Chapter Ten:
The Roaring Twenties

“Never let the fear of striking out get in your way.”
-Babe Ruth
Objective:
- Evaluate and analyze the causes and effects of events and social issues like Social Darwinism, Red Scare, Prohibition, the Great Migration, the Harlem Renaissance, the Teapot Dome Scandal, and the Roaring 20s.

Essential Questions:
- What difficulties did Americans have in adjusting to peace after the war?
- What factors sparked the prosperity of the 1920s?
- How did the policies of Republican Presidents differ from those of the Progressive Presidents?
- In what ways did the 1920s witness a conflict in values?
- What impact did the “Harlem Renaissance” have on the African-American community in America?

TEKS:
- History: 5 (A), 6 (A), 6 (B)
- Geography: 13 (A)
- Government: 19 (C)
- Economics: 15 (C), 16 (A)
- Culture: 25 (A), 25 (B), 26 (D)
- Science, Technology, and Society: 27 (C)
Chapter Vocabulary

- Roaring Twenties
- Return to Normalcy
- Red Scare
- Teapot Dome Scandal
- Warren Harding
- Calvin Coolidge
- Herbert Hoover
- Rugged Individualism
- Henry Ford
- Prohibition
- Frances Willard
- Eighteenth Amendment
- Twenty-First Amendment
- Scopes “Monkey” Trial
- Clarence Darrow
- Immigration Acts
- Eugenics
- Flapper
- Tin Pan Alley
- Great Migration
- Harlem Renaissance
- Langston Hughes
- Marcus Garvey
- Charles Lindbergh
Important Ideas

- The 1920s were a period of economic prosperity and of new cultural values.
- Immediately after the war, Americans experienced a temporary recession as businesses adjusted from a wartime to a peacetime economy. Americans, frightened by the triumph of Communism in Russia, experienced a “Red Scare.” Attorney General Palmer arrested thousands of suspects and deported them.
- Nativism and racism were also on the rise, and Americans retreated to a more traditional isolationist foreign policy.
- Three Republican Presidents pursued pro-business policies with low taxes and high tariff rates. Warren Harding proposed a "return to normalcy," but his administration was beset by corruption as later revealed by the Teapot Dome Scandal and other scandals. Calvin Coolidge believed the "business of America is business," while Herbert Hoover saw "rugged individualism" as the spirit that had made America into a great nation.
- Several factors contributed to the economic prosperity of the 1920s. The most important one was the spread of the automobile. Henry Ford used assembly-line production to lower car prices, bringing ownership in reach of most Americans.
- Electricity and electrical appliances also greatly helped to stimulate the economy.
- Corporate profits led stock prices to rise. Many Americans became involved in speculation in the stock market and real estate, in the hopes of getting rich.
- The 1920s saw a clash of cultural values. The Eighteenth Amendment banned the sale of alcoholic beverages. Tennessee passed a law banning the teaching of evolution. This law came to national attention in the Scopes "Monkey Trial." A teacher broke the law and was defended by Clarence Darrow. William Jennings Bryan helped the prosecution.
Important Ideas

• There was also a rise of Nativist feeling and the introduction of restrictions on immigration, establishing quotas for the first time. Eugenics attempted to promote what were considered to be superior genetic characteristics.
• Women gained the right to vote with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. The 1920s saw greater freedom for women as they wore less restrictive clothing, entered the work force in greater numbers, and began gaining college educations.
• Millions of African-Americans began moving from the rural South to cities in the North and Midwest during and after World War I in the Great Migration.
• The vibrant African-American community in Harlem in New York City became the cultural center of the Harlem Renaissance. Writers like Alaine Locke and Langston Hughes celebrated their heritage. Marcus Garvey attempted to organize African Americans in a Back-to-Africa Movement.
• Writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald depicted the lifestyles of the young and materialistic rich in the 1920s, while Sinclair Lewis ridiculed American hypocrisy.
The decade of the 1920s opened with the difficult task of adjusting to peace. Disillusioned by the war, Americans returned to their traditional policy of isolationism in foreign affairs - refusing to become involved in other nations' disputes or problems. The government stopped its wartime spending and soldiers returned home from war looking for jobs. Factories closed to convert from military to civilian production. Farmers lost their markets in Europe. These factors led to a temporary economic recession (downturn) in the United States, lasting from 1919 until 1921.
The Red Scare

- The end of World War I brought new fears to many Americans of Communists, anarchists, and immigrants. Russia had been ill-prepared for the war. In 1917, strikes in cities and soldiers' mutinies had led to the overthrow of the Tsar. Later in the year, Communist revolutionaries, led by Vladimir Lenin, had seized power.
- Communists threatened to spread their revolution to other countries in Europe, like Germany and Hungary. When a wave of strikes also hit the United States in 1919, many Americans feared this was the start of their own Communist revolution. This “Red Scare” created an atmosphere of panic.
The Palmer Raids

- In January 1919, an Italian anarchist set off a bomb outside the home of Attorney General Mitchell Palmer. The bombing was one in a series of attacks that day on judges, politicians, and law enforcement officials in eight American cities, including Cleveland and New York. The nation demanded that action be taken. This convinced Palmer that a radical plot to overthrow the U.S. government was underway. In January 1920, Palmer ordered the round-up of 4,000 suspects in several cities without warrants. His assistant, J. Edgar Hoover, directed the raids. Palmer arrested men he accused of plotting to overthrow the government. Most were later released, but 600 were eventually deported.
The Sacco & Vanzetti Case

- The anti-Communist hysteria affected immigrants as well. Two Italian immigrants, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were convicted of committing murder during a robbery. The robbery was allegedly committed to obtain funds for an anarchist revolution. Pressure for their release came from around the world. Many Americans feared looking weak to the rest of the world if they let them go. Although the evidence was insufficient to convict them, the judge was extremely partial in his conduct of the trial. Both Sacco and Vanzetti were found guilty and executed in 1927. Supporters of Sacco and Vanzetti 's innocence believed their conviction was due to their anarchist views, despite jurors who insisted that anarchism had played no part in their decision.
The Rise of Nativism & Racism

- The Red Scare, anarchist bombings, and the Sacco and Vanzetti trial contributed to the rise of **nativism** -- a dislike of foreigners. Nativists believed white Protestant Americans were superior to other people. As you will learn later in this chapter, these attitudes led to new restrictions on immigration. The migration of African Americans from the South to Northern cities also led to increased racial tensions after the war. The **Ku Klux Klan**, dead for decades, found new life in 1915. Klan members were hostile to immigrants, Catholics, Jews, and African Americans. Major race riots broke out just after the war in many American cities. The worst riot occurred in Chicago, where 38 people were killed. The lynching of African Americans also continued, as well as segregation in the South.
The Republican Presidents

- In 1920, Republicans returned to the White House. They were to remain there for the next twelve years, overseeing the prosperity of the twenties as well as the arrival of the Great Depression that ended it.
- In general, Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover followed policies favorable to American business. They supported laissez-faire policies with minimal government interference in business activities:

**High Protective Tariffs.** Congress passed tariffs that protected U.S. manufacturers by keeping out foreign-made goods. The **Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act (1930)** raised tariffs to their highest levels in history.

**Republican Policies Favoring Business**

- **Lower Taxes on the Wealthy and Corporations.** Congress slashed taxes on the rich and corporate profits. As a result, a larger tax burden was shifted to the average wage earner.
- **Lax Enforcement of Antitrust Laws and Regulations.** These Presidents were lax in regulating business. Business was given a much freer hand and a large number of business mergers took place in the 1920s.
Harding Administration: 1921-1923

- Warren Harding was elected President by a landslide in 1920. A former Ohio newspaperman and U.S. Senator, he captured the national spirit when he called for a "return to normalcy" as his campaign slogan. By this, Harding meant a less ambitious foreign policy and a greater emphasis on peacetime production and prosperity at home. Under Harding, the United States refused to join the League of Nations, enacted high tariffs, lowered taxes, and restricted immigration.

- For a period when racial and ethnic prejudices were on the rise, Harding himself showed a remarkable degree of tolerance. He gave a speech in Alabama in 1921 urging greater rights for African Americans, and supported an anti-lynching bill.

- Harding also resisted anti-Semitism. His campaign manager was a Jewish-American from Texas, Albert Lasker, also known as the "Father of Modern Advertising." Harding signed an act creating child health care centers. He also pursued arms reduction by sponsoring the Washington Naval Conference and supporting U.S. membership in the World Court.
Harding Administration: 1921-1923

- One of Harding's most serious weaknesses was that he appointed personal friends the Ohio Gang - who turned out to be dishonest. One Cabinet member, the Secretary of the Interior, leased oil-rich government lands at Teapot Dome, Wyoming, to two business friends in exchange for personal bribes. The **Teapot Dome Scandal**, uncovered just after Harding's death in 1923, was one of the worst scandals in U.S. history.

- Additional scandals emerged in other departments. Another of Harding's appointments, Charles Forbes, stole millions from the construction of hospitals for returning war veterans. Because of Harding's poor choices for Cabinet positions, these scandals have left a lasting stain on his reputation.
Coolidge Administration: 1923 - 1929

- As Governor of Massachusetts, Calvin Coolidge had come to national attention during the Boston police strike of 1919. In a telegram to Samuel Gompers, President of the AFL, he wrote, “There is no right to strike against the public safety by anyone, anywhere, any time.” Based on his record as Governor, Coolidge was selected as Harding's Vice-President. He became President when Harding died suddenly in 1923. Coolidge was then elected for another term in 1924.
Coolidge Administration: 1923 - 1929

- Coolidge symbolized the old-fashioned values of honesty and thrift. Continuing Harding's pro-business policies, his motto was "the business of America is business." Coolidge spoke so infrequently in public that he became known as "Silent Cal," but he received much of the credit for the business expansion of the 1920s. He had a talent for doing nothing. A noted journalist said of Coolidge: "His active inactivity suits the needs of the country admirably. It suits all the business interests which want to be let alone .... And it suits those who are convinced that government has become dangerously complicated and top-heavy." However, some have accused Coolidge's *laissez-faire* approach to the economy as encouraging the over-speculation that resulted in the crash of 1929.
Hoover Administration: 1929 - 1933

- The son of a Quaker blacksmith, **Herbert Hoover** was a skilled engineer and self-made millionaire. Before 1917, he had distributed relief aid to Belgian children. During the war, he oversaw U.S. food production. Later, he was Secretary of Commerce under President Coolidge. In the 1928 Presidential campaign, Hoover optimistically predicted the end of poverty in America if he were elected: "We in America today are nearer the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land."
Hoover Administration: 1929 - 1933

- Hoover was impressed by the achievements of business in raising American living standards. He believed this had come about because of a system in which individuals were given equal opportunities, a free education, and a will to succeed. This "rugged individualism," as Hoover called it, spurred progress and was the foundation of America's "unparalleled greatness." Hoover felt that too much government interference in business would undermine the nation's prosperity by increasing corruption, smothering initiative, extinguishing opportunity, and "dry[ing] up the spirit of liberty and progress."
Rise of the Automobile

- The 1920s were prosperous times for many Americans. After the initial slump in the economy of 1919-1920, wages and employment opportunities began to rise, while business profits and production soared. Government policies favoring business were one factor behind this prosperity. There were several others.

- Probably the single most important factor behind the prosperity of the 1920s was the expanded use of the automobile. The growth in automobile ownership, from 8 to 24 million, greatly affected all aspects of American life. Automobile production required vast amounts of steel, glass, and rubber- stimulating those industries. By 1929, one out of every nine workers was employed in an auto-related industry. Cars gave people greater mobility. Families were now able to drive away on vacation. The growth of suburbs was also made possible by the car. School buses allowed students in remote and rural areas to attend school regularly for the first time.
Rise of the Automobile

- **Henry Ford** was an engineer and early automobile manufacturer. His goal was to build cars that everyone could afford. His **Model T**, introduced in 1905, was the first car that many middle-class Americans could buy. He introduced the assembly line in 1914, increasing production by moving cars along a conveyor belt while workers completed their assigned tasks. By 1924, Ford was producing 1.6 million cars a year at a price of less than $300 per car. By 1925, one car was rolling off Ford's assembly line every ten seconds.

- Ford's new assembly line production was so efficient he was able to double wages overnight while slashing prices. Ford wanted to give workers enough buying power to purchase the cars and other goods they were mass-producing.
Rise of Other New Industries

- The 1920s saw new discoveries and inventions in almost every field, laying the framework for many new businesses. These inventions included improvements in transmitting electrical power, improved motors, and a new trans-Atlantic telephone service. New household appliances, like the vacuum cleaner, refrigerator and toaster, were also introduced. Radio and motion pictures became widespread. The American chemical industry expanded and the use of oil and natural gas increased. These new industries created new jobs, and changed the ways Americans lived.

- The first airplane, using an engine similar to that in a car, was flown by the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in 1903. **Glenn Curtiss** was an early aviation pioneer. In 1908, he turned his attention to designing a seaplane that could take off and land on water. Three years later, he successfully flew his "hydroeroplane" in San Diego Bay, landing on a naval ship. His landing marked the birth of U.S. naval aviation, and convinced the Secretary of the Navy to buy the navy's first aircraft. In 1912, Curtiss developed a larger "flying boat." In 1919, he constructed the first airplane to cross the Atlantic Ocean for the U.S. Navy.
More Efficient Production Techniques

• The 1920s saw remarkable improvements in manufacturing efficiency. As you know, Ford had introduced electric conveyor belts to his assembly lines. Each car moved along the belt to different groups of workers who completed one small part of the assembly. With this method, production was suddenly six times faster. Use of the conveyer belt and other new techniques spread, making industry generally more productive. When manufacturers first adopted the **assembly line** to their production process, they often achieved dramatic gains in productivity, and consumers benefited from lower prices. However, one unforeseen consequence was a radical change in the nature of factory work. Skilled workers were no longer needed, even in complex manufacturing operations like car assembly.
Age of Mass Consumption

- Along with changes in production, the 1920s witnessed new patterns of consumption, creating mass markets for goods. Advertising stimulated demand, while workers with higher wages and more leisure time had greater purchasing power. Retailers developed new programs for installment purchases and buying on credit. The buyer had to pay a small down payment to take home an item. The buyer then paid the rest in small monthly payments, which included interest. Through installment plans, consumers were able to buy more expensive goods, such as cars, refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, furniture, and radios, which they could not otherwise afford. Once one seller offered an installment plan, competitors were usually forced to do the same. As the table below shows, the majority of costly items were bought using this method:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Item</th>
<th>Installment Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automobiles</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonographs</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum Cleaner</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing Machine</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Speculation Boom

- **Speculation** is the purchase of any item, not for personal use, but in the hope of selling it later at a higher price. The 1920s saw the spread of speculation in stocks and real estate. The development of new industries, improved production techniques, and the expansion of mass markets had led the shares of corporations listed on the stock market to climb to dizzying heights. Gains in stocks fueled speculation. As people read about these successes, it enticed them to buy stocks for easy profits. As more people bought stocks, stock prices went up even higher.
Uneven Prosperity

- Not all groups participated equally in the prosperity of the 1920s. Wealth was highly concentrated. According to one study in 1929, the top one thousandth (0.1%) of Americans had a combined income equal to that of the bottom 42%. The same top group controlled about one-third of all savings, while more than three-quarters of Americans had no savings at all. Many Americans still faced poverty. With the introduction of tractors and spread of electricity, farmers faced lower incomes due to overproduction. Railroads suffered from new competition with cars. Textile workers faced lower wages because of foreign competition. Minority groups faced discrimination in employment.
Cultural Values in Conflict

• In the 1920s, many Americans began to adopt a set of new values that threatened the traditional values of the nineteenth century. The yearning of young people for greater freedom and excitement helped prompt some of these changes. The struggle between modern and traditional values was reflected in the literature, films, and dramas of the 1920s. Greater mobility and material comfort had a key impact on social patterns and beliefs. Many groups, especially women, the young, and African Americans, felt a new sense of power and independence. Others felt threatened and sought to preserve traditional ways.

• At the start of the 1920s, rural America continued to regard the rise of modern urban society with great suspicion. The best examples of efforts to defend traditional values were probably Prohibition and the Scopes Trial.
Prohibition

- Protestant reformers often saw liquor as the cause of poverty and crime. Many women's organizations championed an end to selling alcoholic drinks, believing this would protect families, women and children from the effects of alcohol abuse.

- One of the most outspoken voices of the Temperance Movement was Frances Willard (1839-1896). Her own brother had been an alcoholic. In 1879, she was elected as President of the National Women's Temperance Union. During her nineteen years as President, Willard advocated women's rights, suffrage, prison reform for women, an eight-hour workday and improved working conditions in factories. In 1882, Willard organized the Prohibition Party. By 1919, the work of Willard and other reformers had created efficient pressure to persuade enough states to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment, banning the sale of alcoholic drinks.
Prohibition

- Many Americans believed Prohibition wrongly tried to force one group's moral beliefs on others. Others opposed Prohibition because the closing of bars, breweries, and distilleries put thousands of people out of work. These critics argued that the return of a legal liquor industry would provide new jobs. In addition, Prohibition led to a growth in lawlessness and the rise of organized crime, which supplied illegal alcohol to willing consumers.

- By 1933, most Americans saw this "experiment" in morals as a failure. Many people had simply refused to accept the ban on alcohol. Although illegal, alcoholic drinks were widely available at "speakeasies" and other underground drinking establishments. Even President Harding drank alcohol in the White House. Fewer than fourteen years after the ban on alcoholic drinks went into effect, Prohibition was repealed by the Twenty-First Amendment (1933). The experience of Prohibition demonstrated that unpopular laws are sometimes unenforceable.
An even greater clash between traditionalists and modernists took place in the 1920s in Tennessee, the first state to pass a law against the teaching of Darwin's Theory of Evolution. State legislators believed that Darwin had contradicted the Biblical account of Creation. In 1925, John Scopes, a biology teacher, was arrested for teaching his class about the theory of evolution. Scopes was arrested and put on trial.

The Scopes "Monkey Trial" drew nationwide attention for pitting older religious beliefs against new scientific theories. The state was represented by William Jennings Bryan as special prosecutor, while the famed attorney Clarence Darrow defended Scopes. Bryan and Darrow were considered to be the greatest orators of their day, and the Scopes trial became the first in American history to be broadcast over national radio. Darrow cross-examined Bryan as an expert on the Bible, pointing to seeming contradictions in the Biblical text. In the end, Scopes was convicted for teaching evolution, but his $100 fine was later set aside by an appeals court.
New Restrictions on Immigration

- In 1910, Eastern and Southern Europeans made up 70 percent of all immigrants entering the United States. During World War I, immigration was reduced to a trickle by the conflict in Europe. After the war, nativist feelings against immigrants led Congress to restrict immigration from Europe for the first time.

- American nativist feeling had deep roots in anti-Catholicism, ethnic bias and the fear of admitting foreign radicals. Many Americans saw the influx of immigrants without skills, education, or a knowledge of English as a threat to the nation's economic stability. The "New Immigrants" often settled in inner cities, which put added pressures on local governments and schools to provide them with services.

- The **Immigration Acts** of 1921, 1924, and 1929 were basically designed to keep out immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. These laws established quotas for each separate nationality, based on America's existing ethnic composition. Under this system, Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany were allowed the greatest number of immigrants, while the number of "New Immigrants" (from Eastern and Southern Europe) was severely limited. Asian immigration was barred altogether.
Eugenics

- Belief in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon "race" was common in this time period. Many Americans believed that light-skinned, blond-haired, blue-eyed people were superior to others. Such feelings had contributed to the new restrictions on immigration. They also led to the rise of eugenics. **Eugenics** was a pseudo-scientific belief that the human race could be improved by breeding. It was supposed that superior parents would have even better children.

- A leading proponent of eugenics, **Charles Davenport**, thought that by preventing the mentally ill from having children, mental illness in the United States might be sharply reduced. Davenport and other eugenicists also wanted to reduce immigration to the United States by what they saw as "inferior races" from Eastern and Southern Europe.

- Eugenics led to forced sterilizations, segregation laws, and marriage restrictions. Some of the money to finance this racist thinking came from such prestigious groups as the Carnegie Institution and Rockefeller Foundation. The belief in eugenics later spread from the United States to Germany. Eugenics was also closely tied to **Social Darwinism**. Social Darwinists believed that different human races competed for survival just as different plants and animals did in the natural world.
In opposition to these traditional values were the newer, modern values of the period, which encouraged greater openness and self-expression.

The decade opened with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote. New household appliances reduced housework, and greater numbers of women now went to college. As more women worked, they demonstrated a new economic independence and became more assertive. This brought about changes in manners and morals. Young women began to smoke and drink in public. They rejected restrictive clothing and instead adopted the new look of the "flapper." Flappers wore short dresses that revealed their body shapes as well as their legs and arms. Their hair was short and choppy, and they also wore a lot of make up. Young women went out on dates or to dances without a chaperone. Flappers enjoyed energetic popular dances like the Charleston. People began reading Sigmund Freud and treating sexuality more openly.
After the Civil War, thousands of pianos were sold to individuals. As a result, the demand for sheet music exploded. Around 1910, New York City began to emerge as the capital of popular music publishing. **Tin Pan Alley**, a section of New York City, was the area where song-writing and musical ideas mixed together to form American popular music. Various styles, such as blues, jazz, and ragtime, were melded together.

Publishers were surprised to discover that sheet music for popular tunes was being bought up by ordinary people who just wanted to play these songs at home. During this same period, vaudeville became the most popular form of stage entertainment. Vaudeville shows had a great need for music and the publishing houses of Tin Pan Alley were glad to provide them since a great deal of money was made by selling the songs they popularized.

Songs such as *In the Good Old Summertime* (1902), *Give My Regards to Broadway* (1904) and *Shine on Harvest Moon* (1908) were all written for vaudeville. Tin Pan Alley saw the emergence of such famous songwriters as Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Scott Joplin, and George Gershwin. These artists created some of the most memorable pieces in our nation's songbook.
Youth & the Lost Generation

- In the 1920s, young adults were responsible for zany fads like flagpole sitting and marathon dancing. A new group of writers, known as the "Lost Generation," rejected the desire for material wealth. They believed they did not fit in the patterns of everyday life after the horrors and brutality of World War I. This group of writers believed America had become overly materialistic and lacking in spirituality. Several, like Ernest Hemingway, lived in Paris. Hemingway wrote *A Farewell to Arms* about experiences in World War I, and *The Sun Also Rises*, showing the strength of the Lost Generation. **Sinclair Lewis**, in *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, ridiculed the narrowness and hypocrisy of American life. Lewis's novels were innovative for giving strong characterizations of modern working women. In 1930, he became the first American author to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. **F. Scott Fitzgerald** wrote *The Jazz Age* and *The Great Gatsby*. *Gatsby* is the story of an immensely rich, but mysterious and unhappy self-made man. It hints that the search for purely material success often leads to tragedy.
The Great Migration

• The two decades from 1910 to 1930 witnessed the movement, known as the Great Migration, of about two million African Americans out of the South to the "Promised Land" of the Northeast and Midwest. They left in search of jobs in the nation's growing industrial cities and to escape sharecropping, tenant farming, and the deep racism they faced in the South. Northern industrial jobs, even menial ones, offered wages significantly higher than jobs in the South. Reports from friends and family that had previously migrated to the North also inspired increased African-American migration.

• In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Chicago's African-American population more than doubled; Cleveland's grew by three times; and Detroit's increased sixfold. African Americans were still greeted by racism, housing shortages and crime, even in the North, but they also found organizations such as the National Urban League and the NAACP, which were dedicated to helping them adjust to their new lives. Confined to all black neighborhoods, African Americans created cities-within-cities. The largest of these was Harlem, in upper Manhattan of New York City. About 200,000 African Americans lived together there in one of the most vibrant communities of the 1920s.
The Harlem Renaissance

• The 1920s is often referred to as the **Jazz Age**, reflecting the great importance of this new form of African-American music. The general awakening of African-American culture in these years has become known as the **Harlem Renaissance**.

• The Harlem Renaissance was begun by a rising middle class of African Americans. It was more than simply about music. It reached into other forms of art such as dance and visual arts. It sought to bring recognition to the African-American community. It was an era in which many African Americans felt as though they had liberated themselves from a past marked by self-doubt and uncertainty. They shared an unprecedented level of optimism, a pride in all things black, and a confidence in their own future that reached beyond Harlem to other African-American communities.
The Harlem Renaissance

- Poets and writers like **Langston Hughes** (1902 - 1967) and **Alain Locke** expressed this new pride in their heritage, while attacking racism. They felt their accomplishments in literature and art demonstrated their value as a people. Hughes is recognized as one of America's best poets. Born in Missouri, he was drawn to Harlem like other African-American artists and writers. Hughes drew on his personal experiences in writing about what it was like to be an African American growing up in America. His poems, novels, plays and newspaper columns made him one of the most popular writers of the Harlem Renaissance. His writings expressed the new mood of rugged determination to overcome racial prejudice.

**Countee Cullen** was another leading poet, who won more major literary prizes than any other African-American writer of the 1920s. **Zora Neale Hurston** became one the first successful African-American women authors. In 1937, she published what is considered her greatest novel, *Their Eyes Watching God*. 
The Harlem Renaissance

• Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) was a highly controversial political activist, known for his fiery rhetoric and fancy uniforms. Garvey emphasized racial pride. While living in London in 1914, he formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Two years later, he came to the United States to help organize African Americans. His goal was the total liberation of African people around the world.

• African-American soldiers serving in France during World War I had witnessed a society in Europe that was more tolerant than in America. When many of these soldiers returned home, they found racism against African Americans as deeply entrenched as ever. Garvey spoke to African Americans who were alienated at finding racism so widespread in the United States after the war.

• Garvey stressed racial unity through self-help. He encouraged African Americans to set up their own shops and businesses. The disillusionment that came from those who had migrated to the North and the frustrations of struggling to cope with urban life set the scene for Garvey’s Back-to-Africa Movement. Garvey advocated that African Americans should return to Africa, especially to Liberia.
Popular New Heroes

• More leisure time in the 1920s gave people greater opportunity for entertainment. They turned to spectator sports, the radio, movies, and magazines. The rise of new popular heroes resulted from the need to preserve a sense of personal identity in an increasingly impersonal age of machines. Popular heroes like Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey served as new role models.

• Charles Lindbergh became the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. Lindbergh made his historic flight alone in a single-engine plane. He took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island. Traveling through fog and ice, and despite sleep deprivation, Lindbergh landed his plane 33 hours later in Paris on May 20, 1927. His airplane, "The Spirit of St. Louis," had carried him over 3,600 miles. His daring trip made him a national hero and worldwide celebrity.