

Yet despite this frenzy of hero-worship, Lindbergh remained modest and calm. He refused offers of millions of dollars in publicity fees. Fame and applause could not spoil him. To millions of Americans, Lindbergh was proof that the solid moral values of the old days lived on in the heartland of America.

**Amelia Earhart** Lindbergh's feat inspired later flyers, including Amelia Earhart, who in 1932 flew across the Atlantic alone. Three years later Earhart flew solo from Hawaii to California, a challenge that had resulted in the deaths of many aviators before her. In 1937, however, attempting to fly around the world, she disappeared somewhere in the Pacific Ocean.

**Heroes of Sports** In general, the 1920s were a time when Americans began to enjoy sports as never before. A highly publicized fight between boxers Jack Dempsey and Georges Carpentier in 1921 broke the record for ticket sales, taking in \$1 million. Dempsey won the fight to become the heavyweight champion of the world and a new American hero.

Of all the heroes of the era, none generated more excitement than baseball legend George Herman "Babe" Ruth. Known as "the Sultan of Swat," Babe Ruth set records in hitting, pitching, and outfielding that stood for decades.

During his career, with the Boston Red Sox and then with the New York Yankees, Ruth hit 714 home runs, a record that was unbroken for nearly 40 years. In 1927 the champion enthralled Americans by setting the legendary record of 60 home runs in a 154-game season.



Tennis star Helen Wills and boxing champion Jack Dempsey.



Women, too, excelled in sports. For example, Gertrude Ederle smashed record after record in women's freestyle swimming. In the Olympic Games of 1924 she won a gold medal. In 1927 she became the first woman to swim the 35-mile-wide English Channel. Her time beat the men's record by nearly two hours.

Besides being eager spectators, more Americans began participating in sports. With more leisure time and with the mobility of automobiles, people took up golf, tennis, swimming, and other types of recreation.

## SECTION 3 REVIEW

### Comprehension

- 1. Key Terms** Define: (a) flapper; (b) demographics; (c) barrio.
- 2. Summarizing the Main Idea** In what ways did Americans react to the changing social values of the 1920s?
- 3. Organizing Information** Make a tree map entitled *Women in the 1920s*. On the first level, create categories labeled *Changes in Lifestyles*, *Women at Work*, and *Women in Politics*. Then fill in facts under each of these categories.

### Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Time Lines** Refer to the time line at the start of the section. Choose three entries and explain the significance of each.
- 5. Recognizing Cause and Effect** How did the business boom of the 1920s affect the nation's demographics?

### Writing Activity

- 6. Writing an Expository Essay** Write a magazine article titled "The Roaring Twenties." Describe some of the trends and people who gave the 1920s this name.



**1920**

Nation's first  
commercial radio station  
begins operation

**1922**

Claude McKay's  
Harlem Shadows

**1923**

Duke Ellington  
begins jazz  
career in New  
York City

**1924**

George  
Gershwin's  
Rhapsody in Blue

**1925**

F. Scott  
Fitzgerald's  
The Great Gatsby

**1926**

Ernest Hemingway's  
The Sun Also Rises

**1920****1922****1924****1926**

## 4 Mass Media and the Jazz Age

### SECTION PREVIEW

#### Objectives

- 1 Analyze the impact of the growth of the nation's mass media.
- 2 Identify some of the major figures of the Jazz Age and other artistic figures of the 1920s.
- 3 Show how the Lost Generation and the Harlem Renaissance influenced American culture.
- 4 **Key Terms** Define: mass media; Jazz Age; Lost Generation; Harlem Renaissance.

#### Main Idea

Radio, movies, and jazz were some of the new forms of information, entertainment, and the arts that began in the 1920s. The decade was an especially creative period for music, art, and literature.

#### Reading Strategy

**Organizing Information** As you read, write down facts that will help you to define what the Jazz Age was. Then use your notes to write a one-sentence definition.



Lillian Gish  
worked in silent  
films and  
“talkies.”

Before 1900, few outside of Los Angeles had even heard of the dusty little suburb northwest of the city. It had been built by a prohibitionist, who hoped it would remain a dry town, free of drinking and bad behavior.

In the early 1900s, however, filmmakers moved into the little town. They were attracted by its sunny climate, its variety of landscapes from desert to snowy mountains, and the large work force available in the area.

Movies made the little town big. In time, its main avenue became a strip of expensive shops and bars. Stars drove the streets in luxurious imported cars, trailed by reporters.

By the 1920s, the whole nation knew about it. In fact, the whole world knew about it. Dusty little Hollywood had grown up.

### The Mass Media

Hollywood's new fame reflected a major trend of the 1920s. Before that time, the United

States had been largely a collection of regional cultures. Interests, tastes, and attitudes varied widely from one region to another. The majority of people simply did not travel about much, talk to those in other regions, or even read much of the same news as others.

The 1920s changed all that. Films, nationwide news gathering, and the new industry of radio broadcasting produced a truly national culture. Print and broadcast methods of communicating information to large numbers of people are known as the **mass media**.

**Movies** From their beginnings in the 1890s, motion pictures had been a wildly popular mass medium, and through the 1920s, people just kept coming. Between about 1910 and 1930, the number of theaters rose from about 5,000 to about 22,500. During the later part of the decade, the nation's theaters showed movies to 100 million Americans each week—at a time when the total population was less than 125 million. Movie making had become the fourth largest business in the country.

These growth figures are even more amazing in view of the fact that before 1927, movies



## Growth of the Mass Media, 1920–1930

Newspapers	Between 1920 and 1930 daily newspaper circulation rose from 27,791,000 to 39,589,000—an increase of 42%.
Motion Pictures	Between 1922 and 1930 the number of people attending motion pictures rose from 40 million per week to 90 million per week—an increase of 125%.
Radios	Between 1920 and 1930 the number of households with radios, like the one at right, rose from 20,000 to 13,750,000—an increase of 68,650%.

Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*



**Interpreting Tables** The decade of the 1920s saw an explosion in forms of mass communication, such as this radio (right). **Science and Technology** Which form of mass communication grew most during this decade?

were silent. In that year the first film with sound was introduced. Titled *The Jazz Singer*, it featured a vaudeville star named Al Jolson. Audiences loved the singing, music, and sound effects of the film. The industry boom continued as theaters everywhere changed over to the new “talkies.”

**Newspapers** Americans followed the off-screen lives of their favorite stars in another mass medium, the newspaper. During the 1920s newspapers increased both in their size and in the number of readers. In 1900, a hefty edition of *The New York Times* totaled only 14 pages. By the mid-1920s, however, newspapers even in mid-sized American cities were totaling more than 50 pages a day, and Sunday editions were enormous. In fact, the use of newsprint roughly doubled in the United States between 1914 and 1927.

Although newspapers were getting bigger, the number of them was declining. Between 1914 and 1929, nearly 2,000 newspapers and magazines went out of business in the United States. Often, newspaper chains owned by a single individual or company bought up established papers and merged them. Between 1923 and 1927, the number of chains doubled, and the total number of newspapers they owned rose by 50 percent.

William Randolph Hearst, the legendary publisher of the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *New York Journal*,<sup>†</sup> gained control of newspapers in more than 20 cities. As newspapers became a mass medium, people shared the same information, read about the same events, and were influenced by the same ideas and fashions. Thus newspapers helped create a common culture.

**Radio** As a mass medium, radio barely existed until the 1920s. Before that time, only about 20,000 Americans had radio sets, all homemade. As an experiment, in 1920 Frank Conrad of the Westinghouse Company in East Pittsburgh tried sending recorded music and baseball scores over the radio. The response was so great that Westinghouse began broadcasting programs on a regular basis. Soon the nation had its first radio station operating as a for-profit business, Pittsburgh’s KDKA.

The growth of radio was tremendous. By 1922 more than 500 stations were on the air, and Americans were eagerly buying radios to listen to them. To reach more people, networks

### Main Idea CONNECTIONS

What social changes were brought about by the mass media?

<sup>†</sup> Hearst’s life and quest for power were the basis for one of the most popular motion pictures ever, Orson Welles’s 1941 classic *Citizen Kane*.



such as the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) linked many individual stations together. Each station in the network played the same programming. Soon much of the country was listening to the same jokes, commercials, music, sports events, religious services, and news. Other companies imitated NBC, building networks of their own. Thus radio became a medium for the masses.

## The Jazz Age

Radio combined with the great African American migration to the cities to produce another highlight of the 1920s—a music called jazz. This music features improvisation, a process by which musicians make up music as they are playing it rather than relying completely on printed scores. It also has a type of off-beat rhythm called syncopation.

**Jazz Arrives** Jazz grew out of African American music of the South, especially ragtime and blues. By early in the 1900s, bands in New Orleans were playing the new mix of styles, and many radio listeners began hearing the new sound for the first time in the 1920s. Soon jazz became a nationwide craze. Younger people in particular loved to dance to the new music. By 1929, a survey of stations showed that two thirds of all radio air time was devoted to jazz.

Jazz won over even Americans who had been horrified by it at first. It seemed to sum up the character of the decade. The great symphony conductor Leopold Stokowski declared that jazz was “an expression of the times, of the breathless, energetic, superactive times in which we are living.” It was no surprise that the 1920s came to be called the **Jazz Age**.

**The Jazz Clubs** One of hottest places to listen to jazz was Harlem, a district on the northern end of New York City. By one count, Harlem had some 500 jazz clubs. About a dozen clubs gave shows mostly for white visitors, including the Cotton Club, Connie’s Inn, and the Saratoga Club.

Nearly all the great jazz musicians played in the Harlem clubs at one time or another. The Jelly Roll Morton Band had a smooth, modern sound. Louis

“Satchmo” Armstrong improvised brilliant solos on his trumpet or sang soulful tunes. One of the best remembered jazz musicians to play in Harlem, however, was “the Duke” himself—Duke Ellington.

## Duke Ellington

**AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY** Edward Kennedy Ellington was born in Washington, D.C., in 1899. His father worked as a butler but later became a blueprint maker for the navy. The Ellingtons were able to keep up a middle-class life in a time when doing so was especially difficult for African Americans.

“Duke,” as Ellington was called, showed talent at both drawing and piano from an early age. At 17 he was supporting himself by playing in clubs in Washington at night and painting signs during the day. Although he was offered a scholarship at the Pratt Institute of Fine Arts in New York City, he turned it down in favor of continuing his musical career.



Duke Ellington  
(1899–1974)

In 1923, jazz musician Fats Waller persuaded Ellington and several of his musician friends to move to New York. They formed a band and soon landed a job at the Hollywood Club in the downtown area. This band, under various names and in one form or another, continued to play with Ellington until his death in 1974.

In the 1920s, he worked with superb jazz musicians such as Bubber Miley on trumpet, “Tricky Sam” Nanton on trombone, and Sonny Greer on drums. Later Billy Strayhorn joined as an assistant arranger.

Though Ellington was an excellent pianist, his greatest genius was as a bandleader, arranger, and composer. For some 50 years, Ellington’s music and his band’s music seemed one and the same.

For example, even though “Take the A Train,” the band’s theme song, was written by Strayhorn, most people associate it with Ellington. Yet Ellington was also a brilliant composer in his own right, writing at least a thousand pieces in his long career, including

*Jazz music, played on phonographs like this one, lay at the heart of a dramatic change in fashion, manners, and morals.*





music for concerts, Broadway shows, films, and operas.

Ellington's music lives on today. His old recordings are still available, and new artists continually rework such great tunes as "Mood Indigo," "Solitude," "In a Sentimental Mood," "Blue Harlem," and "Bojangles." Even a century after his birth, among jazz musicians the Duke is still the king. 🇩🇪

## Other Artists

The jazz spirit ran through all the arts of the 1920s. People spoke of "jazz poetry" and "jazz painting." Its strongest effect, of course, was on other forms of music. Composer George Gershwin, the son of Russian immigrants, won overnight success in 1924 with his *Rhapsody in Blue*. Composed for jazz band-leader Paul Whiteman, this piece was first played by Whiteman's orchestra and throbbed with jazz rhythms. Yet it was not quite jazz and not quite symphony. Instead it was a magical blend of the two.

**Painting** Like jazz musicians, American painters of the 1920s did not shy away from taking the pulse of American life. Painters such as Edward Hopper and Rockwell Kent showed the nation's rougher side, from cities to coal mines, from the streets to the barrooms.

By contrast, a young artist named Georgia O'Keeffe painted natural objects such as flowers, animal bones, and landscapes. Yet her simple images always suggest something greater than themselves. A range of hills, for example, seem almost to shudder with life. O'Keeffe continued to paint until her death in 1986 at the age of nearly 100.

**Literature** Several writers, too, began fruitful careers during the 1920s. Muckraking novelist Sinclair Lewis attacked American society with savage irony. His targets included the small town (in *Main Street*, 1920), the prosperous conformist (*Babbitt*, 1922), the medical business (*Arrowsmith*, 1925), and dishonest ministers (*Elmer Gantry*, 1927). Lewis refused a Pulitzer Prize in 1926, but he did win (and accept) the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930, the first such award to go to an American.



Edward Hopper painted this lonely scene, called *Automat*, in 1927. The Automat was a popular restaurant chain in which one could purchase a snack or a meal from a vending machine and eat it at a table. **Culture** What does the painting suggest about Hopper's view of the society of the times?

Another writer destined for the Nobel Prize was playwright Eugene O'Neill. In a career stretching from the 1920s into the 1950s, he wove dark, poetic tragedies out of the material of everyday American life. Until his time, most American theaters had shown only European plays or light comedies. The power of O'Neill's work proved to the public that the American stage could achieve a greatness rivaling that of Europe.

## The Lost Generation

One set of writers during the 1920s gained the name the **Lost Generation**, because of their belief that they were lost in a greedy, materialistic world that lacked moral values. Many of these writers and thinkers flocked to Greenwich Village, part of Manhattan, in New York City. (For decades afterward, Greenwich Village would remain a cultural center for bohemians, or rebels against conventional lifestyles.)

F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda Sayre, lived the life of the Lost Generation.







Writers Langston Hughes (far left) and Zora Neale Hurston (top left) helped make Harlem a leading artistic center. Jazz singer Bessie Smith (bottom left) helped fill jazz nightspots in the North (above). Harlem was also a vital social hub in the 1920s. **Culture** Why do you think Harlem became the center of a literary awakening in the 1920s?

Others became expatriates, or people who live outside their homeland. Discontent with American society of the 1920s, they left the country to live in Paris, or other parts of Europe thought to be more intellectually stimulating.

The most prominent writers of the Lost Generation were John Dos Passos, Archibald MacLeish, Hart Crane, e. e. cummings, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Hemingway wrote of the Lost Generation in his 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises*. His novels and short stories are read today for their direct, simple style.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was both part of the Lost Generation and part of the flapper world. In fact, some people believe Fitzgerald had a part in creating flapper culture with his novel *This Side of Paradise*, published in 1920. His 1925 masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*, focused on the wealthy, sophisticated Americans of the Jazz Age. Not surprisingly, this Lost Generation writer found the rich to be self-centered and shallow.

After Hemingway made the term “Lost Generation” famous, it was taken up by the flappers. They liked to imagine themselves as rebels against the culture of their time, living a life both fast and dangerous. As their motto they took the words of a popular poet of the day, Edna St. Vincent Millay:



“My candle burns at both ends;  
It will not last the night;  
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—  
It gives a lovely light!”

—Edna St. Vincent Millay,  
“First Fig,” 1920

## The Harlem Renaissance

For African Americans, the cultural center of the United States increasingly was New York City’s Harlem. The number of African Americans living in Harlem grew from 14,000 in 1914 to about 200,000 in 1930. Not just a national center for jazz, Harlem also became the home of an



African American literary awakening of the 1920s known as the **Harlem Renaissance**.

James Weldon Johnson emerged as a leading writer of the Harlem group. Johnson lived in two worlds, the political and the literary. As executive secretary of the NAACP, he led the group during an active time in its history, while pursuing a writing career that inspired younger members of the Harlem group. His most famous work, *God's Trombones* (1927), is a collection of sermons in rhythmic verse modeled after the style of traditional black preaching.

Alain Locke's 1925 book *The New Negro* celebrated the blossoming of African American culture. Locke noted that both African and American heritage could be enriching, not conflicting.

Zora Neale Hurston came to New York as a young actress, became an anthropologist, and gained fame as a Harlem writer with her poignant novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1931). Dorothy West, another accomplished writer, tackled the dual themes of being black and being a woman.

The leading poets of the Harlem Renaissance were Claude McKay and Countee Cullen. McKay produced a large body of work, including *Harlem Shadows* (1922), and was a voice of protest against the sufferings of African Americans in white society.

The gifted Cullen is best known for his 1925 collection of poems called *Color*. He was also responsible for bringing to light the talents

of the Harlem writers by collecting many of their works into *Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets* (1927).

The Harlem writer perhaps most studied today is Langston Hughes, a poet, short story writer, journalist, and playwright whose career stretched into the 1960s. Hughes spoke with a clear, strong voice about the joys and difficulties of being human, being American, and being black:

#### AMERICAN VOICES

“I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong. . . .

Tomorrow,

I'll be at the table

When company comes.

Nobody'll dare

Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

Besides,

They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.”

—Langston Hughes,  
“I, Too,” 1926

#### Main Idea CONNECTIONS

What themes did Harlem writers deal with in their works?

## SECTION 4 REVIEW

### Comprehension

- 1. Key Terms** Define: (a) mass media; (b) Jazz Age; (c) Lost Generation; (d) Harlem Renaissance.
- 2. Summarizing the Main Idea** What types of cultural changes took place in the United States during the 1920s?
- 3. Organizing Information** Create a web diagram with the label *Mass Media* in the center circle. Fill out the diagram to show the various media that developed during the 1920s and some effects these media had on American life.

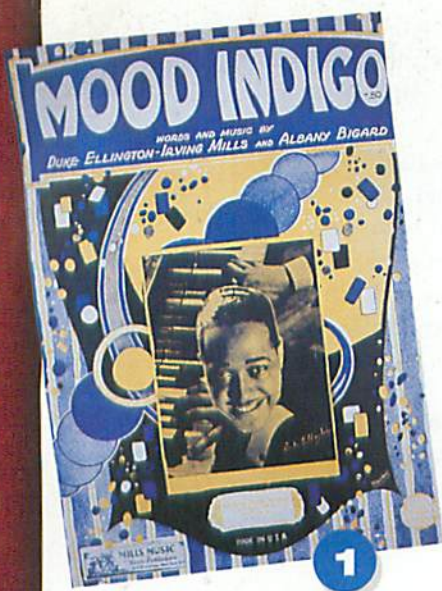
### Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Time Lines** Refer to the time line at the start of the section. Choose two people listed on the time line and explain why each was important to the Jazz Age.
- 5. Analyzing Documents** Reread the poem above. (a) In a sentence, state the message of the verse. (b) How does it express the spirit of the Harlem Renaissance?

### Writing Activity

- 6. Writing an Expository Essay** Write an essay describing the spirit of the Jazz Age. Use supporting details from the section.





1

### Duke Ellington

Duke Ellington, pictured on the sheet music of one of his famous compositions, became one of America's greatest composers.



2

### Dizzy Gillespie's Trumpet

Dizzy Gillespie, whose bent horn distinguished him from other trumpet players, pioneered the modern jazz and bebop styles. His career began in the 1930s and spanned seven decades.



3

### Flapper's Dress and Beads

Flapper clothes were a must for doing the newest dances to jazz music.

4

### Hymie Shertzer

The well-known saxophonist worked with many bands as well as in recording studios and in radio.



5

### Shertzer's Saxophone

The saxophone was invented in Europe in 1840 but never became a popular orchestral instrument. Musicians like Shertzer, however, made the sax's smooth, easily blended sound one of the major voices of the jazz band.

