

Y9 History America in the 1920s



Summary

During the 1920s, America experienced an economic boom. This was a time of economic prosperity, and impacted American society in many ways. The sale of consumer goods increased, along with car ownership thanks to Henry Ford and the Model T. Many (flapper) women experienced increased freedom and wider public entertainment. However, despite the good times, the 1920s also saw the rise of gangster violence with prohibition, and black Americans experienced considerable racism and discrimination across America. This 'roaring' decade came to an end with the Wall Street Crash of 1929, which plunged America into a Great Depression the following decade.

Key Figures

Henry Ford	An American business man who created the Model T, a standardised car made on an assembly line. This sped up production and made cars more affordable.
Louis Armstrong	An influential musician who popularised 'jazz' music throughout the 1920s.
Al Capone	A gangster and business man who became famous for supplying alcohol illegally and racketeering. He was very powerful and used violence to build his empire.
Buster Keaton	Famous comedy star of silent movies, his film 'The General' was very popular.



SCAN ME

Challenge — Different groups in America experienced the 1920s differently. Who do you think had the **worst** of times and the **best** of times? Explain your answer and back up with examples.

1919 Prohibition becomes law

1920 Women get the vote

1923 Coolidge becomes President

1925 The Great Gatsby is published

Aug 1927 two immigrants executed for being Communists

Oct 1927 The first 'talkie' The Jazz Singer is released

1928 Hoover becomes President

1929 St Valentines Day gang massacre

Oct 1929 Wall Street Crash

TIMELINE

Key Vocabulary

Economic Boom	A time of prosperity with an increase in production and sale of goods and an increase in wages
Flapper	A fashionable young woman who enjoyed more freedom, wore short skirts, had bobbed hair and smoked and drank in public
Laissez Faire	A policy that the government should not interfere with the economy
Prohibition	From 1920-33 this law stated the production and sale of alcohol was illegal in America
Moonshine	Alcohol that was illegally made in America
Speakeasy	A secret bar which illegally sold alcohol
Gangster	Used violence and intimidation to control the supply of illegal alcohol
Racketeering	Gangsters forced business owners to pay them for protection.
Jim Crow Laws	These legalized racial segregation (separated black and white people in America)
Ku Klux Klan	A racist group of white Protestants who used violence to intimidate black Americans
Lynching	A mob killing of a person, usually by hanging
Wall Street Crash	A major stock market crash when shares plummeted in value and many investors and banks went bankrupt
The Great Depression	A period when America and then the world's economies collapsed causing unemployment and misery

Other Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zt8ftyc/revision/1>

