

The Roaring Twenties

Reading and Discussion

After World War I, Americans were seeking to enjoy the newfound peace that was established after the war. This period of history after World War I became known as the **Roaring Twenties**. It was called that because Americans were making more money and spending more money. They were also more focused on fun activities. Many people had more money because they had invested in the **stock market**. A stock is a share in a company. As the company increases in value, the value of the stock also increases. Most stocks increased in price during the 1920s, and many Americans purchased stocks and sold them to make money when they went up in price.

As well as having more money, Americans also had more free time because the labor movement in America succeeded in reducing the typical work-day to only eight hours. Previously, many people had worked more than eight hours each day. During this time, people bought appliances and cars, which made their lives easier, and gave them even more free time. Many Americans watched movies or listened to the radio. In 1927, the first movie with sound was released. It was called **The Jazz Singer**.

Americans also drank alcoholic beverages during their free time, but in 1919, the **Eighteenth Amendment**, which called for **Prohibition**, was ratified. Prohibition made it illegal to sell or produce alcoholic beverages. Prohibition had quite an effect on American life in the 1920s. People who supported the Prohibition hoped it would make society become more moral. However, Prohibition seemed to have the opposite effect. Because it was illegal to drink alcohol, many found it to be exciting and glamorous, and illegal clubs sprang up where people could go to socialize and drink. These illegal clubs were called **speakeasies**. People also made alcohol illegally. These people were called **bootleggers**. Bootleggers and gangsters got rich selling by illegal alcohol. Eventually, people realized that Prohibition was causing more problems, and in 1933, the **Twenty-first Amendment** repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, which ended Prohibition.

During the 1920s, African American culture flourished, and there were many famous writers and poets like **Langston Hughes** and **Zora Neale Hurston**. **Duke Ellington** and **Louis Armstrong**, famous jazz musicians, were also popular during this time. Some call this time period the **Harlem Renaissance**, because it was the rebirth of African American culture and much of it took place in Harlem, New York City.

Since more Americans were listening to the radio and reading newspapers, the media helped turn people into celebrities. In 1927, **Charles Lindbergh** became a celebrity when he made the first solo flight over the Atlantic Ocean. In 1928, **Amelia Earhart** also became a celebrity when people learned that she was the first woman to pilot a plane across the Atlantic Ocean.

The 1920s were a prosperous time, but it was not a wonderful time for everyone. Minority groups were still being discriminated against, and the Ku Klux Klan was powerful in the South.

Name _____

Date _____

Activities

Activity A: Multiple Choice:

1. This period of American history after World War I became known as the:

- a. Roaring Times
- b. Roaring Twenties
- c. Raging Twenties
- d. Raging Times

2. The first movie with sound was:

- a. Prohibition
- b. The Jazz Singer
- c. Roaring Jazz
- d. Jazzy Times

3. The Eighteenth Amendment was ratified in:

- a. 1819
- b. 1817
- c. 1918
- d. 1919

4. The rebirth of African American culture in New York City was called the:

- a. Apollo
- b. Harlem Renaissance
- c. Prohibition
- d. Inhibition

Activity B: True or False:

____ 1. Most stocks increased in price during the 1920s.

____ 2. In 1927, the first movie with sound was released.

____ 3. Charles Lindbergh made the first solo flight over the Atlantic Ocean.

____ 4. In 1928, Amelia Earhart was the first woman to pilot a plane across the Pacific Ocean.

____ 5. Twenty-first Amendment enforced the Eighteenth Amendment.

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Date _____

Answer Key

Activity A

1. This period of American history after World War I became known as the:

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- b. **Roaring Twenties**
- c. Raging Twenties
- d. Raging Times

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- d. **1919**

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Activity B

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