THE ROARING TWENTIES

MASS MEDIA
After World War I, the United States entered an era of prosperity known as the Roaring Twenties. For the first time, average Americans could buy expensive items such as automobiles. Cities and their surrounding suburbs grew, leisure time increased, and the ways American spent their free time changed. But the wave of prosperity did not last. In 1929, the U.S economy collapsed. America entered the Great Depression, a time when many people did not have money or jobs. Throughout this period, mass media grew and helped to shape American culture.

Print Media
In the 1920s, people had more time to read for enjoyment. Mass-market magazines became more popular than ever. The colorful publications told people about news, fashion, sports, and hobbies. Advertisers used flashy ads in magazines and newspapers to sell consumer products. The content of these publications often created fads, or temporary fashions and ways of acting. Magazines and newspapers helped to shape the culture of the era.

Radio Broadcasts
In the 1920s, mass media expanded to include the radio. For the first time, millions of people around the world were connected through radio signals. Throughout the country, people gathered at home to listen to their radios. Programs included broadcast news, entertainment programs, and popular music, such as jazz. Later, during the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used the radio to broadcast his “fireside chats.” In these radio programs, the President spoke to Americans and calmed their fears about the poor economy.

Movies
Although movies had been around for a generation, they were silent pictures. In 1927, the first motion picture with sound was released, and the film industry changed forever. Millions of people flocked to theaters to see “talkies.” During the Great Depression, movies provided an escape from the hardships of daily life.

CHALLENGES TO TRADITIONAL VALUES
After World War I, many Americans wanted to return to life as they had known it before the war. But the United States was changing. More Americans were living in the cities, earning a better income and enjoying more free time. These transformations brought challenges to traditional American values. The table below describes some of these changes and their effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGE</th>
<th>EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many Americans began to emphasize science and secular values over traditional ideas about religion.</td>
<td>Science and religion clashed when a high school teacher, John Scopes, broke a Tennessee law by teaching Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. In the 1925 Scopes Trial (also known as “The Monkey Trial”), John Scopes was tried and found guilty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's attitudes and roles began to change.</td>
<td>The fashions of women who were known as “flappers” were popularized in movies and magazines. More important, these women believed that they had the same social and political rights as men. More women entered the workforce and politics. With the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, women gained the right to vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants flocked to the United States, bringing a diverse mix of people and ideas.</td>
<td>Immigration, once fairly open to people from eastern and southern Europe, was limited to quotas. New legislation limited immigration from certain countries. The Ku Klux Klan, which terrorized African Americans, was revived. Some Americans were angered by the country’s changing values. They revived the Klan and added ethnic groups such as Jews, Catholics, and immigrants, as targets of hatred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eighteenth Amendment (1919) banned the production and sale of alcohol.</td>
<td>Prohibition was seen as a way to strengthen families and society in general. However, some people believed that a ban on alcohol contributed to organized crimes. The law did not stop people from drinking. Once alcohol could not be purchased legally, ordinary Americans smuggled it, sold it in secret, or made their own. They also gathered in secret drinking places known as speakeasies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ROARING TWENTIES
Guided Reading. Read the handout and answer the questions below.

1. What were some of the things Americans could do for the first time in the 1920's because of the prosperity that followed World War I?
   -
   -

2. What happened in 1929 and how did it affect America?

3. What three types of mass media grew during the 1920s?
   -
   -

4. What kinds of information could be found in mass-market magazines?

5. What did advertisers used to sell consumer products? What did the content of these publications often create?

6. What kinds of programs were broadcast on the radio in the 1920s? What was the purpose of the “fireside chats”?
   -
   -

7. How did movies change in 1927?

8. What kinds of transformations occurred in America in the 1920s regarding science and religion?

9. What did John Scopes do to break the law in 1925? What was his occupation?
   -

10. What was a “nickname” for the Scope’s Trial? What was the outcome of his trial?
    -

11. In what 2 ways did the lives of women change in America in the 1920s?
    -

12. Who did the newly revived Ku Klux Klan target for their hatred in America in the 1920s?

13. What was the purpose of Prohibition initially?

14. What were some negative aspects that occurred because of Prohibition?

15. What was a speakeasy?