

The Roaring Life of the 1920s**Section 2****The Twenties Woman****Terms and Names**

flapper Young woman who embraced the new fashions and values of the 1920s

double standard Set of principles granting one group more freedom than another group

Before You Read

In the last section, you read about some lifestyle changes in the 1920s. In this section, you will learn how women's lives changed during the 1920s.

As You Read

Use a web diagram to take notes on the changes women experienced in the 1920s.

YOUNG WOMEN CHANGE THE RULES (Pages 440–441)**What was a flapper?**

In some ways, the spirit of the twenties was a reaction to World War I. Many young soldiers had witnessed horrible events in Europe. This led them to rebel against traditional values. They wanted to enjoy life while they could.

Young women also wanted to take part in the rebellious, pleasure-loving life of the twenties. Many of them demanded the same freedom as men.

The new urban culture also influenced many women. Their symbol was the **flapper**. She was an emancipated young woman. She held new independent attitudes and liked the sophisticated new fashions of the day.

She wore make-up, short skirts, short hair, and more jewelry than would have been proper only a few years before. She often smoked cigarettes and drank alcohol in public. She went dancing to new, exciting music.

Other attitudes changed, too. Many young men and women began to see marriage as more of an equal partnership.

At the same time, churches and schools protested the new values. The majority of women were not flappers. Many people felt torn between the old values and the new ones.

One result of this clash between old values and the image of the flapper was the **double standard**. This was a set of principles or values generally accepted by society. One American double standard allowed men to have greater sexual freedom than women. Women still had to observe stricter standards of behavior than men did.

1. How did the flapper represent the spirit of the twenties?

WOMEN SHED OLD ROLES AT HOME AND AT WORK

(Pages 441–443)

How did women's roles change?

Many women had gone to work outside the home during World War I. This trend continued in the twenties. But their opportunities had changed after the war. Men returned from the war and took back traditional “men’s jobs.” Women moved back into the “women’s professions” of teaching, nursing, and social work.

Big business provided another role for women: clerical work. Millions of women became secretaries. Many others became salesclerks in stores. Many women also worked on assembly lines in factories. By 1930, 10 million women had paid jobs outside the home. This was almost one-fourth of the American work force.

Women did not find equality in the workplace. Few women rose to jobs in management. Women earned less than men. Men regarded women as temporary workers whose real job was at home keeping house and raising children. In the twenties, patterns of discrimination against women in the business world continued.

Family life changed, too. Families had fewer children. Electrical appliances made

housework easier. Many items that had been made at home—from clothing to bread—could now be bought ready-made in stores.

Public agencies took over some family responsibilities, too. They provided services for the elderly and the sick. Nevertheless, most women remained homemakers. Some women had to work and also run their homes. It was hard for them to combine these roles.

In the 1920s, marriages were more often based on romantic love than arranged by families. Children were no longer part of the work force. They spent their days in school and other activities with people of their own age. Peer pressure began to be an important influence on teens’ behavior. This reflected the conflict between traditional attitudes and modern ways of thinking.

2. Describe two changes in women’s roles in the workplace.

The New American Woman of the 1920s

Part A. Read the following description of the work week of a woman of 1900 and answer the questions at the end.

Within the usual American home, Monday was always "wash-day," attended by a soapy, steamy scent of suds. Water frequently had to be carried in buckets from a well some distance from the house. The clothes were "put to soak" the night before, and washing was begun as early as four in the morning. It was a matter of pride with housewives to have the washing hung before breakfast, and neighbors would vie with one another in seeing whose washing appeared earliest on the line. Tuesday was "ironing-day." The irons were heated on a hot stove. Men's "boiled" shirts, linen collars and cuffs, and women's and children's dresses and underwear with many yards of ruffles, starched to a wooden inflexibility, were "done up" at home. Wednesday was sewing and mending day. Women's and children's clothing was made at home, and usually the shirts of the men of the household. Darning huge piles of socks and stockings so perfectly that the darning could hardly be detected was a prized accomplishment of a good housewife. The best silk dress was often turned and remade to serve for a few more years. No man was ashamed to wear an honest patch. Thursday was a kind of mid-week rest-day; so far as it had fixed tasks, they were usually crocheting or embroidering, quilting, making rag carpets. Friday was cleaning-day. The thick carpets had to be swept with a broom; the housewife usually wore a dust-cap or towel wrapped around her head to protect her hair. After a thorough sweeping of rooms and stairs, furniture was dusted. Kitchen floors and porches were scrubbed, usually on hands and knees. The stoves were brightly polished. Saturday was "baking-day." All the bread and pastries were made in the home, large solid loaves, pies, cakes, doughnuts, and that delicacy most prized by the small boy—"cookies," usually made with a coating of white sugar and with a solitary raisin set like a jewel in the centre, and kept in a crock on an inaccessible shelf of the pantry to be doled out for good behavior or withheld for discipline. To use much "baker's bread" was an indictment, at once, of a housewife's industry and of her pride in her calling. Sunday was called the day of rest, but for the housewife it meant, often, the arrival of "company" and extra cooking. It was at this period that the old adage was most apt: "A man may work from sun to sun, but women's work is never done."³

1. What appliances or innovations of today would have lightened the housewife's work-week?
2. What additional tasks of the housewife are not even mentioned here?
3. How much time, in your opinion, would the housewife have had for personal interests and needs?

³Mark Sullivan, *Our Times, 1900–1925, Vol. 1: The Turn of the Century* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 424–27.

Part B. To conclude the lesson, explain how the lives of women changed in the 1920s with respect to each of the following points.

Housekeeping duties:

Leisure-time activities:

Civic responsibilities:

Careers:

Dress:

Daily routine:

13.1 Quiz

Select the letter of the term, name, or phrase that best matches each description. Note: Some letters may not be used at all. Some may be used more than once.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| a. Prohibition | e. fundamentalism |
| b. speakeasy | f. Clarence Darrow |
| c. bootlegger | g. William Jennings Bryan |
| d. Scopes trial | |

- _____ 1. This was defended at the Scopes trial.
- _____ 2. He was called as a witness in the Scopes trial.
- _____ 3. This was someone who provided illegal alcohol.
- _____ 4. One of the effects of this was a rise in organized crime.
- _____ 5. This describes the era after the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect.
- _____ 6. The government failed to budget enough men and money to enforce this.
- _____ 7. The American Civil Liberties Union hired him to represent John T. Scopes.
- _____ 8. This was an "underground" saloon or nightclub where liquor was sold illegally.
- _____ 9. This Protestant movement was grounded in the literal, word for word, interpretation of the Bible.

13.2

For each incomplete sentence, circle the letters of all the statements that accurately complete it.

- _____ 1. A flapper was a young woman who (circle six)
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| a. seemed casual and independent. | e. preferred a natural look for hair and make-up. |
| b. found true equality with men. | f. rejected traditionalist values of the 19th century. |
| c. often smoked and drank in public. | g. wore ankle-length dresses. |
| d. wore short skirts. | h. refused to take responsibility for domestic chores. |
- _____ 2. In the 1920s, women in the workplace found that (circle three)
- | | |
|--|--|
| a. they could earn as much as men. | d. some previously "men only" jobs were available to them. |
| b. many assembly-line jobs were available. | e. most paid workers were still men. |
| c. their managers were likely to be women. | |
- _____ 3. In the 1920s, women at home found that (circle three)
- | | |
|--|---|
| a. more ready-made foods and clothing were available. | d. their children spent most of their days at school and in organized activities. |
| b. traditional housework chores were more important than ever. | e. they experienced greater equality in marriage. |
| c. they were usually expected to work outside the home. | |

The Roaring Life of the 1920s

Section 3

Education and Popular Culture

Terms and Names

Charles A. Lindbergh First person to fly solo across the Atlantic

George Gershwin Composer

Georgia O'Keeffe Artist

Sinclair Lewis Novelist

F. Scott Fitzgerald Novelist

Edna St. Vincent Millay Poet

Ernest Hemingway Novelist

Before You Read

In the last section, you learned about women in the 1920s. In this section, you will read about education and popular culture during the 1920s.

As You Read

Use a time line to take notes on the key events in popular culture in the 1920s.

SCHOOLS AND THE MASS MEDIA SHAPE CULTURE (Pages 446–448) How did popular culture change in America?

America was becoming more prosperous. Business and industry required a more educated work force. These two factors caused a huge increase in the number of students going to high school. In 1914, only 1 million American students went to high school after elementary school. In 1926, the number was nearly 4 million.

Schools changed as they grew. Before the 1920s, high schools were mostly for students who were going on to college. In the twenties, high schools had a wide range of students. Schools offered vocational, or work-related, training for industrial jobs. They offered home economics courses for future homemakers.

High schools also saw an increase in the number of children of immigrants. Many of these students did not speak English. Even so, the nation's schools were successful in teaching large numbers of Americans to read.

As a result of increased literacy, more people read newspapers than before. Newspaper circulation rose. Big city papers and newspaper chains swallowed up small town newspapers.

National magazines were also popular. Some of them delivered the news. Other magazines published fiction and articles.

The most powerful of the mass media was radio. Radio networks with stations in many cities were formed in the twenties. The networks did research to find out what people wanted to hear—and gave it to them. Radio networks created something new in America: the shared national

Section 3, *continued*

experience of hearing things as they happened. By 1930, 40 percent of American households had radios.

1. What was an effect of increased literacy in the United States?

AMERICA CHASES NEW HEROES AND OLD DREAMS (Pages 448–451)

Who was Charles Lindbergh?

In the 1920s, Americans had more money and more free time than ever before. Fads, including puzzles and games, swept the nation. People also spent a great deal of money at sports events.

The twenties were called the Golden Age of Sports. Many talented athletes set new records. These athletes were portrayed as superheroes by the media. They became heroes to many Americans.

Charles A. Lindbergh thrilled the nation by becoming the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Lindbergh took off from New York City in his plane, *The Spirit of St. Louis*. After 33 hours, Lindbergh landed outside of Paris, France. On his return to the United States, Lindbergh became the idol of America. In an age of sensationalism and excess, Lindbergh stood for the honesty and bravery the nation seemed to have lost.

Even before the introduction of sound, movies became a national pastime. *The Jazz Singer*, the first movie with sound, was released in 1927. Walt Disney's *Steamboat Willie*, the first animated film with sound was made the next year. By 1930, the "talkies" had caused movie attendance to double.

In the 1920s, American artists broke away from European traditions. Eugene O'Neill wrote plays about the confusion of modern American life. Composer **George Gershwin** merged jazz with traditional elements creating music with a new American sound.

American painters recorded the America they saw and felt. Edward Hopper painted the loneliness of American life. **Georgia O'Keeffe** showed the grandeur of New York City. She later became famous for her paintings of the Southwest.

Many gifted American writers criticized American society. **Sinclair Lewis** was the first American to win a Nobel Prize for Literature. His novels *Main Street* and *Babbitt* made fun of middle-class America's conformity and materialism.

Novelist **F. Scott Fitzgerald** coined the term "Jazz Age" to describe the twenties. His books, such as *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby*, showed the negative side of the age. But the poems of **Edna Vincent Millay** celebrated youth and freedom from traditional restrictions.

Some Americans disliked American culture so much they went to live abroad. Many gathered in Paris. The writer Gertrude Stein called them the Lost Generation. They included Fitzgerald and **Ernest Hemingway**. Hemingway introduced a tough, simple style of writing that changed American literature.

2. Why did Lindbergh become an American idol?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Section 3, *continued*

As you read this section, take notes summarizing how public education changed.

	Education Before the 1920s	Education During the 1920s
1. Enrollments		
2. Types of courses		
3. Immigrants		
4. Financing		

As you read about how America's popular culture developed in the 1920s, give at least two specific examples of each area of popular culture.

1. Magazines	2. Radio
3. Sports	4. Movies
5. Theater, music, and art	6. Literature

“The Business of America” in the 1920s

Part A. Read the following statements illustrating the philosophy of presidents and others during the 1920s. Write the essence of each quote in the margin.

“Let Wall Street have a nightmare and the whole country has to help get them back in bed again.”¹

—Will Rogers, humorist and political commentator (1920)

“Not heroism but healing, not nostrums but normalcy, not revolution but restoration, not agitation but adjustment, not surgery but serenity, not the dramatic but the dispassionate, not experiment but equipoise, not submergence in internationality but sustainment in triumphant nationality.”²

—Warren G. Harding (1920)

“I have said to the people we mean to have less Government in business as well as more business in Government.”³

—Warren G. Harding (1921)

“There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, any time, anywhere!”⁴
—Calvin Coolidge, Governor of Massachusetts, telegram to Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, on the occasion of the Boston Police strike (September 14, 1919)

“It does not at all follow that because abuses exist, it is the concern of the federal government to attempt their reform.”⁵

—Calvin Coolidge, Message to Congress (1925)

“This is a business country . . . and it wants a business government. I do not mean a government by business nor a government for business, but I do mean a government that will understand business.”⁶

—Calvin Coolidge (1925)

“We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. . . . We shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation.”⁷

—Herbert Hoover, acceptance speech for the Republican nomination for President (August 11, 1928)

¹Michael Jackman, ed., *The Macmillan Book of Business and Economic Quotations* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1984), 185.

²Harvey Wish, *Contemporary America: The National Scene Since 1900*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 263.

³Jackman, *The Macmillan Book of Business and Economic Quotations*, 96.

⁴William Allen White, *A Puritan in Babylon: The Story of Calvin Coolidge* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), 166.

⁵Wish, *Contemporary America*, 362.

⁶Jackman, *The Macmillan Book of Business and Economic Quotations*, 96–97.

⁷Wish, *Contemporary America*, 372.

"The Republican party . . . restored the Government to its position as an umpire instead of a player in the economic game. For these reasons the American people have gone forward in progress while the rest of the world has halted, and some countries have even gone backwards."

—Herbert Hoover, "Rugged Individualism" speech (October 22, 1928)

"Surely no one will consider us lacking in reverence if we say that every one of the 'principles of modern salesmanship' on which businessmen so much pride themselves, are brilliantly exemplified in Jesus' talk and work. The first of these and perhaps the most important is the necessity for 'putting yourself in step with your prospect.'"⁸

—Bruce Barton, advertising executive and Republican politician

"The business of government is to keep the government out of business—that is, unless business needs government aid."⁹

—Will Rogers (1927)

Part B. Mark each of the following statements A if it is consistent with the philosophy expressed in the quotes above and B if it inconsistent with this philosophy.

- _____ 1. The government should place a high tariff on imported goods.
- _____ 2. The government should prosecute corporations vigorously for violations of antitrust laws.
- _____ 3. The administration should push for lower taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals.
- _____ 4. The government should lease its oil fields to private individuals.
- _____ 5. The government should increase its spending on health, welfare, and public works.
- _____ 6. The government should protect the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively.
- _____ 7. The government should encourage certain businesses with subsidies and/or lower taxes.
- _____ 8. The government should expand its regulation of business for the protection of consumers.
- _____ 9. Government should not place businessmen on agencies designed to regulate business practices.
- _____ 10. Government spending should be kept at a minimum.
- _____ 11. If left alone, business can insure prosperity for all Americans.
- _____ 12. Government should assume an active role in regulating the economy and promoting full employment.

⁸Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1925), 104.

⁹Jackman, *The Macmillan Book of Business and Economic Quotations*, 97.

Part C. To conclude this lesson, write a paragraph incorporating the following elements:

1. a topic sentence summarizing the philosophy of Republicans in the 1920s toward business;
2. at least four specific examples of how Republican presidents applied this philosophy in their actions during the decade;
3. a conclusion with an original campaign slogan or theme for Republicans in the 1928 election.