accepted the challenge. In his biology class, Scopes read this passage from *Civic Biology*: “We have now learned that animal forms may be arranged so as to begin with the simple one-celled forms and culminate with a group which includes man himself.” Scopes was promptly arrested, and his trial was set for July.

The ACLU hired **Clarence Darrow**, the most famous trial lawyer of the day, to defend Scopes. William Jennings Bryan, three-time Democratic candidate for president and a devout fundamentalist, served as a special prosecutor. There was no real question of guilt or innocence: Scopes was honest about his action. The **Scopes trial** was a fight over evolution and the role of science and religion in public schools and in American society.

The trial opened on July 10, 1925, and almost overnight became a national sensation. Darrow called Bryan as an expert on the Bible—the contest that everyone had been waiting for. To handle the throngs of Bryan supporters, Judge Raulston moved the court outside, to a platform built under the maple trees. There, before a crowd of several





thousand, Darrow relentlessly questioned Bryan about his beliefs. Bryan stood firm, a smile on his face.

**A PERSONAL VOICE**

CLARENCE DARROW AND WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

**Mr. Darrow**—“You claim that everything in the Bible should be literally interpreted?”

**Mr. Bryan**—“I believe everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is given there. Some of the Bible is given illustratively. For instance: ‘Ye are the salt of the earth.’ I would not insist that man was actually salt, or that he had flesh of salt, but it is used in the sense of salt as saving God’s people.”

—quoted in *Bryan and Darrow at Dayton*

Darrow asked Bryan if he agreed with Bishop James Ussher’s calculation that, according to the Bible, Creation happened in 4004 B.C. Had every living thing on earth appeared since that time? Did Bryan know that ancient civilizations had thrived before 4004 B.C.? Did he know the age of the earth? Bryan grew edgy but stuck to his guns. Finally, Darrow asked Bryan, “Do you think the earth was made in six days?” Bryan answered, “Not six days of 24 hours.” People sitting on the lawn gasped. **E**

With this answer, Bryan admitted that the Bible might be interpreted in different ways. But in spite of this admission, Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100. The Tennessee Supreme Court later changed the verdict on a technicality, but the law outlawing the teaching of evolution remained in effect.

This clash over evolution, the Prohibition experiment, and the emerging urban scene all were evidence of the changes and conflicts occurring during the 1920s. During that period, women also experienced conflict as they redefined their roles and pursued new lifestyles.



**▲** A 1925 newspaper cartoon portrays Bryan (left) and Darrow (right) at the close of the Scopes “monkey” trial on the teaching of evolution, so-called because of a theory of evolution that humans evolved from apes.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Analyzing Issues**

**E** What was the conflict between fundamentalists and those who accepted evolution?



**ASSESSMENT**

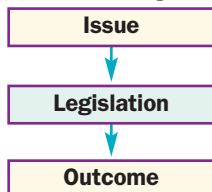
**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Prohibition
- bootlegger
- Clarence Darrow
- speakeasy
- fundamentalism
- Scopes trial

**MAIN IDEA**

**2. TAKING NOTES**

Create two diagrams like the one below. Show how government attempted to deal with (a) problems thought to stem from alcohol use and (b) the teaching of evolution.



Was the legislation effective? Explain.

**CRITICAL THINKING**

**3. ANALYZING ISSUES**

How might the overall atmosphere of the 1920s have contributed to the failure of Prohibition?

**4. ANALYZING CAUSES**

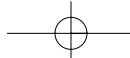
Why do you think organized crime spread so quickly through the cities during the 1920s? Explain your answer.

**5. EVALUATING**

Do you think the passage of the Volstead Act and the ruling in the Scopes trial represented genuine triumphs for traditional values?

**Think About:**

- changes in urban life in the 1920s
- the effects of Prohibition
- the legacy of the Scopes trial



# The Twenties Woman

## MAIN IDEA

American women pursued new lifestyles and assumed new jobs and different roles in society during the 1920s.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Workplace opportunities and trends in family life are still major issues for women today.

## Terms & Names

- flapper
- double standard

## One American's Story

When Zelda Sayre broke off her engagement with would-be writer F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1925, she told him that he would have to become successful on his own. Later, she wrote about how a woman can achieve greatness.

### A PERSONAL VOICE ZELDA SAYRE FITZGERALD

“Rouge means that women want to choose their man—not take what lives in the next house. . . . Look back over the pages of history and see how the loveliness of women has always stirred men—and nations—on to great achievement! There have been women who were not pretty, who have swayed hearts and empires, but these women . . . did not disdain that thing for which paint and powder stands. They wanted to choose their destinies—to be successful competitors in the great game of life.”

—“Paint and Powder,” *The Smart Set*, May 1929 **Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald**



Zelda Sayre and F. Scott Fitzgerald married one week after Scott published his first novel, and Zelda continued to be the model for Scott's independent, unconventional, ambitious female characters. He even copied from her letters and other writings. Ironically, Zelda's devotion to her marriage and to motherhood stifled her career ambitions. Nevertheless, she became a model for a generation of young American women who wanted to break away from traditions and forget the hardships of the war years.

## Young Women Change the Rules

By the 1920s, the experiences of World War I, the pull of cities, and changing attitudes had opened up a new world for many young Americans. These “wild young people,” wrote John F. Carter, Jr., in a 1920 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, were experiencing a world unknown to their parents: “We have seen man at his lowest, woman at her lightest, in the terrible moral chaos of Europe. We have been forced to question, and in many cases to discard, the religion of our fathers. . . . We have been forced to live in an atmosphere of ‘tomorrow we die,’ and so, naturally, we drank and were merry.” In the rebellious, pleasure-loving atmosphere of the twenties, many women began to assert their independence, reject the values of the 19th century, and demand the same freedoms as men.



▲ Flappers compete in a Charleston dance competition in 1926.

**THE FLAPPER** During the twenties, a new ideal emerged for some women: the **flapper**, an emancipated young woman who embraced the new fashions and urban attitudes of the day. Close-fitting felt hats, bright waistless dresses an inch above the knees, skin-toned silk stockings, sleek pumps, and strings of beads replaced the dark and prim ankle-length dresses, whalebone corsets, and petticoats of Victorian days. Young women clipped their long hair into boyish bobs and dyed it jet black.

Many young women became more assertive. In their bid for equal status with men, some began smoking cigarettes, drinking in public, and talking openly about sex—actions that would have ruined their reputations not many years before. They danced the fox trot, camel walk, tango, Charleston, and shimmy with abandon.

Attitudes toward marriage changed as well. Many middle-class men and women began to view marriage as more of an equal partnership, although both agreed that housework and child-rearing remained a woman's job. **A**

**THE DOUBLE STANDARD** Magazines, newspapers, and advertisements promoted the image of the flapper, and young people openly discussed courtship and relationships in ways that scandalized their elders. Although many young women donned the new outfits and flouted tradition, the flapper was more an image of rebellious youth than a widespread reality; it did not reflect the attitudes and values of many young people. During the 1920s, morals loosened only so far. Traditionalists in churches and schools protested the new casual dances and women's acceptance of smoking and drinking.

In the years before World War I, when men “courted” women, they pursued only women they intended to marry. In the 1920s, however, casual dating became increasingly accepted. Even so, a **double standard**—a set of principles granting greater sexual freedom to men than to women—required women to observe stricter standards of behavior than men did. As a result, many women were pulled back and forth between the old standards and the new.

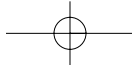
## Women Shed Old Roles at Home and at Work

The fast-changing world of the 1920s produced new roles for women in the workplace and new trends in family life. A booming industrial economy opened new work opportunities for women in offices, factories, stores, and professions. The same economy churned out time-saving appliances and products that reshaped the roles of housewives and mothers.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Evaluating

**A** How was the flapper like and unlike women of today?



▲ A young woman works as a typesetter in a publishing house in 1920.

**NEW WORK OPPORTUNITIES** Although women had worked successfully during the war, afterwards employers who believed that men had the responsibility to support their families financially often replaced female workers with men. Women continued to seek paid employment, but their opportunities changed. Many female college graduates turned to “women’s professions” and became teachers, nurses, and librarians. Big businesses required extensive correspondence and record keeping, creating a huge demand for clerical workers such as typists, filing clerks, secretaries, stenographers, and office-machine operators. Others became clerks in stores or held jobs on assembly lines. A handful of women broke the old stereotypes by doing work once reserved for men, such as flying airplanes, driving taxis, and drilling oil wells. **B**

By 1930, 10 million women were earning wages; however, few rose to managerial jobs, and wherever they worked, women earned less than men. Fearing competition for jobs, men argued that women were just temporary workers whose real job was at home. Between 1900 and 1930, the patterns of discrimination and inequality for women in the business world were established.

**THE CHANGING FAMILY** Widespread social and economic changes reshaped the family. The birthrate had been declining for several decades, and it dropped at a slightly faster rate in the 1920s. This decline was due in part to the wider availability of birth-control information. Margaret Sanger, who had opened the first birth-control clinic in the United States in 1916, founded the American Birth Control League in 1921 and fought for the legal rights of physicians to give birth-control information to their patients.

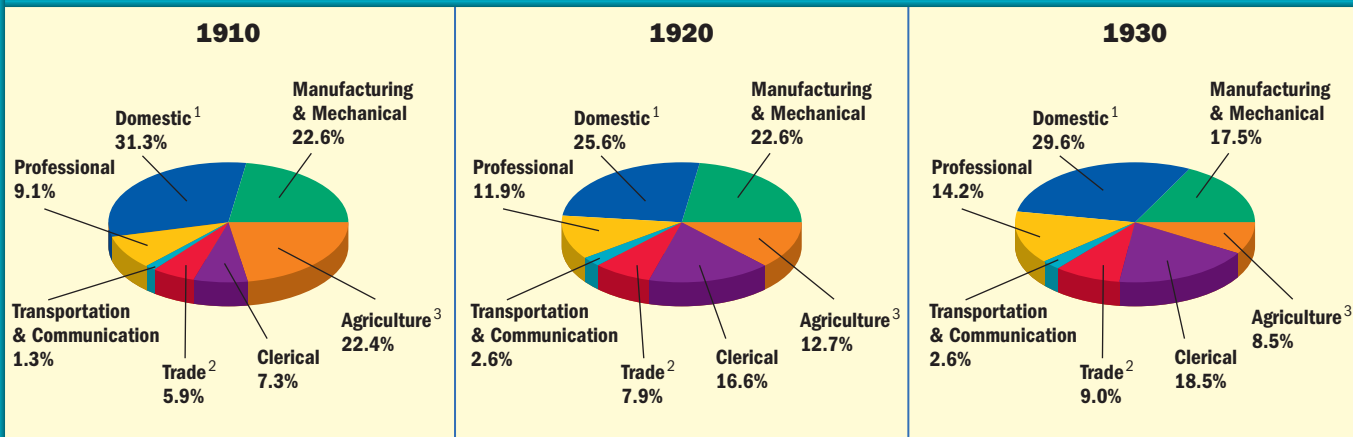
At the same time, social and technological innovations simplified household labor and family life. Stores overflowed with ready-made clothes, sliced bread, and canned foods. Public agencies provided services for the elderly, public health clinics served the sick, and workers’ compensation assisted those who could no longer work. These innovations and institutions had the effect of freeing homemakers from some of their traditional family responsibilities. Many middle-class housewives, the main shoppers and money managers, focused their attention on their homes, husbands, children, and pastimes. “I consider time for reading clubs and my children more important than . . . careful housework and I just don’t do it,” said an Indiana woman in the 1920s.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Analyzing Effects**

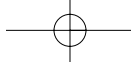
**B** How did the growth of business and industry affect women?

**Women’s Changing Employment, 1910–1930**



<sup>1</sup> Includes restaurant workers and beauticians. <sup>2</sup> Includes sales clerks. <sup>3</sup> Includes forestry and fishing.

Source: Grace Hutchins, *Women Who Work*



As their spheres of activity and influence expanded, women experienced greater equality in marriage. Marriages were based increasingly on romantic love and companionship. Children, no longer thrown together with adults in factory work, farm labor, and apprenticeships, spent most of their days at school and in organized activities with others their own age. At the same time, parents began to rely more heavily on manuals of child care and the advice of experts.

Working-class and college-educated women quickly discovered the pressure of juggling work and family, but the strain on working-class women was more severe. Helen Wright, who worked for the Women’s Bureau in Chicago, recorded the struggle of an Irish mother of two.

**A PERSONAL VOICE** HELEN WRIGHT

**“She worked in one of the meat-packing companies, pasting labels from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. She had entered the eldest child at school but sent her to the nursery for lunch and after school. The youngest was in the nursery all day. She kept her house ‘immaculately clean and in perfect order,’ but to do so worked until eleven o’clock every night in the week and on Saturday night she worked until five o’clock in the morning. She described her schedule as follows: on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday she cleaned one room each night; Saturday afternoon she finished the cleaning and put the house in order; Saturday night she washed; Sunday she baked; Monday night she ironed.”**

—quoted in *Wage-Earning Women*

**MAIN IDEA**

**Summarizing**

**C** What changes affected families in the 1920s?

As women adjusted to changing roles, some also struggled with rebellious adolescents, who put an unprecedented strain on families. Teens in the 1920s studied and socialized with other teens and spent less time with their families. As peer pressure intensified, some adolescents resisted parental control, much as the flappers resisted societal control. **C**

This theme of adolescent rebelliousness can be seen in much of the popular culture of the 1920s. Education and entertainment reflected the conflict between traditional attitudes and modern ways of thinking.

2

ASSESSMENT

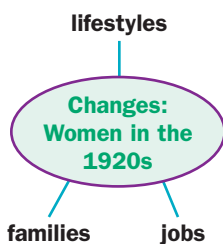
**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- flapper
- double standard

**MAIN IDEA**

**2. TAKING NOTES**

Copy the concept web shown below and add to it examples that illustrate how women’s lives changed in the 1920s.



Write a paragraph explaining how you think women’s lives changed most dramatically in the 1920s.

**CRITICAL THINKING**

**3. EVALUATING**

During the 1920s, a double standard required women to observe stricter codes of behavior than men. Do you think that some women of this decade made real progress towards equality? Support your answer with examples. **Think About:**

- the flapper’s style and image
- changing views of marriage

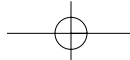
**4. ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES**

In 1920, veteran suffragist Anna Howard Shaw stated that equality in the workplace would be harder for women to achieve than the vote.

**“You younger women will have a harder task than ours. You will want equality in business, and it will be even harder to get than the vote.”**

—Anna Howard Shaw

Why do you think Shaw held this belief? Support your answer with evidence from the text.



# Education and Popular Culture

## MAIN IDEA

The mass media, movies, and spectator sports played important roles in creating the popular culture of the 1920s—a culture that many artists and writers criticized.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Much of today's popular culture can trace its roots to the popular culture of the 1920s.

## Terms & Names

- Charles A. Lindbergh
- George Gershwin
- Georgia O'Keeffe
- Sinclair Lewis
- F. Scott Fitzgerald
- Edna St. Vincent Millay
- Ernest Hemingway

## One American's Story

On September 22, 1927, approximately 50 million Americans sat listening to their radios as Graham McNamee, radio's most popular announcer, breathlessly called the boxing match between the former heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey and the current titleholder, Gene Tunney.

### A PERSONAL VOICE GRAHAM MCNAMEE

“Good evening, Ladies & Gentlemen of the Radio Audience. This is a big night. Three million dollars' worth of boxing bugs are gathering around a ring at Soldiers' Field, Chicago. . . .

Here comes Jack Dempsey, climbing through the ropes . . . white flannels, long bathrobe. . . . Here comes Tunney. . . . The announcer shouting in the ring . . . trying to quiet 150,000 people. . . . Robes are off.”

—*Time* magazine, October 3, 1927

After punches flew for seven rounds, Tunney defeated the legendary Dempsey. So suspenseful was the brutal match that a number of radio listeners died of heart failure. The “fight of the century” was just one of a host of spectacles and events that transformed American popular culture in the 1920s.



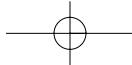
▲ Gene Tunney, down for the “long count,” went on to defeat Jack Dempsey in their epic 1927 battle.

## Schools and the Mass Media Shape Culture

During the 1920s, developments in education and mass media had a powerful impact on the nation.

**SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS** In 1914, approximately 1 million American students attended high school. By 1926, that number had risen to nearly 4 million, an increase sparked by prosperous times and higher educational standards for industry jobs.

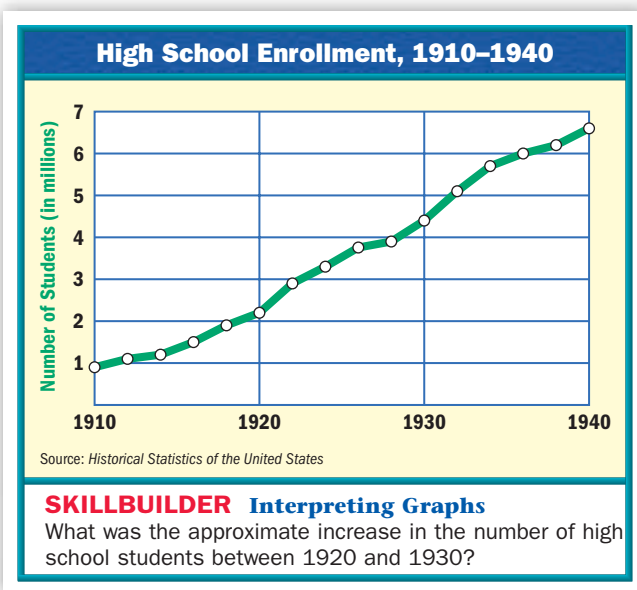
Prior to the 1920s, high schools had catered to college-bound students. In contrast, high schools of the 1920s began offering a broad range of courses such as vocational training for those interested in industrial jobs.



The public schools met another challenge in the 1920s—teaching the children of new immigrant families. The years before World War I had seen the largest stream of immigrants in the nation’s history—close to 1 million a year. Unlike the earlier English and Irish immigrants, many of the new immigrants spoke no English. By the 1920s their children filled city classrooms. Determined teachers met the challenge and created a large pool of literate Americans. **A**

**MAIN IDEA**  
**Summarizing**  
**A** How did schools change during the 1920s?

Taxes to finance the schools increased as well. School costs doubled between 1913 and 1920, then doubled again by 1926. The total cost of American education in the mid-1920s amounted to \$2.7 billion a year.



**SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Graphs**  
 What was the approximate increase in the number of high school students between 1920 and 1930?

**EXPANDING NEWS COVERAGE** Widespread education increased literacy in America, but it was the growing mass media that shaped a mass culture. Newspaper circulation rose as writers and editors learned how to hook readers by imitating the sensational stories in the tabloids. By 1914, about 600 local papers had shut down and 230 had been swallowed up by huge national chains, giving readers more expansive coverage from the big cities. Mass-circulation magazines also flourished during the 1920s. Many of these magazines summarized the week’s news, both foreign and domestic. By the end of the 1920s, ten American magazines—including *Reader’s Digest* (founded in 1922) and *Time* (founded in 1923)—boasted a circulation of over 2 million each.

**RADIO COMES OF AGE** Although major magazines and newspapers reached big audiences, radio was the most powerful communications medium to emerge in the 1920s. Americans added terms such as “airwaves,” “radio audience,” and “tune in” to their everyday speech. By the end of the



By 1930, 40 percent of U.S. households had radios, like this 1927 Cosser three-valve Melody Maker.

## Radio Broadcasts of the 1920s

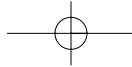


Radio dance parties were common in the 1920s.

Prior to the 1920s, radio broadcasts were used primarily for transmitting important messages and speeches regarding World War I. After the first commercial radio station—KDKA Pittsburgh—made its debut on the airwaves in 1920, the radio industry changed forever. Listeners tuned in for news, entertainment, and advertisements.



In the 1920s, radio was a formal affair. Announcers and musicians dressed in their finest attire, even without a live audience.



decade, the radio networks had created something new in the United States—the shared national experience of hearing the news as it happened. The wider world had opened up to Americans, who could hear the voice of their president or listen to the World Series live. **B**

**MAIN IDEA**
**Analyzing Effects**

**B** Why did radio become so popular?

## America Chases New Heroes and Old Dreams

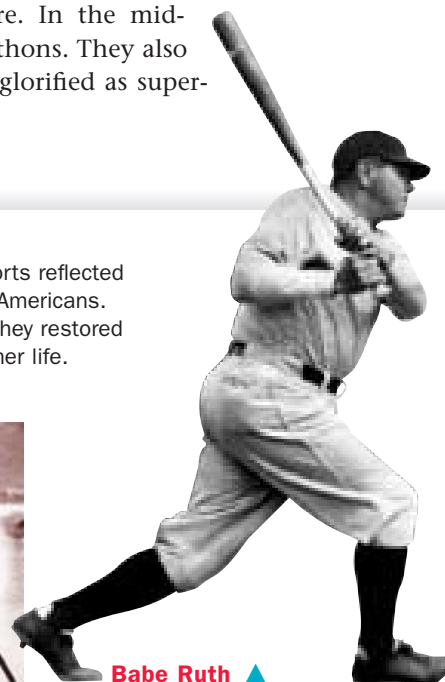
During the 1920s, many people had money and the leisure time to enjoy it. In 1929, Americans spent \$4.5 billion on entertainment, much of it on ever-changing fads. Early in the decade, Americans engaged in new leisure pastimes such as working crossword puzzles and playing mahjong, a Chinese game whose playing pieces resemble dominoes. In 1922, after explorers opened the dazzling tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen, consumers mobbed stores for pharaoh-inspired accessories, jewelry, and furniture. In the mid-1920s, people turned to flagpole sitting and dance marathons. They also flooded athletic stadiums to see sports stars, who were glorified as superheroes by the mass media.

### Sports Heroes of the 1920s

Although the media glorified sports heroes, the Golden Age of Sports reflected common aspirations. Athletes set new records, inspiring ordinary Americans. When poor, unknown athletes rose to national fame and fortune, they restored Americans' belief in the power of the individual to improve his or her life.

**Gertude Ederle** ▶

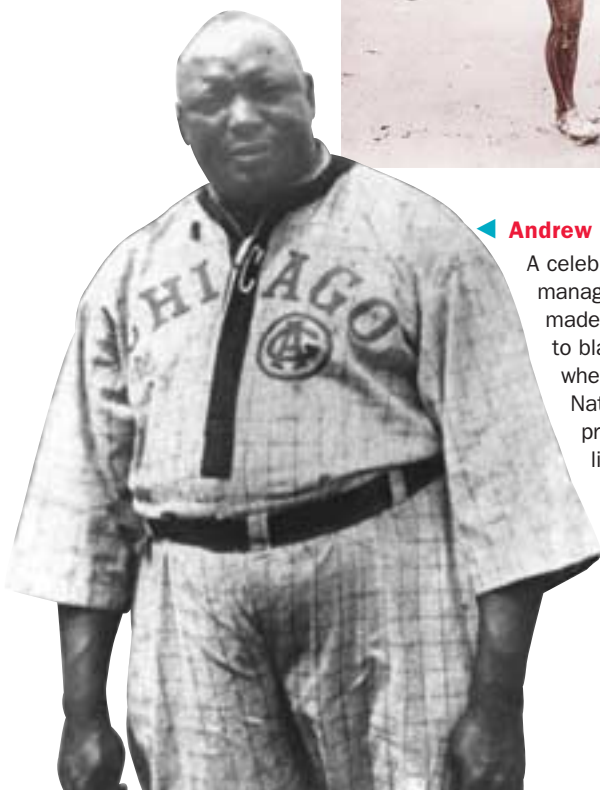
In 1926, at the age of 19, Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the English Channel. Here, an assistant applies heavy grease to help ward off the effects of the cold Channel waters.


**Babe Ruth** ▲

New York Yankees slugger Babe Ruth smashed home run after home run during the 1920s. When this legendary star hit a record 60 home runs in 1927, Americans went wild.

▶ **Andrew "Rube" Foster**

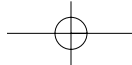
A celebrated pitcher and team manager, Andrew "Rube" Foster made his greatest contribution to black baseball in 1920 when he founded the Negro National League. Although previous attempts to establish a league for black players had failed, Foster led the league to success, earning him the title "The Father of Black Baseball."


**Helen Wills** ▶

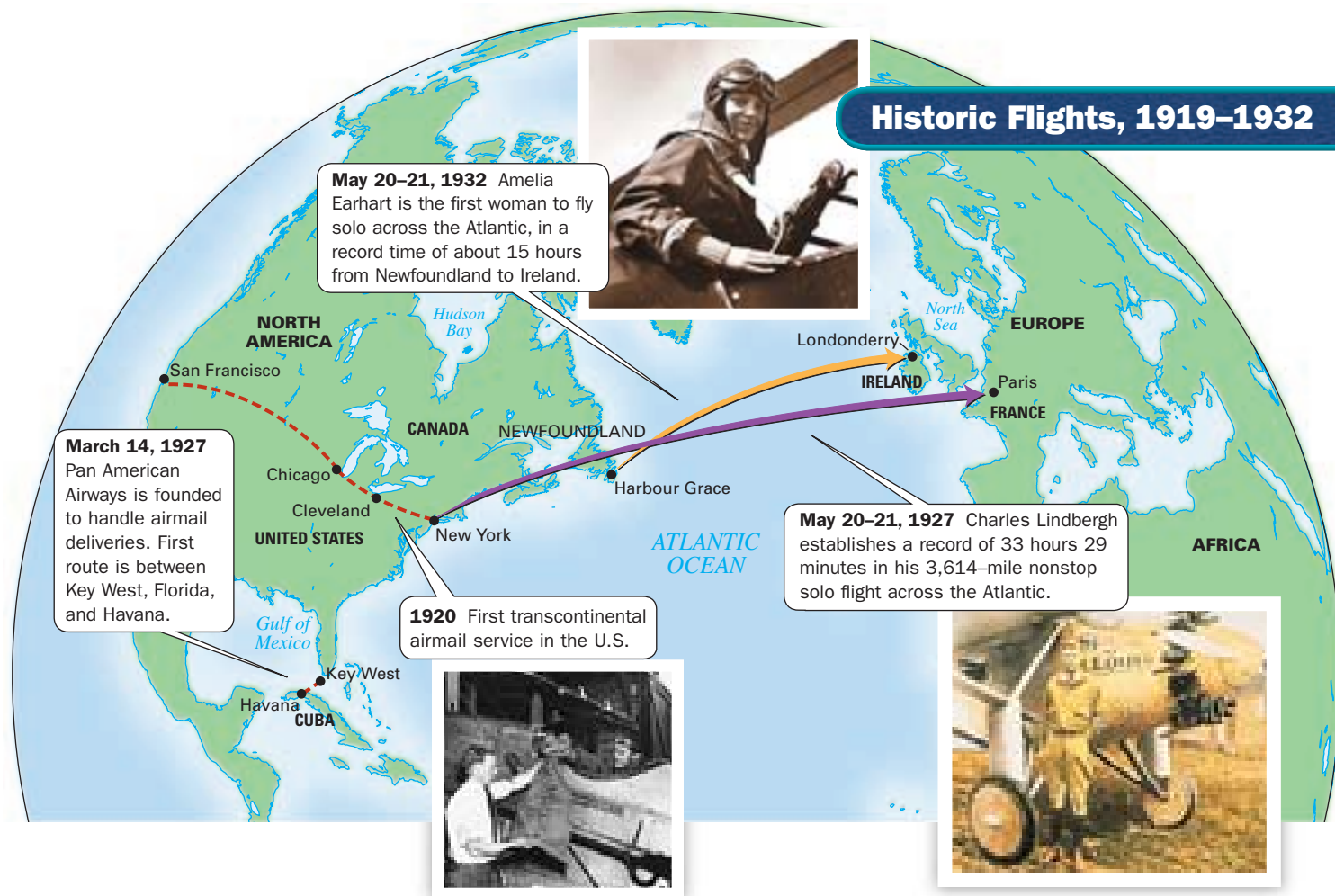
Helen Wills dominated women's tennis, winning the singles title at the U.S. Open seven times and the Wimbledon title eight times. Her nickname was "Little Miss Poker Face."







## Historic Flights, 1919–1932



**March 14, 1927**  
Pan American Airways is founded to handle airmail deliveries. First route is between Key West, Florida, and Havana.

**May 20–21, 1932** Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic, in a record time of about 15 hours from Newfoundland to Ireland.

**1920** First transcontinental airmail service in the U.S.

**May 20–21, 1927** Charles Lindbergh establishes a record of 33 hours 29 minutes in his 3,614-mile nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic.

**LINDBERGH'S FLIGHT** America's most beloved hero of the time wasn't an athlete but a small-town pilot named **Charles A. Lindbergh**, who made the first nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic. A handsome, modest Minnesotan, Lindbergh decided to go after a \$25,000 prize offered for the first nonstop solo transatlantic flight. On May 20, 1927, he took off near New York City in the *Spirit of St. Louis*, flew up the coast to Newfoundland, and headed over the Atlantic. The weather was so bad, Lindbergh recalled, that "the average altitude for the whole . . . second 1,000 miles of the [Atlantic] flight was less than 100 feet." After 33 hours and 29 minutes, Lindbergh set down at Le Bourget airfield outside of Paris, France, amid beacons, searchlights, and mobs of enthusiastic people.

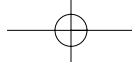
Paris threw a huge party. On his return to the U.S., New York showered Lindbergh with ticker tape, the president received him at the White House, and America made him its idol. In an age of sensationalism, excess, and crime, Lindbergh stood for the honesty and bravery the nation seemed to have lost. The novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, a fellow Minnesotan, caught the essence of Lindbergh's fame.

### A PERSONAL VOICE F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

"In the spring of 1927, something bright and alien flashed across the sky. A young Minnesotan who seemed to have nothing to do with his generation did a heroic thing, and for a moment people set down their glasses in country clubs and speakeasies and thought of their old best dreams."

—quoted in *The Lawless Decade*

Lindbergh's accomplishment paved the way for others. In the next decade, Amelia Earhart was to undertake many brave aerial exploits, inspired by Lindbergh's example.



▲ In *Radiator Building—Night, New York* (1927), Georgia O’Keeffe showed the dark buildings of New York City thrusting into the night sky.

**ENTERTAINMENT AND THE ARTS** Despite the feats of real-life heroes, America’s thirst for entertainment in the arts and on the screen and stage seemed unquenchable in the 1920s.

Even before the introduction of sound, movies became a national pastime, offering viewers a means of escape through romance and comedy. The first major movie with sound, *The Jazz Singer*, was released in 1927. Walt Disney’s *Steamboat Willie*, the first animated film with sound, was released in 1928. By 1930, the new “talkies” had doubled movie attendance, with millions of Americans going to the movies every week. **C**

Both playwrights and composers of music broke away from the European traditions of the 1920s. Eugene O’Neill’s plays, such as *The Hairy Ape*, forced Americans to reflect upon modern isolation, confusion, and family conflict. Fame was given to concert music composer **George Gershwin** when he merged traditional elements with American jazz, thus creating a new sound that was identifiably American.

Painters appealed to Americans by recording an America of realities and dreams. Edward Hopper caught the loneliness of American life in his canvases of empty streets and solitary people, while **Georgia O’Keeffe** produced intensely colored canvases that captured the grandeur of New York.

**WRITERS OF THE 1920s** The 1920s also brought an outpouring of fresh and insightful writing, making it one of the richest eras in the country’s literary history.

**Sinclair Lewis**, the first American to win a Nobel Prize in literature, was among the era’s most outspoken critics. In his novel *Babbitt*, Lewis used the main character of George F. Babbitt to ridicule Americans for their conformity and materialism.

#### ★ A PERSONAL VOICE SINCLAIR LEWIS

“A sensational event was changing from the brown suit to the gray the contents of his pockets. He was earnest about these objects. They were of eternal importance, like baseball or the Republican Party. They included a fountain pen and a silver pencil . . . which belonged in the righthand upper vest pocket. Without them he would have felt naked. On his watch-chain were a gold penknife, silver cigar-cutter, seven keys . . . and incidentally a good watch. . . . Last, he stuck in his lapel the Boosters’ Club button. With the conciseness of great art the button displayed two words: ‘Boosters—Pep!’”

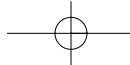
—*Babbitt*

It was **F. Scott Fitzgerald** who coined the term “Jazz Age” to describe the 1920s. In *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby*, he revealed the negative side of the period’s gaiety and freedom, portraying wealthy and attractive people leading imperiled lives in gilded surroundings. In New York City, a brilliant group of writers routinely lunched together at the Algonquin Hotel’s “Round Table.” Among the best known of them was Dorothy Parker, a short story writer, poet, and essayist. Parker was famous for her wisecracking wit, expressed in such lines as “I was the toast of two continents—Greenland and Australia.”

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Making Inferences

**C** Why were Americans so delighted by movies in the 1920s?



Many writers also met important issues head on. In *The Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton dramatized the clash between traditional and modern values that had undermined high society 50 years earlier. Willa Cather celebrated the simple, dignified lives of people such as the immigrant farmers of Nebraska in *My Ántonia*, while **Edna St. Vincent Millay** wrote poems celebrating youth and a life of independence and freedom from traditional constraints.

Some writers such as Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and John Dos Passos were so soured by American culture that they chose to settle in Europe, mainly in Paris. Socializing in the city's cafes, they formed a group that the writer Gertrude Stein called the Lost Generation. They joined other American writers already in Europe such as the poets Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, whose poem *The Waste Land* presented an agonized view of a society that seemed stripped of humanity. **D**

Several writers saw action in World War I, and their early books denounced war. Dos Passos's novel *Three Soldiers* attacked war as a machine designed to crush human freedom. Later, he turned to social and political themes, using modern techniques to capture the mood of city life and the losses that came with success. **Ernest Hemingway**, wounded in World War I, became the best-known expatriate author. In his novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*, he criticized the glorification of war. He also introduced a tough, simplified style of writing that set a new literary standard, using sentences a *Time* reporter compared to "round stones polished by rain and wind."

During this rich literary era, vital developments were also taking place in African-American society. Black Americans of the 1920s began to voice pride in their heritage, and black artists and writers revealed the richness of African-American culture.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Causes

**D** Why did some writers reject American culture and values?

#### Vocabulary

**expatriate:** a person who has taken up residence in a foreign country

## KEY PLAYER



### F. SCOTT FITZGERALD 1900-1940

F. Scott Fitzgerald married vivacious Zelda Sayre in 1920 after his novel *This Side of Paradise* became an instant hit. He said of this time in his life:

"Riding in a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky, I began to bawl because I had everything I wanted and knew I would never be so happy again."

Flush with money, the couple plunged into a wild social whirl and outspent their incomes. The years following were difficult. Zelda suffered from repeated mental breakdowns, and Scott's battle with alcoholism took its toll.



## ASSESSMENT

**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each of the following names, write a sentence explaining his or her significance.

• Charles A. Lindbergh  
• George Gershwin

• Georgia O'Keeffe  
• Sinclair Lewis

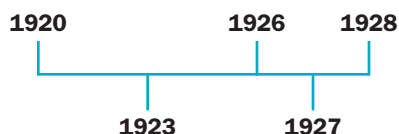
• F. Scott Fitzgerald  
• Edna St. Vincent Millay

• Ernest Hemingway

### MAIN IDEA

#### 2. TAKING NOTES

Create a time line of key events relating to 1920s popular culture. Use the dates below as a guide.



In a sentence or two, explain which of these events interests you the most and why.

### CRITICAL THINKING

#### 3. SYNTHESIZING

In what ways do you think the mass media and mass culture helped Americans create a sense of national community in the 1920s? Support your answer with details from the text. **Think About:**

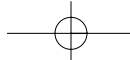
- the content and readership of newspapers and magazines
- attendance at sports events and movie theaters
- the scope of radio broadcasts

#### 4. EVALUATING

Do you think the popular heroes of the 1920s were heroes in a real sense? Why or why not?

#### 5. SUMMARIZING

In two or three sentences, summarize the effects of education and mass media on society in the 1920s.



# The Harlem Renaissance

## MAIN IDEA

African-American ideas, politics, art, literature, and music flourished in Harlem and elsewhere in the United States.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The Harlem Renaissance provided a foundation of African-American intellectualism to which African-American writers, artists, and musicians contribute today.

## Terms & Names

- Zora Neale Hurston
- James Weldon Johnson
- Marcus Garvey
- Harlem Renaissance
- Claude McKay
- Langston Hughes
- Paul Robeson
- Louis Armstrong
- Duke Ellington
- Bessie Smith

## One American's Story

When the spirited **Zora Neale Hurston** was a girl in Eatonville, Florida, in the early 1900s, she loved to read adventure stories and myths. The powerful tales struck a chord with the young, talented Hurston and made her yearn for a wider world.

### A PERSONAL VOICE ZORA NEALE HURSTON

“My soul was with the gods and my body in the village. People just would not act like gods. . . . Raking back yards and carrying out chamber-pots, were not the tasks of Thor. I wanted to be away from drabness and to stretch my limbs in some mighty struggle.”

—quoted in *The African American Encyclopedia*

After spending time with a traveling theater company and attending Howard University, Hurston ended up in New York where she struggled to the top of African-American literary society by hard work, flamboyance, and, above all, grit. “I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less,” Hurston wrote later. “I do not weep at [being Negro]—I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife.” Hurston was on the move, like millions of others. And, like them, she went after the pearl in the oyster—the good life in America.



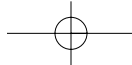
### VIDEO

**JUMP AT THE SUN:**  
Zora Neale Hurston  
and the Harlem  
Renaissance

## African-American Voices in the 1920s

During the 1920s, African Americans set new goals for themselves as they moved north to the nation's cities. Their migration was an expression of their changing attitude toward themselves—an attitude perhaps best captured in a phrase first used around this time, “Black is beautiful.”

**THE MOVE NORTH** Between 1910 and 1920, in a movement known as the Great Migration, hundreds of thousands of African Americans had uprooted



themselves from their homes in the South and moved north to the big cities in search of jobs. By the end of the decade, 5.2 million of the nation's 12 million African Americans—over 40 percent—lived in cities. Zora Neale Hurston documented the departure of some of these African Americans.

### A PERSONAL VOICE ZORA NEALE HURSTON

**“Some said goodbye cheerfully . . . others fearfully, with terrors of unknown dangers in their mouths . . . others in their eagerness for distance said nothing. The daybreak found them gone. The wind said North.”**

—quoted in *Sorrow's Kitchen: The Life and Folklore of Zora Neale Hurston*

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Effects

**A** How did the influx of African Americans change Northern cities?

However, Northern cities in general had not welcomed the massive influx of African Americans. Tensions had escalated in the years prior to 1920, culminating, in the summer of 1919, in approximately 25 urban race riots. **A**

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN GOALS** Founded in 1909, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) urged African Americans to protest racial violence. W. E. B. Du Bois, a founding member of the NAACP, led a parade of 10,000 African-American men in New York to protest such violence. Du Bois also used the NAACP's magazine, *The Crisis*, as a platform for leading a struggle for civil rights.

Under the leadership of **James Weldon Johnson**—poet, lawyer, and NAACP executive secretary—the organization fought for legislation to protect African-American rights. It made antilynching laws one of its main priorities. In 1919, three antilynching bills were introduced in Congress, although none was passed. The NAACP continued its campaign through antilynching organizations that had been established in 1892 by Ida B. Wells. Gradually, the number of lynchings dropped. The NAACP represented the new, more militant voice of African Americans.

**MARCUS GARVEY AND THE UNIA** Although many African Americans found their voice in the NAACP, they still faced daily threats and discrimination. **Marcus Garvey**, an immigrant from Jamaica, believed that African Americans should build a separate society. His different, more radical message of black pride aroused the hopes of many.

In 1914, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). In 1918, he moved the UNIA to New York City and opened offices in urban ghettos in order to recruit followers. By the mid-1920s, Garvey claimed he had a million followers. He appealed to African Americans with a combination of spellbinding oratory, mass meetings, parades, and a message of pride.

### A PERSONAL VOICE MARCUS GARVEY

**“In view of the fact that the black man of Africa has contributed as much to the world as the white man of Europe, and the brown man and yellow man of Asia, we of the Universal Negro Improvement Association demand that the white, yellow, and brown races give to the black man his place in the civilization of the world. We ask for nothing more than the rights of 400 million Negroes.”**

—speech at Liberty Hall, New York City, 1922

### KEY PLAYER



**JAMES WELDON JOHNSON**  
1871–1938

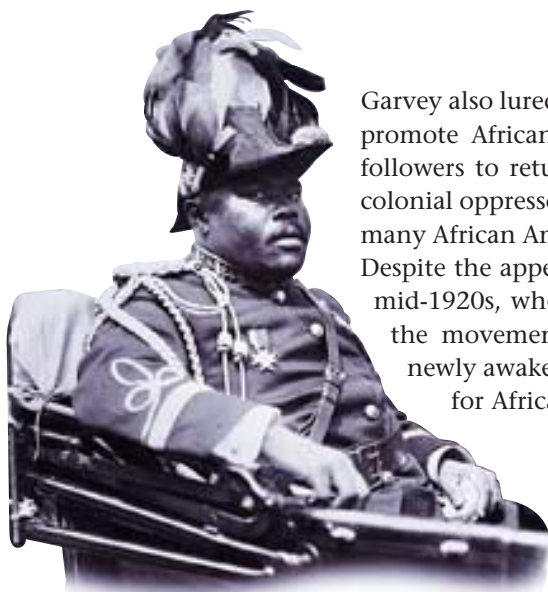
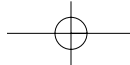
James Weldon Johnson worked as a school principal, newspaper editor, and lawyer in Florida. In 1900, he wrote the lyrics for “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the song that became known as the black national anthem. The first stanza begins as follows:

“Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of  
Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the  
rolling sea.”

In the 1920s, Johnson straddled the worlds of politics and art. He served as executive secretary of the NAACP, spearheading the fight against lynching. In addition, he wrote well-known works, such as *God's Trombones*, a series of sermon-like poems, and *Black Manhattan*, a look at black cultural life in New York during the Roaring Twenties.

#### Vocabulary

**oratory:** the art of public speaking



▲ **Marcus Garvey designed this uniform of purple and gold, complete with feathered hat, for his role as “Provisional President of Africa.”**

Garvey also lured followers with practical plans, especially his program to promote African-American businesses. Further, Garvey encouraged his followers to return to Africa, help native people there throw off white colonial oppressors, and build a mighty nation. His idea struck a chord in many African Americans, as well as in blacks in the Caribbean and Africa. Despite the appeal of Garvey’s movement, support for it declined in the mid-1920s, when he was convicted of mail fraud and jailed. Although the movement dwindled, Garvey left behind a powerful legacy of newly awakened black pride, economic independence, and reverence for Africa. **B**

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Summarizing

**B** What approach to race relations did Marcus Garvey promote?

## The Harlem Renaissance Flowers in New York

Many African Americans who migrated north moved to Harlem, a neighborhood on the Upper West Side of New York’s Manhattan Island. In the 1920s, Harlem became the world’s largest black urban community, with residents from the South, the West Indies, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Haiti. James Weldon Johnson described Harlem as the capital of black America.

### A PERSONAL VOICE JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

“Harlem is not merely a Negro colony or community, it is a city within a city, the greatest Negro city in the world. It is not a slum or a fringe, it is located in the heart of Manhattan and occupies one of the most beautiful . . . sections of the city. . . . It has its own churches, social and civic centers, shops, theaters, and other places of amusement. And it contains more Negroes to the square mile than any other spot on earth.”

—“Harlem: The Culture Capital”

Like many other urban neighborhoods, Harlem suffered from overcrowding, unemployment, and poverty. But its problems in the 1920s were eclipsed by a flowering of creativity called the **Harlem Renaissance**, a literary and artistic movement celebrating African-American culture.

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN WRITERS** Above all, the Harlem Renaissance was a literary movement led by well-educated, middle-class African Americans who expressed a new pride in the African-American experience. They celebrated their heritage and wrote with defiance and poignancy about the trials of being black in a white world. W. E. B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson helped these young talents along, as did the Harvard-educated former Rhodes scholar Alain Locke. In 1925, Locke published *The New Negro*, a landmark collection of literary works by many promising young African-American writers.

**Claude McKay**, a novelist, poet, and Jamaican immigrant, was a major figure whose militant verses urged African Americans to resist prejudice and discrimination. His poems also expressed the pain of life in the black ghettos and the strain of being black in a world dominated by whites. Another gifted writer of the time was Jean Toomer. His experimental book *Cane*—a mix of poems and sketches about blacks in the North and the South—was among the first full-length literary publications of the Harlem Renaissance.

Missouri-born **Langston Hughes** was the movement’s best-known poet. Many of Hughes’s 1920s poems described the difficult lives of working-class African Americans. Some of his poems moved to the tempo of jazz and the blues. (See Literature in the Jazz Age on page 458.)



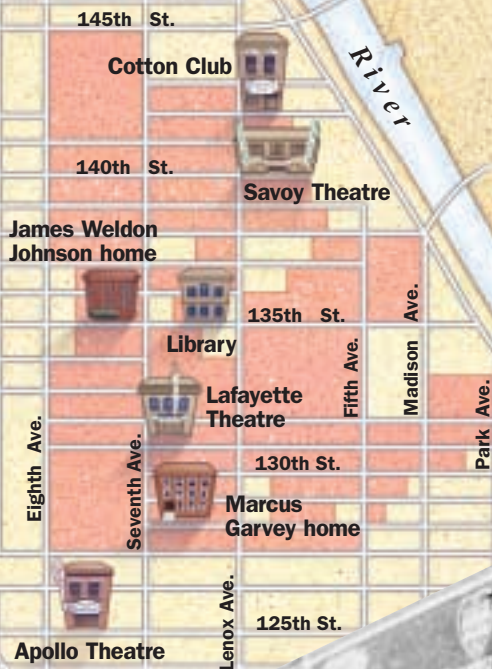
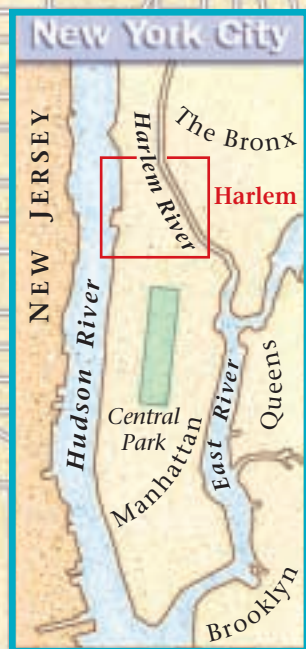
The Fletcher Henderson Orchestra became one of the most influential jazz bands during the Harlem Renaissance. Here, Henderson, the band's founder, sits at the piano, with Louis Armstrong on trumpet (rear, center).

## Harlem in the 1920s

At the turn of the century, New York's Harlem neighborhood was overbuilt with new apartment houses. Enterprising African-American realtors began buying and leasing property to other African Americans who were eager to move into the prosperous neighborhood. As the number of blacks in Harlem increased, many whites began moving out. Harlem quickly grew to become the center of black America and the birthplace of the political, social, and cultural movement known as the Harlem Renaissance.



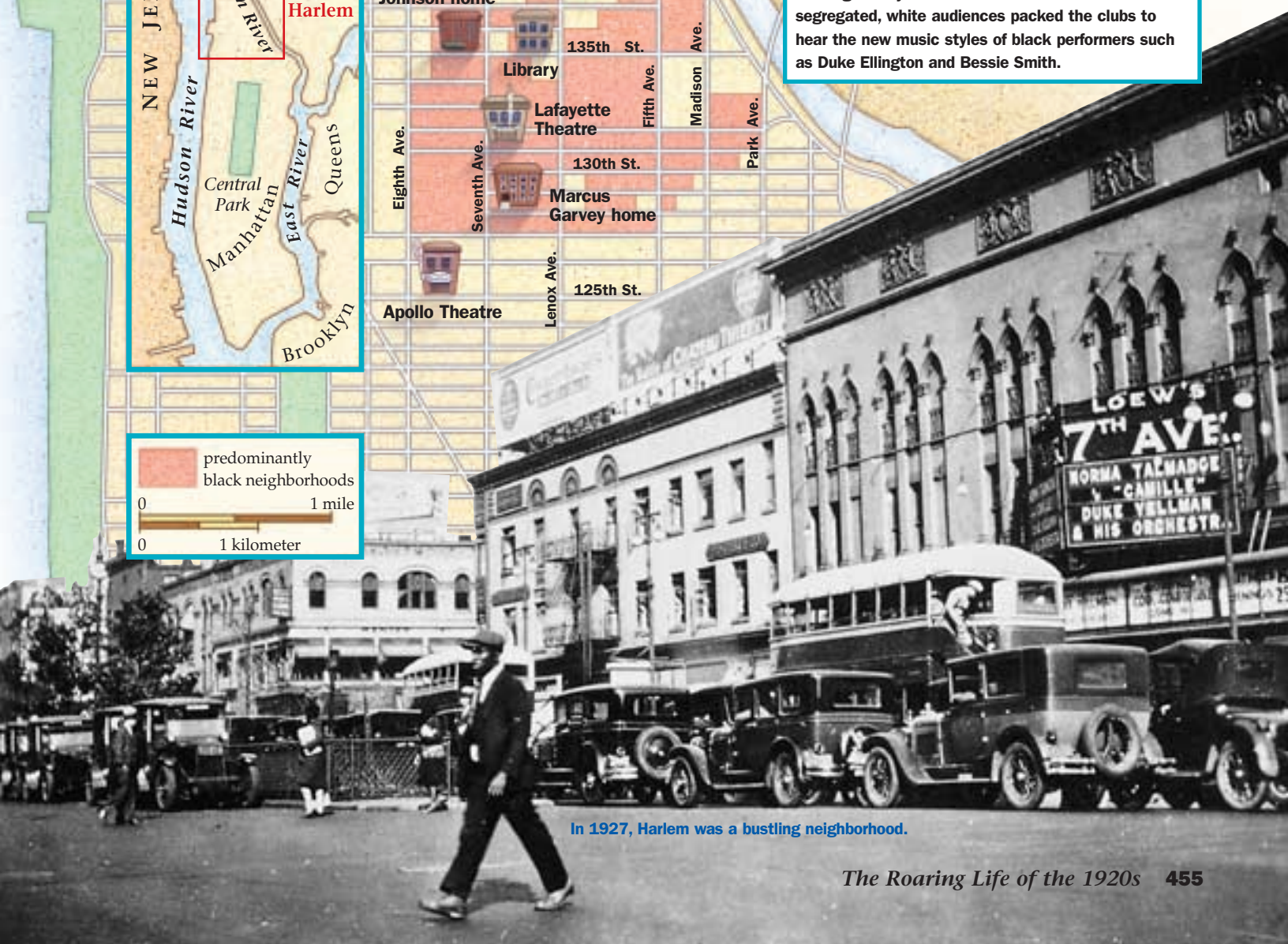
In the mid 1920s, the Cotton Club was one of a number of fashionable entertainment clubs in Harlem. Although many venues like the Cotton Club were segregated, white audiences packed the clubs to hear the new music styles of black performers such as Duke Ellington and Bessie Smith.



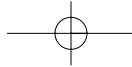
predominantly black neighborhoods

0  1 mile

0  1 kilometer



In 1927, Harlem was a bustling neighborhood.



In many of her novels, short stories, poems, and books of folklore, Zora Neale Hurston portrayed the lives of poor, unschooled Southern blacks—in her words, “the greatest cultural wealth of the continent.” Much of her work celebrated what she called the common person’s art form—the simple folkways and values of people who had survived slavery through their ingenuity and strength. **C**

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERFORMERS** The spirit and talent of the Harlem Renaissance reached far beyond the world of African-American writers and intellectuals. Some observers, including Langston Hughes, thought the movement was launched with *Shuffle Along*, a black musical comedy popular in 1921. “It gave just the proper push . . . to that Negro vogue of the ‘20s,” he wrote. Several songs in *Shuffle Along*, including “Love Will Find a Way,” won popularity among white audiences. The show also spotlighted the talents of several black performers, including the singers Florence Mills, Josephine Baker, and Mabel Mercer.

During the 1920s, African Americans in the performing arts won large followings. The tenor Roland Hayes rose to stardom as a concert singer, and the singer and actress Ethel Waters debuted on Broadway in the musical *Africana*. **Paul Robeson**, the son of a one-time slave, became a major dramatic actor. His performance in Shakespeare’s *Othello*, first in London and later in New York City, was widely acclaimed. Subsequently, Robeson struggled with the racism he experienced in the United States and the indignities inflicted upon him because of his support of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. He took up residence abroad, living for a time in England and the Soviet Union.

The Hot Five included (from left) Louis Armstrong, Johnny St. Cyr, Johnny Dodds, Kid Ory, and Lil Hardin Armstrong.



**AFRICAN AMERICANS AND JAZZ** Jazz was born in the early 20th century in New Orleans, where musicians blended instrumental ragtime and vocal blues into an exuberant new sound. In 1918, Joe “King” Oliver and his Creole Jazz Band traveled north to Chicago, carrying jazz with them. In 1922, a young trumpet player named **Louis Armstrong** joined Oliver’s group, which became known as the Creole Jazz Band. His talent rocketed him to stardom in the jazz world.

Famous for his astounding sense of rhythm and his ability to improvise, Armstrong made personal expression a key part of jazz. After two years in Chicago, in 1924 he joined Fletcher Henderson’s band, then the most important big jazz band in New York City. Armstrong went on to become perhaps the most important and influential musician in the history of jazz. He often talked about his anticipated funeral.

### A PERSONAL VOICE LOUIS ARMSTRONG

“They’re going to blow over me. Cats will be coming from everywhere to play. I had a beautiful life. When I get to the Pearly Gates I’ll play a duet with Gabriel. We’ll play ‘Sleepy Time Down South.’ He wants to be remembered for his music just like I do.”

—quoted in *The Negro Almanac*

Jazz quickly spread to such cities as Kansas City, Memphis, and New York City, and it became the most popular music for dancing. During the 1920s, Harlem pulsed to the sounds of jazz, which lured throngs of whites to the showy, exotic nightclubs there, including the famed Cotton Club. In the late 1920s, **Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington**, a jazz pianist and composer, led his

### MAIN IDEA

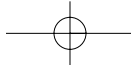
#### Synthesizing

**C** In what ways did writers of the Harlem Renaissance celebrate a “rebirth”?

#### Background

See Historical Spotlight on page 617.





ten-piece orchestra at the Cotton Club. In a 1925 essay titled "The Negro Spirituals," Alain Locke seemed almost to predict the career of the talented Ellington.

**A PERSONAL VOICE** ALAIN LOCKE

**"Up to the present, the resources of Negro music have been tentatively exploited in only one direction at a time—melodically here, rhythmically there, harmonically in a third direction. A genius that would organize its distinctive elements in a formal way would be the musical giant of his age."**

—quoted in *Afro-American Writing: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry*

Through the 1920s and 1930s, Ellington won renown as one of America's greatest composers, with pieces such as "Mood Indigo" and "Sophisticated Lady."

Cab Calloway, a talented drummer, saxophonist, and singer, formed another important jazz orchestra, which played at Harlem's Savoy Ballroom and the Cotton Club, alternating with Duke Ellington. Along with Louis Armstrong, Calloway popularized "scat," or improvised jazz singing using sounds instead of words.

**Bessie Smith**, a female blues singer, was perhaps the outstanding vocalist of the decade. She recorded on black-oriented labels produced by the major record companies. She achieved enormous popularity and in 1927 became the highest-paid black artist in the world.

The Harlem Renaissance represented a portion of the great social and cultural changes that swept America in the 1920s. The period was characterized by economic prosperity, new ideas, changing values, and personal freedom, as well as important developments in art, literature, and music. Most of the social changes were lasting. The economic boom, however, was short-lived.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Summarizing**

**D** Besides literary accomplishments, in what areas did African Americans achieve remarkable results?

KEY PLAYER



DUKE ELLINGTON  
1899-1974

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, was largely a self-taught musician. He developed his skills by playing at family socials. He wrote his first song, "Soda Fountain Rag," at age 15 and started his first band at 22.

During the five years Ellington played at Harlem's glittering Cotton Club, he set a new standard, playing mainly his own stylish compositions. Through radio and the film short *Black and Tan*, the Duke Ellington Orchestra was able to reach nationwide audiences. Billy Strayhorn, Ellington's long-time arranger and collaborator, said, "Ellington plays the piano, but his real instrument is his band."

4

## ASSESSMENT

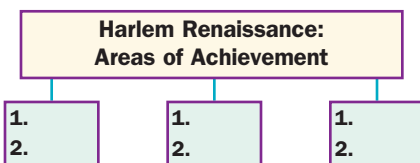
**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zora Neale Hurston</li> <li>• James Weldon Johnson</li> <li>• Marcus Garvey</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harlem Renaissance</li> <li>• Claude McKay</li> <li>• Langston Hughes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Robeson</li> <li>• Louis Armstrong</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duke Ellington</li> <li>• Bessie Smith</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|--|

**MAIN IDEA**

**2. TAKING NOTES**

In a tree diagram, identify three areas of artistic achievement in the Harlem Renaissance. For each, name two outstanding African Americans.



Write a paragraph explaining the impact of these achievements.

**CRITICAL THINKING**

**3. ANALYZING CAUSES**

Speculate on why an African-American renaissance flowered during the 1920s. Support your answer. **Think About:**

- racial discrimination in the South
- campaigns for equality in the North
- Harlem's diverse cultures
- the changing culture of all Americans

**4. FORMING GENERALIZATIONS**

How did popular culture in America change as a result of the Great Migration?

**5. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS**

What did the Harlem Renaissance contribute to both black and general American history?