

World War 1, 1920s, & Great Depression Study Guide

- **World War I** started in 1914 after the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist. The United States avoided the war as long as possible but eventually joined the war in 1917. Under *President Woodrow Wilson*, the United States was **Isolationist**. (**believing that countries should not get involved in each other's problems**)

An agreement to stop fighting, also known as an armistice, occurred in 1918. The war was not officially over, however, until the signing of the **Treaty of Versailles** in 1919.

Causes of World War I

Imperialism is a nation's desire to become more powerful by getting more territories. A nation that has imperialist goals wants to expand its power to other nations around the world.

Militarism is a nation's desire to keep a very strong military in case it is needed in the future. Before World War I, European countries were trying to make the strongest military and be the most powerful. As one country built up the army and navy, other countries would do the same.

Nationalism is a strong sense of loyalty to a nation. It can also mean a nation's desire to create an independent nation made up of those who share common interests or ideas.

Taking Sides in World War 1

Allies	Central Powers
Great Britain France Russia Serbia Belgium	Germany Austria-Hungary Bulgaria Ottoman Empire

World War 1 and the United States

- The United States was able to stay neutral for the first few years of World War I.
- Staying neutral was very difficult because of America's close relationship with Great Britain and the interruptions to trade. Public opinion slowly turned against Germany.
- The United States became concerned about Germany early in the war. The Germans announced they would be using unrestricted submarine warfare. This meant German submarines (U Boats) would sink any enemy ship without warning. They said they would even sink ships that were not being used for the military, like merchant or passenger ships.
- In 1915, a German submarine sunk the **Lusitania**. The *Lusitania* was a British ocean liner. Most of the passengers on the ship were killed, including around 100 Americans. This angered many Americans and is considered one of the reasons that the United States became involved in World War I.

- Another event causing American anger was the **Zimmerman Telegram**. Germany's foreign minister, Arthur Zimmerman, sent a secret telegram to Mexico City asking Mexico to attack the U.S. if the U.S. went to war with Germany. In exchange, Germany promised Mexico parts of the U.S. if/when they won the war. Mexico did not accept the offer, but the U.S. was alarmed by the offer.
- By 1917, the countries fighting in World War I had reached a stalemate. A stalemate is a situation where no one is winning. After the United States entered the war in 1917, the Allies began to win the war.

A New Kind of War

WW1 was a different kind of war. There were new technologies like submarines, airplanes, mustard gas, armored tanks, and trench warfare. **Trench Warfare** was a form of war where each side dug trenches. Soldiers stayed in the trenches. Some trench systems were 400 miles long. The area between trenches was called **no man's land**.

After the War

- The Treaty of Versailles ended World War I. The treaty placed all the blame for the war on Germany and removed its military strength. Germany was also forced to pay other countries for the entire cost of the war. 10 million soldiers died during the war, 21 million were wounded, 5 million civilians, people who were not soldiers, died.
- Following the war, President Wilson wanted the countries of Europe to help each other rebuild. He proposed The League of Nations, to try to prevent another war. It was clear from the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles, however, that countries like France and Great Britain simply wanted to punish Germany.
- The U.S. rejected the Treaty of Versailles, and therefore the League of Nations, and declared the war with Germany at an end in 1921. This made the treaty difficult to enforce for the other European powers in the years after the war.

Postwar America

Everyday life in the United States experienced many cultural changes during the 1920s. When World War 1 ended, life improved. Factories went into high gear and produced products to satisfy a growing demand. Many Americans worked in these factories. Their wages gave them buying power. The economy was booming. This period is called **The Roaring Twenties**. The following is just a few names to help describe American culture of the 1920s.

Henry Ford introduced the assembly line and **mass production** to automobile making. Once there was a new and faster way of making cars, Ford could make one car every 93 minutes. By 1927, he had sold 15 million Model T cars. Americans could now travel almost anywhere quickly and easily.

Louis Armstrong was very well known for his jazz music. He was a great trumpet player. Jazz was introduced to America in the 1920s and it became very popular. **Mass production** had made radios common and affordable. Until this time, people got their news and entertainment from newspapers and books. Radio was live and could be heard at home. People gathered around their radios as families do today around televisions. Radios quickly spread Jazz all over the country. Popular culture in the 1920's was called **The Jazz Age**. In 1927, the first full length movie with sound, **The Jazz Singer**, was made. Movies with sound and not just music were called "**Talkies**."

Langston Hughes was an American writer. He often wrote of African American issues. His work was very important in the **Harlem Renaissance**, which was an African American cultural movement in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. People whose grandparents had lived through slavery became educated and had good jobs. In Harlem, African culture blossomed. **The Harlem Renaissance** happened in music, dance, politics, literature and art.

Charles Lindbergh was an author, inventor, and a pilot. He is most famous for his work in aviation. He was the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. He flew from New York to Paris in the *Spirit of St. Louis*.

Babe Ruth was one of the greatest baseball players of all time. He started with the Boston Red Sox and ended up with the New York Yankees. He was entered into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936.

Great Depression and New Deal

After WW1, the United States economy was booming. Many people invested in the **stock market**. In October 1929, stocks began to lose their value. The Great Depression was a period of economic hardship. The American economy was in terrible shape. People were without jobs and homes. Many were living in poverty.

1930s: The Depression Hits

- On October 29, 1929, the stock market crashed. This day is known as "Black Tuesday." The crash led to the Great Depression because people had lost the money they had in the stock market. Many people had borrowed money from the bank in order to put it into the stock market. Since most everyone lost their money, they were unable to pay back their bank loans. As a result, the banks had to close down. Work was hard to find, and many people lived in poverty. People moved from town to town in the hopes of finding a job.
- A **recession** is a downturn in the economy. A **depression** is a long and very bad recession. The Great Depression lasted almost 10 years. Stock prices didn't fully recover until 1954. By 1932 one in four workers were unemployed in the United States.
- **Hoovervilles** were groups of shacks made from materials usually found in the trash. People could not afford homes when they could not find work. These shantytowns were named after President Herbert Hoover. Many people were angry that he did not help them when they needed him. Many had to rely on soup kitchens, which gave out

free food to the poor. It was common for people to go door to door looking for food or work.

- In the 1920's people borrowed money from the banks to buy many things that were produced to make their lives easier. This system is called **credit**. Few people had savings, but almost everyone had debt. During the Depression, many could not pay back their debt to the banks. When loans were not paid back, the banks lost money. Hoover did not give direct aid to help the needy people. Instead, he gave good loans to businesses and banks. He thought that helping businesses would help create jobs.
- To make matters worse, a severe drought swept across the Great Plains. As the drought continued, the grass in the area died, and the soil dried out. The topsoil, the upper layer of dirt on the fields blew away. This caused huge dust storms in the area. This is called the Dust Bowl. The drought caused farmers to suffer even more during the Great Depression. Many families lost their farms and moved from the Midwest to California, changing America forever. Before the Dust Bowl, America was a country of farms and small towns. Today, 80% of the population lives in or near cities.

Changes Under a New President

- **Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR)** became the thirty-second president of the United States in 1933. He was crippled from polio eleven years earlier, and used a wheelchair and crutches. He was elected president **four** times in a row, the most times of any president.
- Roosevelt created the **New Deal** to provide relief for the unemployed, to help the economy recover, and to reform the banking systems. **Social Security**, a program started to help people (65 or over) who retired or were out of work, is the only New Deal program that still exists today.
- New jobs were created in 1935 under the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)**. The WPA provided jobs to construct public buildings such as schools, libraries, roads, bridges—including the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. It employed 8.5 million Americans.
- **The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)** put people to work building dams, bridges, and roads. The dams were especially important because they helped to irrigate crops, control floods and generate electricity used in parts of the South that had never had electric power before..
- **The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC)** was set up to maintain state and national forests. People were given jobs to work in the forests making trails, fighting fires, and planting trees. The men were paid \$30 a month and lived in camps. It employed 30 million people.

Success in the 1930s

Even though the country was in a depression, people were still able to achieve some success.

Edward "Duke" Ellington was a leader of the new sound in jazz "big band" music. After his death, he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his work.

Margaret Mitchell also won the Pulitzer Prize in 1937, for her novel ***Gone With the Wind***. The book was made into a movie of the same name.

James "Jesse" Owens was an African American Olympic runner. In the 1936 Summer Olympics I Berlin, Germany, he won 4 gold medals.