

LESSON 3

The Decade of 1920–1929

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

You are encouraged to be very attentive while viewing the video program. Review the video objectives and be prepared to record possible answers, in abbreviated form, as you view the video. The topics and time periods may differ from the chapters of the textbook your school system is using. Each video program chronicles a wide array of events and personalities during a specific decade of the 20th century. Keep in mind that one of the overarching goals of each lesson is to help you understand how past historical events and actions by historical personalities did not occur in a vacuum, and that they are inextricably interwoven in your society today.

Video:

“The Decade of 1920–1929” from the series, **The Remarkable 20th Century**.

Activities:

Your teacher may assign one or more activities for each lesson.

OVERVIEW

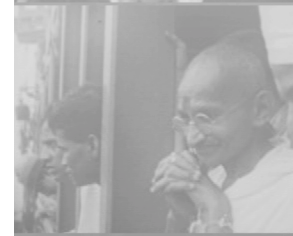
“Just being another decade on the time line was not good enough for the 1920s. When its brief turn came, it had to be the biggest, the loudest the brightest. A calamity gave it birth, and a calamity ended it. It was a decade of giants, none before or since.”

— Kevin Rayburn

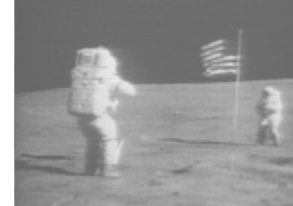
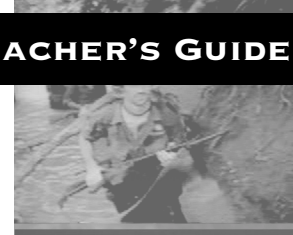
What country in the 1920s was characterized by prosecution of anarchists, attacks on laborers and racial groups, “Knight Riders,” violation of human civil rights, economic depression in rural areas, political scandals, gangsters, and deportation of people? Could this be America? While all of the preceding events occurred in the United States, it was also the country that granted citizenship to all Native Americans in 1924 and produced great writers like Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. It was the decade that saw the world embrace a Native American art form developed by black musicians such as Louis Armstrong. Jazz would spread throughout the world and remains the root of 20th century music. Yet, not everyone was enamored by this music that broke musical and social rules.

When you think of the United States in the 1920s, and you hear the word prohibition, you immediately think of alcohol. But, did you know that by the end of the 1920s, at least sixty communities across the nation had enacted laws prohibiting jazz in public dance halls? After all, wasn't it the “Devil's Music”? Is that the origin of the expression “don't give me that jazz?”

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“The Jazz Age was wicked and monstrous and silly. Unfortunately, I had a good time.”

—Heywood Brown

Phonograph records and musical programs on radio shows in the late 1920s helped make jazz popular in the urban areas. It became so popular, that it spread throughout the world. Jazz flourished as part of New York’s Harlem Renaissance.

While much of urban America experienced an economic boom through much of the 1920s, the world community enjoyed little peace or stability. The aftershocks of World War I totally dominated the European landscape. Russia was experiencing a tumultuous period as Lenin consolidated his power, and communism consumed the nation. A wary United States responded with the “Red Scare” and growing resentment of foreigners. Great Britain’s mighty empire was crumbling and cracks were appearing in India and Ireland.

President Wilson was unsuccessful in his efforts to convince the United States to support his Fourteen Points and join the League of Nations. His attempts to ensure peace throughout the world and foster fledging democracies fell victim to totalitarianism which began to raise its ugly head in the form of Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany.

The 1920s were a decade dominated by personalities that varied from Babe Ruth and Charles Lindbergh to villains such as Al Capone. People were entertained with Edison’s motion pictures and spectacles such as the Sacco and Vanzetti trial and the Scopes Monkey Trial.

Conservatism in business and isolationism on the international scene dominated the American political scene. Euphoria reigned over the stock market until Black Tuesday in October of 1929, and the economy of the U.S. and the world collapsed. The roar of the 1920s became silent.

LESSON GOAL

To be able to infer how events and personalities of the 1920s fostered social and economic changes in later decades.

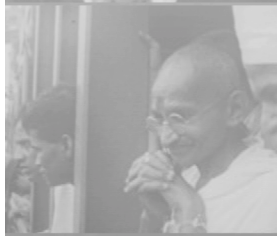
VIDEO OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are designed to assist the viewer in identifying the most significant aspects of the video segment of this lesson. You should take succinct notes while viewing the video.

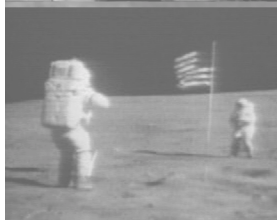
Video: “The Decade of 1920–1929”

1. Analyze the repercussions the Russian revolution in 1917 and the rise of totalitarianism in Europe have on the world community.
2. Evaluate the leadership of the American presidents during the 1920s and the implications for economic prosperity.
3. Assess the significance of the following with reference to societal development in the 1920s: “flappers,” the 18th and 19th Amendments, Palmer raids, “talkies,” jazz music, and American heroes.

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Time Code	Year	Topic	Description
33:31	1925	Social Issues	Evangelist McPherson; Scopes Monkey Trial
34:30	1925	US Politics	General Mitchell court martial
36:14	1926/29	Discoveries & Technology	Byrd to North Pole & South Poles by air
37:42	1926	Entertainment	Sports: Football – Rockne & Fighting Irish & Red Grange; Harlem Globe Trotters
38:34	1926	Discoveries & Technology	Rocket's liquid fuel; Early TV
39:09	1926	Entertainment	Movies: <i>Metropolis</i> , German director Lubich, Russian director Eisenstein, The "It" Girl; Houdini dies
41:21	1927	Economy	Cars, Transatlantic phone cable
41:40	1927	Entertainment	Mount Rushmore
41:48	1927	Transportation	<i>Spirit of St. Louis</i> & Lindbergh
42:48	1927	Entertainment	Sound in movies: Garbo, Laurel & Hardy
44:06	1927/28	Discoveries & Technology	Big Bang Theory; Penicillin
44:44	1927	Entertainment	Sports – Tennis, Boxing
45:22	1927	Social Issues	Sacco Vanzetti Murder Case
45:55	1928	US Politics	Hoover elected
46:37	1927	World Politics	China & Jiang Jie Shi & Mao Zedong
47:40	1928	Entertainment	Movies: Mickey Mouse
48:53	1928	Transportation	Ford Model "A"
49:19	1928	Entertainment	Academy Awards
49:51	1929	Social Issues	St. Valentine's Day Massacre; Elliot Ness & the Untouchables
50:41	1929	Transportation	Zeppelin
51:15	1929	Economy	Stock Market Crash & the Depression
53:00	1929	Overview	Howard K. Smith talks about the causes of the Depression
54:16		Closing	Closing Credits

WEB ACTIVITIES

These activities are not required unless your teacher assigns them. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

Activity 1—Women's Suffrage

Access the following political cartoons at the Web site of "Red Scare (1918–1921)":

"Women's Votes"

http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/HTMLCODE/CHRON/C121_132.HTM

"The Last Few Buttons are Always the Hardest"

http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/HTMLCODE/CHRON/C133_137.HTM

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After reviewing the political cartoons, access the “Photograph Analysis Worksheet” at the National Archives and Records Administration Web site at <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/photo.html> and use the worksheet as a guide for analyzing the two preceding political cartoons.

Activity 2—Women’s Anti-Suffrage Movement

Access Document #7 “Petition to U.S. Senate Women Voters Anti-Suffrage Party of New York World War I. ca. 1917” at the National Archives and Records Administration, <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/woman/wwIpet.html>

Use the “Written Document Analysis Worksheet” located at <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/navy/writanal.html> as a guide to analyze the document.

Activity 3—Palmer Raids and the Red Scare

Access the “Photograph Analysis Worksheet” located at the National Archives and Records Administration, <http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/photo.html>.

Use the worksheet to analyze the following political cartoons related to the Palmer Raids and the Red Scare:

“Bombing at Washington D.C. home of Attorney-General Palmer”

<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/HTMLCODE/CHRON/RS003.HTM>

“All They Want In Our Flag”

<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/HTMLCODE/CHRON/RS122.HTM>

“Put Them Out and Keep Them Out”

<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/HTMLCODE/CHRON/RS073.HTM>

“Deporting the Reds”

<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/HTMLCODE/CHRON/RS096.HTM>

“The Soviet Ark”

<http://newman.baruch.cuny.edu/digital/redscare/HTMLCODE/CHRON/RS109.HTM>

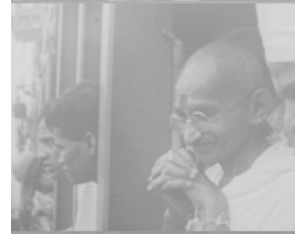
Activity 4—“Devil’s Music”

Access the PBS Web site titled “The TV Series and Beyond” at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/cultureshock/beyond/jazz.html>.

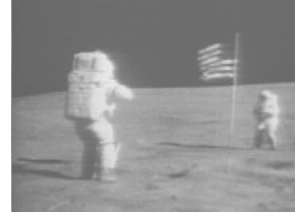
Answer the following questions:

- I. Compare and contrast the criticism directed at jazz music in the 1920s and the criticism directed at rap music in contemporary society.

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2. Analyze how the following historical events in the 1920s helped expand the influence of jazz:
 - a. growing demand for labor
 - b. gangster-run nightclubs
 - c. social liberalism
3. Identify and evaluate a minimum of three issues that would help support the argument that opposition to jazz music had racial overtones.

PRACTICE TEST

After watching the video and reviewing the objectives, you should be able to complete the following Practice Test. When you have completed the Practice Test, turn to the Answer Key to score your answers.

Multiple-choice

Select the single best answer. If more than one answer is required, it will be so indicated.

1. The red scare of 1919–1920 was provoked by:
 - A. the wartime migration of rural blacks to northern cities.
 - B. the strict enforcement of prohibition laws.
 - C. evolutionary science's challenge to the biblical story of the Creation.
 - D. the public's association of labor violence with its fear of revolution.
 - E. All of the above.
2. The first "talkie" motion picture was:
 - A. *The Great Train Robbery*.
 - B. *The Birth of a Nation*.
 - C. *A Farewell to Arms*.
 - D. *The Jazz Singer*.
3. Jazz music was developed by:
 - A. European immigrants.
 - B. American blacks.
 - C. Caucasian impresarios.
 - D. teenage Americans.

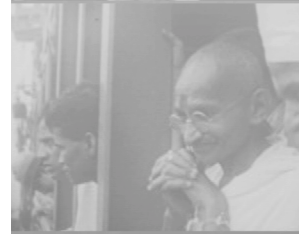
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4. Match each literary figure below with the correct work:
- | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. a-3, b-2, c-4 | a. Ernest Hemingway | 1. <i>The Sun Also Rises</i> |
| B. a-1, b-3, c-2 | b. F. Scott Fitzgerald | 2. <i>Main Street</i> |
| C. a-2, b-1, c-3 | c. Sinclair Lewis | 3. <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> |
| D. a-1, b-4, c-2 | | 4. <i>The Great Gatsby</i> |
5. The postwar anxiety and intolerance of Americans in the 1920s was manifested in the:
- Sacco and Vanzetti case.
 - Scopes trial.
 - resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan.
 - Immigration Act of 1924.
 - All of the above.
6. In his book *Mein Kampf* Adolf Hitler expressed the spirit of:
- the Communist movement.
 - fascism.
 - the Nazi movement.
 - the democratic process.
7. Which of the following statements concerning Russia in the 1920s is accurate:
- Lenin flees to England after his failure to seize power after the second revolution in 1917.
 - Leon Trotsky becomes the leader of the White forces who oppose Lenin.
 - Josef Stalin wins in a power struggle with Trotsky to assume control of Russia after the death of Lenin.
 - Lenin supports the Russian war effort during World War I.

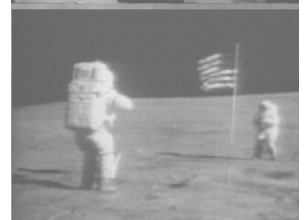
Essay/Problem Questions

- List at least five major economic and /or technological developments in the 1920s. Select the three most significant ones and explain your choices.
- Which of the post war literary talents seem the most interesting to you? Why? Tell why you have enjoyed reading or would like to read the works of any three of these jazz-age writers.
- Would you like to have lived in the 1920s? Why or why not? Explain what you find most alluring about the decade and what you would not have liked.

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11. Do you think that the 1920s should be most noted as a decade of anxiety and intolerance, hedonism and liberation, or both? Cite specific features of life in the 1920s to explain your view. Would it depend on the country? Why or why not?

ANSWER KEY

The following provides the answers and references for the practice test questions. Video objectives are referenced using the following abbreviation: V=Video Objective.

Multiple Choice:

1. D Ref.V 1; 3
2. D Ref.V 3
3. B Ref.V 3
4. D Ref.V 5
5. E Ref.V 3; 5
6. C Ref.V 1
7. C Ref.V 1

Essay/Problem Questions:

8. Ref.V 2; 3
9. Ref.V 5; 6
10. Ref.V 3; 4; 5; 6
11. Ref.V 3; 4; 5; 6

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