

## The Roaring Twenties: Back to the Future?

One of the most significant changes in American demographics took place in 1920. The United States Census reported for the first time that more Americans lived in URBAN areas rather than in Rural areas.  
Look at this chart of the U.S. Population by Residence: 1790 - 1950

## THE 1920'S: A LOOK AT CULTURAL,ECONOMIC,POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGES OF THE DECADE

Choose one of the following topics to become the investigative reporters and create a commentary worthy of a newscast. This newscast will consist of reporting, a visual poster or collage and analysis of how the topic defines the 1920's. Small snippets of video and music may also be used.

Evaluation: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Topic; \_\_\_\_\_

Each group is to give a BRIEF background on why the issue or topic is essential for an understanding of the 1920's and why it matters today.

Find answers to who,what,where,when,why and how of the topic to explain to the "viewing audience"

From readings in the textbook and research from websites, make an analysis of the impact of topic and include this in the newscast.

Make a visual to enhance the newscast--- a collage, a series of pictures, pictures and music, portraits, etc.

On task during library research time and class time 20 pts \_\_\_\_\_

Has factual information for the "who,what,where,when,how,why" 18 pts \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion points for viewers to think about and respond to 12 pts \_\_\_\_\_

Visual/Music is appropriate, historically correct, in depth 20 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

Present and involved in presentation on due date 10 pts \_\_\_\_\_

Practice for presentation, posture, voice, and eye contact, attentive while 20 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

Others in-group is talking, attentive to other presentations

## Topic One: Cultural Shock -- Conflict between the Rural Folks and the City People

As urban populations surpassed that of rural America, rural area people began to develop an inferiority complex. It seemed that their traditional, fundamentalist beliefs were no longer the standard values for the nation.

Instead, new ideas and trends coming from flappers, scholars, scientists, the movies, music, and writers poured from the country's urban centers and threatened to become the dominant values of society.

Analyze the urban-rural conflict through an examination of several social issues of the 1920's: Read H.L. Mencken, a leading supporter and journalist of urban thought (he's from Baltimore). Look at the songs: "How Ya Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm" and "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue" for insights into the trends and the conflict as these topics are investigated:

The Scopes Trial	Prohibition	Flappers	Immigration
Sacco and Vanzetti Trial	Election of 1928	The New KKK	

Use the packet to get started.

## Topic Two: "The Business of America is Business" Economics and Politics 1920's Style

After 20 years of reform and war, Americans were responsive to Pres. Harding's call for the return to "normalcy" {his word}. Normalcy, by the Republican Party definition, meant reduced taxes for the wealthy, less government, a higher tariff and a retreat from international involvement.

For the first time since the Gilded Age, businessmen enjoyed the official approval of the government and the unofficial respect of the American people. Republicans focused on peace and prosperity and controlled the White House for 12 years from 1921 - 1933.

This investigative reporting means interpreting several statements by Republican presidents and other observers on the relationship between government and business.

Read the textbook accounts of Harding, Coolidge and Harding and investigate the following terms and people and reduce the findings to a SLOGAN for the 1928 election campaign:

Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon's tax program  
Elk Hills and Teapot Dome oil leases

the Hawley-Smoot Tariff  
Harding and Coolidge's vetoes of  
The bonus bills  
Coolidge veto of the McNary-Haugen Bill

Fordney-McCumber Tariff

Use the packet to get started.

### Topic Three: What Hath Ford Wrought or Spin-offs of the Automobile Revolution

According to popular legend, although there were only 4 automobiles in the entire United States in 1895, two of them managed to smash into one another in St. Louis. Perhaps it's apocryphal, but it was a portent of the future. By 1920, the automobile was here to stay.

Henry Ford introduced the assembly line auto in 1913 and had placed over 9 million cars on the road by the end of the 1920's. During the 1920's, registration soared to 26,749.853, thus making the car in America a necessity rather than a toy for the rich.

A newspaper writer is quoted as writing: "The Car was a petting parlor for the young, an errand runner for the housewife and an escape hatch for the restless."

As investigative reporters, examine the ramifications of the automobile's development and spin-offs.

Consider the extent to which the automobile revolution, for that is what it was, changed the America of the pre-car days and produced the suburban culture of today.

Take a survey of the class for your newscast. Ask these questions;

- a) how many drive
- b) how many own a car
- c) how many cars in your family

Tally the responses to make a generalization about families now compared to the 1920's

Use the packet to get started.

### Topic Four: The new American woman of the 1920's

This investigative reporting involves highlighting the reasons underlying the changing identity of women in the 1920's. One of the most significant milestones in women's history in the U.S. came with the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. But there was more than change at the ballot box in store for women. Some of the special necessities and activities of wartime America lingered in the relaxed dress and moral standards of the 1920's. American inventiveness in home appliances eliminated some of the drudgery, which had kept prewar women housebound. While not all American women could or necessarily wanted to benefit from these new freedoms, enough did to mark the 1920's as the era of the new American woman.

Explore the changing role of women by comparing their lifestyles with that of the American woman of 1900. Compare household chores, duties, and some of the other changes that helped to liberate her from the past.

Read the excerpt about "dress code" and consider it in light of liberation, the flapper and traditional styles. Arrive at a conclusive statement about social standards in the 1920's.

Use the packet to get started.

### Topic Five: Inventing a New kind of hero for the masses

The 1920's saw radical changes in the morals and values of the Gilded Age. These changes were viewed by some as a moral breakdown that tolerated organized crime, political corruption and sexual liberation.

Look at the choices of heroes for the 1920's. Make a statement about the kind of heroes celebrated in the 1920's. Fads such as flagpole sitting, marathon dancing, swimming, tennis, golf, and the movies all had their stars. No longer did Americans admire only the political and business leaders but turned to the movies, Sports and religion for their idols.

Technology also played a role in changing people's directions and lifestyles. Technology brought more Recreational time that involved individuals in spectator sports. For the first time in history, sports events drew million dollar gates. Movies provided escape and entertainment.

This investigative reporting will consider the lives of the famous of the 1920's. Tell us why these people and tell of their deeds. Interpret the changing role of heroes in American culture.

Do you notice any trends in celebrity that are still valid today? Any differences?

To compare to today, ask some survey questions:

- a) name a personal hero
- b) tell what value is reflected in the choice of that hero

Use the packet to get started.

### Topic Six: Harlem produces a Renaissance and a new Negro

Black Americans had reason to view the 1920's with guarded optimism. While it was a decade

That saw the revival of the KKK, it was also the era of the Harlem Renaissance. Thousands of African Americans migrated from the rural South to the urban North during WWI to take jobs in the War plants. By 1920, enclaves had formed in most Northern major cities. The largest and most famous Of these was Harlem in the upper third of Manhattan Island.

Harlem became the cultural center for American blacks. Uptown blacks had their cultural flowering of Poets, playwrights,artists,musicians and popular entertainers. Sometimes the two cultures of white and black America met as when New York's night clubbers visited Harlem to hear Bessie Smith or Duke Ellington. Black artists would occasionally reverse the trend, as when Paul Robeson appeared in Eugene O'Neill's Plays.

Mostly, the Harlem Renaissance was by blacks for blacks. Poets like Langston Hughes or writers like Zora Huston reinterpreted black culture. Marcus Garvey preached a Back to Africa movement. Race Relations on the whole may not have made much progress in the 1920's but an essential prerequisite was provided by rise of black consciousness and awareness by whites that a significant black culture existed in America.

In this investigative reporting, read several poems by blacks written before and during the Harlem Renaissance. Identify differences in the poems

Analyze and hypothesize how the Harlem Renaissance connects to the modern Civil Rights Movement and leads to the first African American being elected president.

Draw a verbal and illustrative collage of the Harlem Renaissance for the newscast.

Use the packet to get started.