Revision Resources Year 8

Part 2

Depth Study

2.4 Weapons of war

In the years leading up to the Great War, there had been great advances in science, design and invention. The technology to build motor cars and aeroplanes had been invented and there had been breakthroughs in physics and chemistry. Sadly, lots of these new ideas would be used to create new weapons that could kill and injure millions of people!

Mission Objectives

- Explain why the weapons used in the Great War were so deadly.
- Judge which weapons were most effective.

Rifle

Range = 45%
Killing power = 55%
Defensive ability = 40%

A long gun called a rifle was given to all soldiers. It was lightweight so could be carried easily and was accurate up to 600 metres. A 40cm knife, called a bayonet, was fitted onto the end, which could be used if a soldier's bullets ran out. Highly trained soldiers could fire between 15 and 20 bullets per minute.

Machine gun

Range = 45%
Killing power = 85%
Defensive ability = 90%

Invented in around 1862, the machine gun became recognized as one of the Great War's deadliest weapons. They could fire up to ten bullets per second. In the first 12 days of fighting, the French reported losses of over 200,000 men, mostly through machine gun fire. According to British estimates, machine guns caused about 40% of all wounds inflicted on British troops during the whole war.

Poison gas

Range = 10%
Killing power = 30%
Defensive ability = 5%

The first ever major poison gas attack was on 22 April 1915. The Germans released gas from cylinders and allowed the wind to carry it over French soldiers on the front line. The French panicked and ran. A six-kilometre gap opened up in the French lines but the Germans didn't have enough men to mount a serious assault. An opportunity like this never happened again but gas proved its worth as a weapon of terror. Soon both sides were using gas. There were two main types:

Chlorine gas – this suffocated the lungs and left the victim gasping for air.

Mustard gas – rotted the body – skin blistered, eyes bulged. A victim would cough up the lining of his lungs in clots. The pain was so intense that victims often had to be tied down!

Later in the war, gas became less of an effective weapon because gas masks protected troops from the worst effects of the poison.

Grenade

Range = 15%
Killing power = 55%
Defensive ability = 25%

Grenades are small, hand-held bombs that could be thrown about 40 metres into enemy trenches. They exploded a few seconds after a pin was removed and the outer case would shatter into razor-sharp fragments, causing horrific injuries.

What Happened When?

1914

In the same year that the Great War broke out, the British government first passed a law to allow Ireland to rule itself (Home Rule). However, Home Rule for Ireland was postponed because of the war (until 1920).

Be a Top Historian

GCSE

Top historians are able to explain why something is important or **significant**. At GCSE level you are required to do this a lot. This double page challenges you to assess the significance of some of the developments in weaponry during the Great War.

Tank

Range = 45% (if it didn't break down)
Killing power = 60%
Defensive ability = 65%

A British invention, tanks were bulletproof vehicles that could travel over rough terrain, crush barbed wire and cross trenches. At first they were called 'landships' but were code-named tanks in an attempt to convince the Germans they were water tanks and so keep the invention a secret. The name stuck! Although they caused panic and terror on the battlefield, they were very slow (4mph) and unreliable.
All sides saw potential and built their own tanks, but it wasn't until the next world war that tanks became battle-winning weapons.

Wise Up Words

shell shell shock shrapnel

Artillery

Range = 100%
Killing power = 75%
Defensive ability = 20%

Artillery is another word for the large, heavy guns that could shoot bombs (**shells**) over long distances. It was common to bombard the enemy trenches for several hours before an attack in the hope you might kill lots of soldiers as they sheltered in their dugouts. In 1915, 400,000 shells (some as big as soldiers) were fired every month on the Western Front. Some big guns could fire shells over a distance of 21 kilometres. When they exploded, the red-hot metal splinters (**shrapnel**) would cut an enemy to pieces. The noise damaged men's brains and made their ears bleed. It caused **shell shock**, a condition similar to a 'nervous breakdown'.

Flame thrower

Range = 10%
Killing power = 60%
Defensive ability = 2%

A canister was strapped to a soldier's back which forced oil through a nozzle at enemy soldiers. The oil was ignited by a spark to create a sheet of flame that could travel up to 15 metres. Hand-held flame throwers were deadly in small spaces, like dugouts, and caused panic if one was spotted during an attack. Defending soldiers would try and shoot the canister of oil before it got anywhere near. One British soldier who saw a German flame thrower in action said that men who were caught in the blast of the flame 'were never seen again'!

Fighter and bomber planes

Range = 100%
Killing power = 25%
Defensive ability = 10%

Aeroplanes had first appeared in 1903. When fighting began, the planes were very slow, clumsy and unreliable, and were used for keeping an eye on what the enemy was doing and spotting artillery. At first, pilots fired pistols and even threw bricks at each other, but soon 'fighter' planes armed with machine guns were developed. Not long after, 'bombers' were made to fly over enemy trenches and attack them from the air.

Work

1 a Copy and complete a larger version of this chart in your book.

WEAPON: List the eight major weapons.	RANGE: Short, medium or long range?	KILLING POWER: Low, medium or high?	Is it used mainly for attack, defence or both?

b In your opinion, which was the Great War's most deadly weapon and why? Back up your opinion with facts and figures.

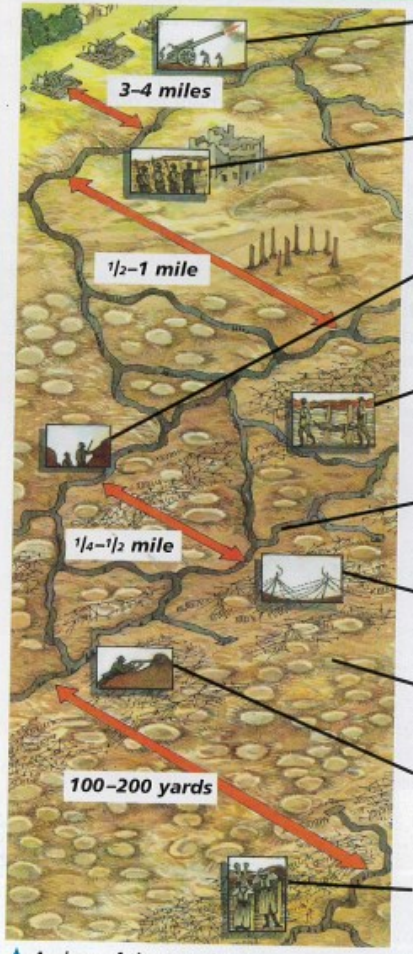
c In general, did the weapons used in the Great War make it easier for an army to attack or defend?

Depth Study

Download Print Hide email

3 LIVING AND DYING IN THE TRENCHES

THIS CHAPTER ASKS
What was it like to live in the trenches?
How did the commanders try to break the stalemate?
Why did they fail?



▲ A view of the trenches.

Behind the lines. *Army camps, huge stock piles of stores and thousands of enormous guns, some of which which could fire on the German line from as far away as six miles.*

Reserve trenches. *A soldier might spend eight days per month here. These trenches were used to build up forces for an attack or launch a counter-attack if the front-line trenches were threatened.*

Support trench. *A soldier might spend four days per month here. More comfortable and slightly less dangerous than the front-line trench.*

Communication trenches. *Used to bring up supplies usually at night. During a battle ammunition and reinforcements had priority over the evacuation of the wounded.*

Front-line trench. *Most uncomfortable and dangerous. A soldier might spend four days here per month.*

Barbed wire. *With gaps to allow patrols in and out. Tin cans were sometimes hung on the wire to give early warning of an attack.*

No Man's Land. *Usually deserted during the day, at night it was patrolled by small parties of well-armed men.*

Advanced listening post. *Usually a shell crater occupied by two or three men during the hours of darkness. Many were so close that they could hear German soldiers snoring.*

German front-line trench. *Almost always better constructed than the British trenches with deep dug-outs to protect the soldiers from shelling.*

NEW WORDS

SHRAPNEL: Pieces of exploding artillery shells.
DUG-OUTS: Underground caverns where soldiers would shelter from bombardment.
TANK-TRAPS: Specially dug ditches which tanks were unable to cross without getting stuck.

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

For most soldiers, life in the trenches followed a set routine. They would be awake half an hour before dawn and would stand by in preparation for a possible enemy attack. The remainder of the day was divided equally between sentry-duty, work (filling sandbags and mending trenches) and rest. Throughout the day there might be a series of inspections from officers and sergeants.

The greatest problem faced by the ordinary soldier was the sheer discomfort of living in the trenches. Men used to city life could find the intense cold unbearable and this was made even worse by rain and mud which left them wet for days on end. Whilst officers had their own private **dug-outs**, the men had to make do with a ledge dug into the side of the trench, so prolonged sleep was almost impossible. Added to the misery of exhaustion, was the problem of lice which infested everyone and giant rats which multiplied and grew to enormous sizes by eating the corpses in No Man's Land. Some of these rats were so large and fierce that they were even known to attack wounded and sleeping men.

SOURCE A

▲ *British soldiers in a flooded reserve area.*

SOURCE B

The cold crept under our clothes, our fingers and joints ached with it; it seemed to congeal our blood and kill the very marrow of our bones.

▲ *A soldier describes the cold in the trenches during the winter of 1917.*

SOURCE C

◄ *A German corpse decaying in the trenches. The rats have already eaten away the face.*

Q Discussion Point
In 1914 thousands of men volunteered to fight. Do you think the same would happen today if there were a war?

SOURCE D

▲ *A wounded soldier being evacuated from the front-line.*

SOURCE E

December 9th 1915. Hazy. Cool. One leaning against a tree. One fifty yards right. Fell across a log. Shot three successive helpers.
December 16th 1916. Clear. Fine. Good hunting. Sixteen good shots. Seven known hits and feel sure of four more.

▲ *Excerpts from a British sniper's diary.*

SOURCE F

Pratt was hopeless. His head was shattered. Splatterings of brain lay in a pool under him... it took over two hours before he died in a crowded place where perhaps a dozen men sat with the smell of blood... gurgling and moaning from his lips, now high and liquid, now low and dry – a death rattle fit for the most blood-thirsty novelist.

▲ *Death of a British soldier hit by a German sniper.*

The biggest guns used in World War One were three guns which the Germans used to bombard Paris in 1918. They could hurl a shell the weight of a small car 71 miles. The French thought there was only one gun. They nicknamed it Big Bertha.

DEATH IN THE TRENCHES

Even in the quietest sector of the front the soldier in the trenches was in constant danger from the enemy. Both sides used specially trained snipers who could hit a man's head from up to half a mile away and there was always the threat of a sudden short bombardment from the enemy's big guns. The **shrapnel** from the guns' exploding shells could cut men in two or the explosion could bury them alive. Such was the power of the big guns that even those who had a near miss might be killed by the shock of the explosion which could burst their internal organs without leaving a mark on them.

NIGHT IN THE TRENCHES

The hours of darkness were the most active and tense time in the trenches. Nervous sentries scanned the dark horizon for any sign of enemy activity. Small groups of heavily armed men would often clash as they patrolled No Man's Land. Both sides sent raiding parties to the enemy trenches in order to capture prisoners for interrogation. These trench-raids often involved vicious hand-to-hand combat with knives, clubs and spades.

THE EXPERIENCE OF BATTLE

Throughout the war, generals attempted to break through the enemy's trenches by launching massive frontal assaults. Sometimes these attacks might take the front-line trench, but they rarely got any further and were usually driven out by a counter-attack. For many of the men the experience of battle was one of senseless sacrifice. They were ordered out of their trenches to cross No Man's Land in a hail of machine-gun bullets and shrapnel. The result was usually slaughter, with thousands killed outright and many more left to die of wounds in No Man's Land. Until the last few months of the war no breakthrough was ever achieved.

SOURCE H

▲ *A club used by British soldiers in trench raids.*

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO THE WAR

As the war dragged on with no end in sight, many soldiers came to resent the politicians who had sent them to war and the generals whose plans led to such heavy casualties with no hope of victory. Only loyalty to their mates and fierce army discipline, which included the firing squad for desertion, kept them at their posts. They simply wanted to survive the war and return home.

THE COST OF TRENCH LIFE

Many soldiers lost their lives on quiet days when no particular battle was taking place and others suffered from a wide variety of physical illnesses brought on by conditions in the trenches. But there were also less obvious casualties brought about by exposure to constant danger and sudden death; thousands of men suffered a form of nervous breakdown known as shellshock, and even those who seemed to escape the war unscathed could suffer in later life. Ten years after the war 65,000 British ex-soldiers were in mental homes.

SOURCE G

Old soldiers say bayonneting was like sticking a knife into butter. The only problem was getting the blade back out because the skin and muscle closed on the bayonet. Thus the half twist which men in training were taught.

▲ *How to use a bayonet. From* Death's Men, *by Dennis Winter. 1978.*

SOURCE I

We're here, because
we're here,
Because we're here,
Because we're here,
(repeat many times)

▲ *A British soldiers' song. What does it suggest about their attitude to the war?*

Q You are an old soldier who has to introduce fresh young soldiers to the trenches. Write a three-page illustrated leaflet explaining the following:

- How to find your way around the trench system
- Dangers and how to avoid them
- Discomforts and how to make life tolerable.

Use both the text and the sources to provide as detailed a guide as possible.

Download Print Hide email

The ultimate weapon?

After 1914 both sides looked to technology and science for a new weapon which could break the stalemate.

British soldiers were able to protect their lungs in early gas attacks by urinating in a handkerchief and holding it over their mouths. At Nieuport in France, Scottish soldiers who wore kilts, protected their bare legs from mustard gas by wearing lady's drawers.

GAS

On the 22 April 1915 German soldiers opened hundreds of canisters and allowed the first poison gas to blow over the Allied trenches at Ypres. The effect was devastating. A whole section of Allied line was left defenceless as men choked or ran in terror from the gas. The Germans were not prepared for the enormous success of their new weapon, however, and the chance to break through was lost because there were not enough troops ready for an attack.

Despite this wasted opportunity, German inventors continued to develop poison gas, and they soon discovered a way to deliver a range of ever more horrific gases from artillery shells. Phosgene gas attacked the lungs, making them fill up and drown the victim in his own body fluids, whilst contact with mustard gas could burn skin away to the bone.

SOURCE A

Gas horns would be honked, empty brass shell-cases beaten, rifles emptied and the mad cry would be taken up. For miles around scared soldiers woke up in the midst of frightful pandemonium and put on their masks, only to hear a few minutes later the cry of 'All safe'. Gas shock was as frequent as shellshock.

A gas alarm in the trenches.

SOURCE B

British soldiers blinded by gas are led away from the front lines.

Despite its early impact, poison gas was never to become a war-winning weapon. Even the slightest breeze could make its effects unpredictable and it often became as big a problem for the defenders as it was for the attackers. The Allies were quick to act against the threat and, within a week of the first attack, the British had distributed over 300,000 gas masks amongst their troops. They also developed their own poison gas production. In the end, gas did nothing to shorten the war, it only made the conflict more horrific for the ordinary soldier.

SOURCE C

A British poster appealing for money to build tanks.

SOURCE D

The tanks' military impact in France was minor but on the home front it boosted morale enormously.

Timewatch, *BBC Television, 1998.*

TANKS

On 15 September 1916, German troops on the Somme were terrified by the sight of huge mechanical monsters lumbering across the battlefield spitting shells and machine-gun bullets. These were the first tanks which were developed in great secrecy in Britain during the previous year. They tore into the German lines, smashing machine-gun nests and emptying trenches, yet despite the fear which they created the tanks had little effect on the outcome of the battle. They had been sent in as a last resort by a commander desperate for a breakthrough and there was never enough of them to make any real difference. The only effect of their appearance was to give the Germans warning of what they might expect in future.

The British soon discovered that their tanks had a number of important weaknesses. They were mechanically unreliable and, because of their weight, they often got stuck in the mud of No Man's Land. With a top cross-country speed of four miles per hour, they were easy targets for artillery and their thin armour was not even guaranteed to keep the crews completely safe against rifle fire. The Germans responded to the tank threat with specially dug **tank-traps**, heavy anti-tank rifles and armour piercing ammunition. Only when the Allied commanders had a large number of tanks and knew how to use them properly could they be expected to change the course of the war.

Q

1. Does the fact that gas and tanks did not win the war mean they were not significant weapons? Answer this question by referring to **Sources A** to **D**.

2. Complete the table below, then use it to explain why tanks and gas failed to end the war.

	Gas	Tank
How did commanders misuse the weapon?		
What were its weaknesses?		
How did the enemy counter the weapon?		

Breakthrough on the Somme?

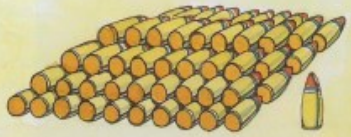
YOUR MISSION: to report on the battle plan for the Somme Offensive.

In 1916 the British Army planned to win the war in one major battle. You are a high-ranking Army Intelligence Officer. It is your job to work through all the available information on the progress of the battle and provide the Commander-in-Chief, General Haig, with reports and recommendations. Look carefully at the battle plan below, then review all the information in the sources before writing your report.

Plan for the Somme Offensive

TOP SECRET

1. A huge new army of volunteers will be recruited.



2. Supplies and men will assemble to attack the Somme sector of the front.

3. German defences will be bombarded with over one and a half million shells for seven days before the attack.

4. The bombardment will destroy the German defences, break their barbed wire and kill most of their defenders.

5. Three big mines and seven small ones will be dug under German strong points to be exploded just before the attack.

6. The new army will advance across No Man's Land and occupy the German defences.

Signed *Douglas Haig*
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
British Army

SOURCE A

The German machine-guns and infantry must have been preserved owing to their deep dug-outs. These were numerous and elaborate, most of them thirty or forty feet below ground level, with two or three entrances. The enemy wire entanglements had everywhere been completely destroyed by our artillery.

▲ *Lieutenant B.L. Gordon, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.*

SOURCE B

I was in the first wave. My first impression was the sight of unexploded mortar bombs... they were supposed to destroy the German wire which was almost untouched. I doubt if one had exploded.

▲ *Private G.S. Young, North Staffordshire Regiment.*

SOURCE C

We went down into a (German) dug-out and actually found the electric lights still burning. So much for the artillery preparation.

▲ *Private A. McMullen, Donegal and Fermanagh Volunteers.*

SOURCE D

When the English started advancing we were very worried; they looked as though they must overrun our trenches. We were very surprised to see them walking, we had never seen that before. The officers were in front. I noticed one of them walking calmly carrying a walking stick. When we started firing, we just had to load and reload. They went down in their hundreds. You didn't have to aim, we just fired into them. If only they had run, they would have overwhelmed us.

▲ *Private Karl Blenk, 169th Regiment. German Army.*

SOURCE E

I could see away to my left and right, long lines of men. Then I heard the 'patter patter' of machine-guns in the distance. By the time I'd gone another ten yards there seemed to be only a few men left around me; by the time I'd gone twenty yards I seemed to be on my own. Then I was hit myself.

▲ *Sergeant J. Galloway, 3rd Battalion. Tyneside Irish.*

INVESTIGATION

You are the investigator!

You must prepare a report for the British commander Douglas Haig. Write a paragraph on each of the following:

- The main aims for the day and why there should be no German opposition.
- Did the bombardment achieve its planned purpose?
- How did so many Germans survive the bombardment?
- Why were the surviving Germans able to inflict so many casualties?

Finish your report with a final paragraph which puts forward your proposals for solving any the problems which you have discovered in the planning of the first day's attack.

4 THE END OF THE WAR

THIS CHAPTER ASKS
Why did Germany lose the war?
How was Germany affected by the defeat?

NEW WORDS

ARMISTICE: a cease-fire.

BLOCKADE: preventing goods and people from getting in or out of a country.

THE GERMAN CHANCE OF VICTORY

In April 1917 the USA came into the war against Germany. It seemed that with its enormous industry and manpower the Americans would make an Allied victory inevitable, but the USA was unprepared for war and it would take a long time for them to recruit, train and equip an army large enough to confront the Germans in France. There was just enough time to defeat the Allies before the Americans could have a real impact. Germany decided to risk everything on a quick victory.

Russia withdrew from the war at the end of 1917, and this freed up more German troops for the big offensive in France. The bravest men in every German unit were formed into special stormtrooper groups. They were given the best available weapons and training so that they could spearhead the attack.

SOURCE B

German stormtroopers go over the top on the first day of the March offensive.

SOURCE A

An American recruitment poster for the Tank Corps.

THE MARCH OFFENSIVE

In March 1918 the stormtroopers launched an all-out attack on Allied lines. Once again German soldiers reached the River Marne near Paris, but their attack slowed and finally stopped. The Allied line buckled, but did not break; the attack had cost Germany the lives of thousands of its best soldiers. In August 1918 an Allied counter-attack using tanks, aircraft and fresh American soldiers sent the Germans into full retreat.

SOURCE C

German soldiers return home in 1918. In many places they were treated like heroes. They blamed civilian politicians for their defeat and refused to admit that they had been beaten.

SOURCE D

Nothing important was lost by the failure of the March Offensive. The German line was still unbroken and although they lost the land which they had gained earlier, they simply withdrew to stronger positions. The real effect was psychological. The failure shattered faith in victory which, until that moment, had carried the Germans forward. They realised that the decision had gone against them. They no longer wanted to win. They wanted only to end the war.

A.J.P. Taylor, from **The First World War.**

THE GERMAN REVOLUTION

Since the start of the war, German ports had been blockaded by the British Royal Navy whose aim was to starve the Germans of food and the raw materials on which their factories depended. The **blockade** took a long time to have any effect, but by 1918 German war production was already slowing and food was becoming scarce, making life miserable for civilians. Meanwhile, Germany's allies were dropping out of the war. In September 1918 Bulgaria surrendered, and at the beginning of November Austria-Hungary simply fell apart as its many different nationalities attempted to form their own independent countries.

The failure of the March Offensive deeply demoralised German civilians and sailors who now both realised that defeat was inevitable. In October 1918 the German fleet was ordered to sail out of port to challenge the British, but most sailors saw no point in sacrificing themselves for a cause which they thought was already lost. The sailors mutinied and started a revolution which soon began to spread to ordinary civilians in the cities.

With the army being pushed back and the civilian population demanding peace at any price, German leaders had no choice but to ask for an **armistice**. The fighting stopped at 11 am on 11 November 1918.

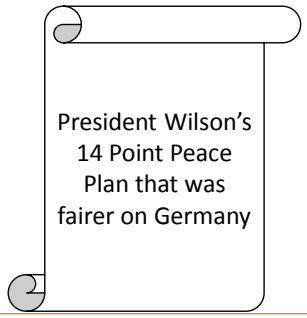
Q

1. Were returning German soldiers right to feel that they were not defeated in 1918?

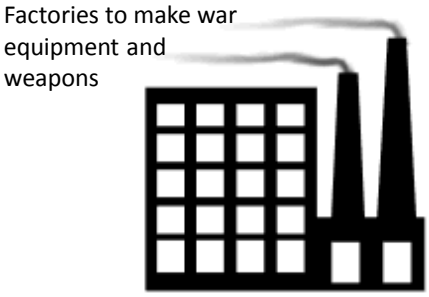
2. Explain how each of the following contributed to Germany's defeat:

- The Allied blockade of Germany
- US entry into the war
- The failure of the March Offensive
- The mutiny of the German fleet.

Which do you think was most important?



Summary: What did the USA bring to WWI?



How did WWI affect the USA? | Europe after WWI

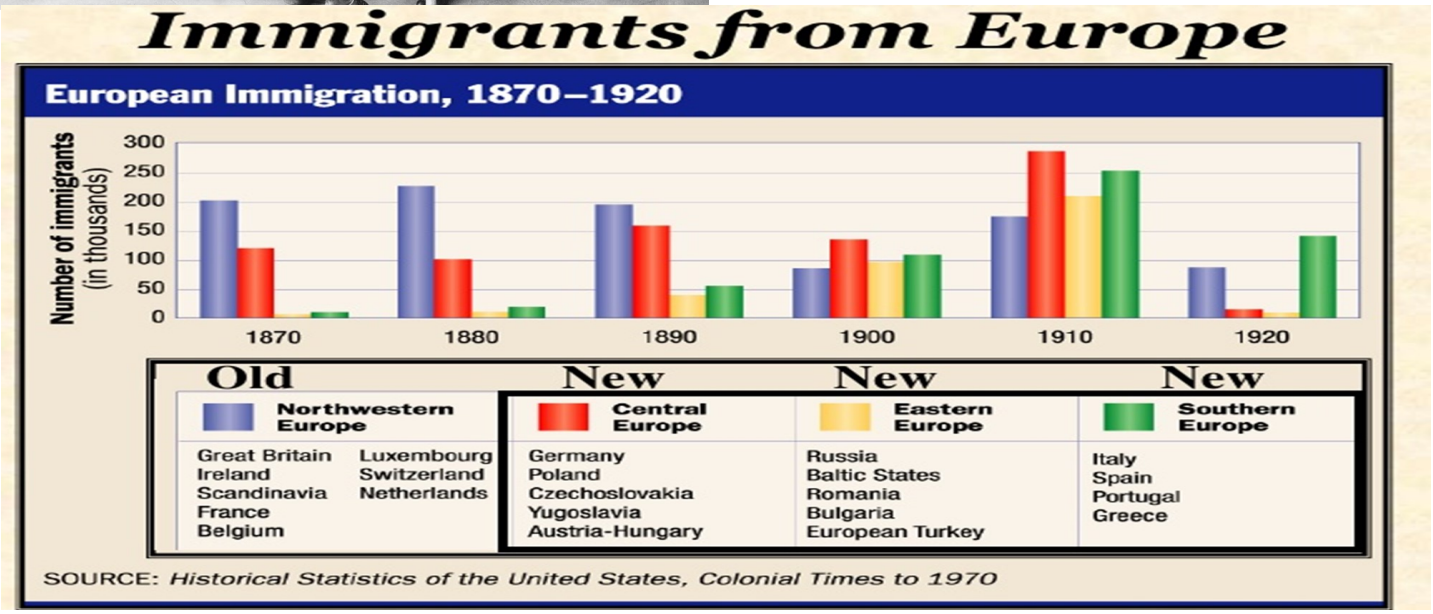
Social Impact	Political Impact	Economic Impact	Impact on Europe
• 116, 000 US Soldiers dead • Worldwide Flu Epidemic – Spanish Flu (50 Million dead) • 1 Million US Soldiers fought in the war	• Laissez-Faire attitude – Government left people and business alone to get on with their business • Less government regulation	• Allies owed US money in loans $9.977 Million • US factories made products for the war effort and sold them to Europe	• European Economies in ruins • European Countries borrowed large sums from the USA – Britain and France
• No war damage	• Began to return USA to Isolation again after war effort	• New principles of Mass Production • Took over new markets around the World from European producers • Full employment • Farming increased, sold food to Europe	• Trade links disrupted • Many mines, factories and communications destroyed • Much farm land in France and Belgium destroyed • Needed money to rebuild • Food shortages in war

What happened when immigrants arrived in the USA?

Most of the immigrants travelled by sea, and more than 70 per cent arrived on **Ellis Island** near New York. During the busiest periods, as many as 5,000 people a day arrived there. Most were young - in 1900 the average age was 24. The first view the immigrants saw as they arrived in America on their way to Ellis Island was the Statue of Liberty.

As soon as they arrived, everyone had to be processed in the Great Hall. Then they would have to undergo a series of medical tests. There was a particular emphasis on eye tests because of a disease called 'trachoma'. Ellis Island was given the name the Island of Tears after these eye tests. Anyone suffering from the disease would be kept on Ellis Island for days or perhaps even weeks.

Also, everyone was questioned about their work and financial situation, and were given literacy tests. The aim of the tests was to ensure that immigrants could work after they arrived and that they would not be a burden on society. All this took between three and five hours. Some had to wait longer to undertake more tests, while others who were more unlucky were refused entry and had to face the journey back home.

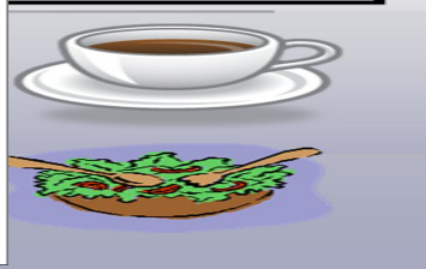


New immigrants and old--what people said	
The old immigrants. . .	**The new immigrants. . .**
came from northern or western Europe	came from southern or eastern Europe
were Protestant	were not Protestant--were Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish
were literate and skilled	were illiterate and unskilled
came over as families	came over as birds of passage
were quick to assimilate	were clannish and reluctant to assimilate
were experienced in the ways of democracy	were radicals or autocrats
had some money in their pockets	arrived impoverished
were tall and fair	were short and dark

Often spoke English	**Spoke no or little English**

Effects of Immigration

In 1920 US President Wilson described the USA as a 'Melting Pot' – different immigrant groups mixed well together to become 'Americans'.
However other people did not believe immigrants mixed well together. They described America as a 'Salad Bowl' – immigrants became Americans but they still kept their old cultures alive.
Some people were concerned that this was causing growing tensions between immigrants and Americans.



Summary of Anti-Immigration attitudes in the 1920s

1. The Trade Unions (called Labour Unions in America) were hostile to new immigrants who worked for low wages and took jobs away from union members.

2. White people were afraid that America's racial and religious strength would be weakened by more Catholic and Jewish immigration.

3. World War One made many Americans realise that new immigrants might be more loyal to their old country and would not be 'good' Americans.

4. Many Americans thought there were enough people already. After World War One there was not enough work or housing to go round.

5. Some Americans thought new immigrants would bring dangerous new ideas such as Communism that would threaten the safety of America. In 1919 there was a Red Scare in the USA about Communist Immigrants.

Changing Approaches to Immigration: 'Open Door' Immigration to Isolationist ideas

During 1907, 1.25 million people were processed on Ellis Island. As the number of immigrants increased, some Americans began to doubt the government's Open Door policy.

Traditionally, the immigrants had tended to come from northern and western Europe – Britain, Ireland, Germany. Between 1900 and 1914 13 million arrived, mainly from southern and eastern Europe – Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Western Poland and Greece.
People started feeling angry towards these 'new' immigrants because:

•they were often poor
•many were illiterate
•many were Roman Catholics or Jews, therefore from a different cultural and religious background
•the trauma of the First World War and the fear of Communism during the Red Scare in 1919, worried many Americans.

Changing government attitudes:

As a result, the US Congress passed three laws to restrict immigration and each law in turn was more severe than the previous one.
1.Literacy Test, 1917 – Immigrants had to pass a series of reading and writing tests. Many of the poorer immigrants, especially those from eastern Europe, had received no education and therefore failed the tests and were refused entry.
2.The Emergency Quota Act, 1921 – A law which restricted the number of immigrants to 357,000 per year, and also set down a quota - only 3 per cent of the total population of any overseas group already in the USA in 1910 could come in after 1921.
3.The National Origins Act, 1924 – This law reduced the maximum number of immigrants to 150,000 per year and cut the quota to 2 per cent, based on the population of the USA in 1890. The act was aimed at restricting southern and eastern Europeans immigrants. It also prohibited immigration from Asia and this angered the Chinese and Japanese communities that were already

The Open Door was now closed to many. The government did not believe that the new immigrants enriched the life and culture of the USA.
As a result, there was more fear of immigrants, xenophobia and racial persecution.

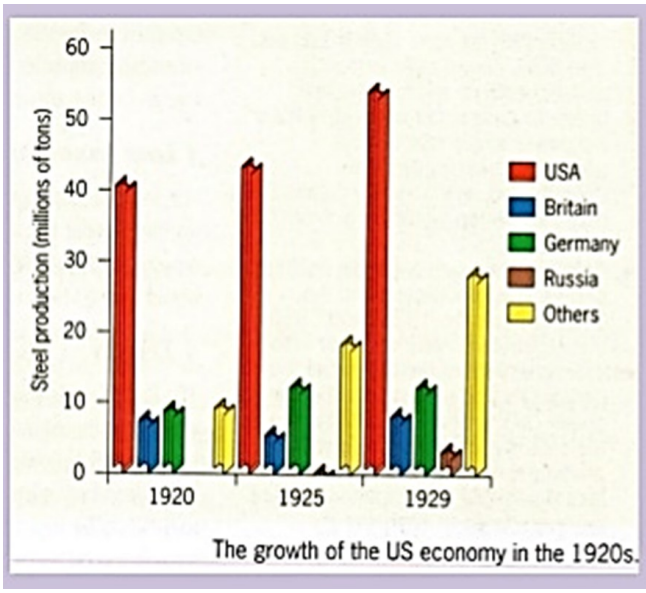
A young immigrant girl wrote to her aunt in Europe:

Dear Auntie:
I received your letter on February 20 and I write you on February 25. Dear auntie, I inform you that I am in the same place working for an English-speaking master and mistress who don't know a word of Polish, and I don't know English; so we communicate with gestures and I know what to do, that's all. I know the work and therefore I don't mind much about the language. But, dear auntie, 1 went intentionally into an English household in order that I may learn to speak English, because it is necessary in America. I am in good health, only I am a little ill with my feet. I don't know what it is, whether rheumatism or something else. I walk very much, because from six o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock in the evening I have work and I receive 22 dollars a month, and I have seven persons, and 16 rooms to clean, and I cook. Everything is on my head.

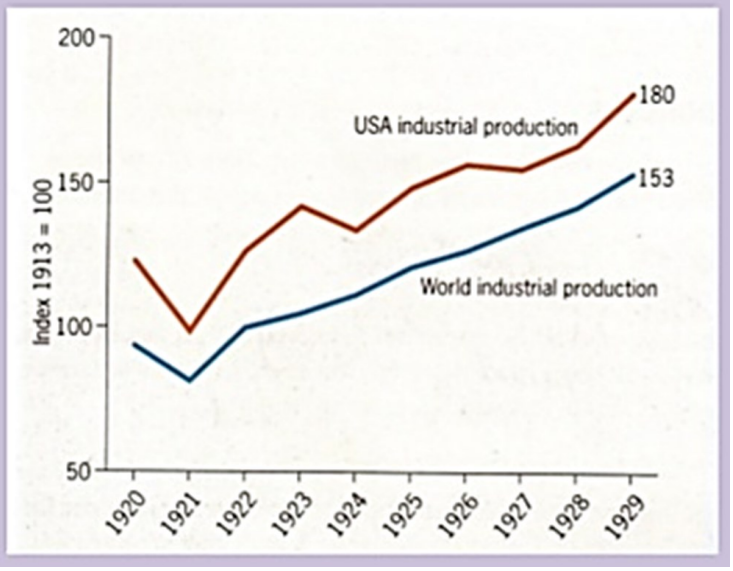
O dear auntie, I write you that I have nothing to write, only I ask you for a quick answer. I wish you a merry holiday of Easter time. O dear God, why cannot I be with my auntie and divide the egg together with parents and brothers and sisters! When I think about all this, I would not be sorry if I had to die right now.

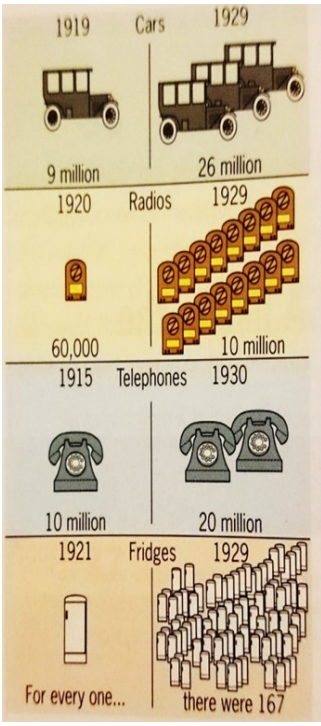
How do we know there was an 'economic boom'?

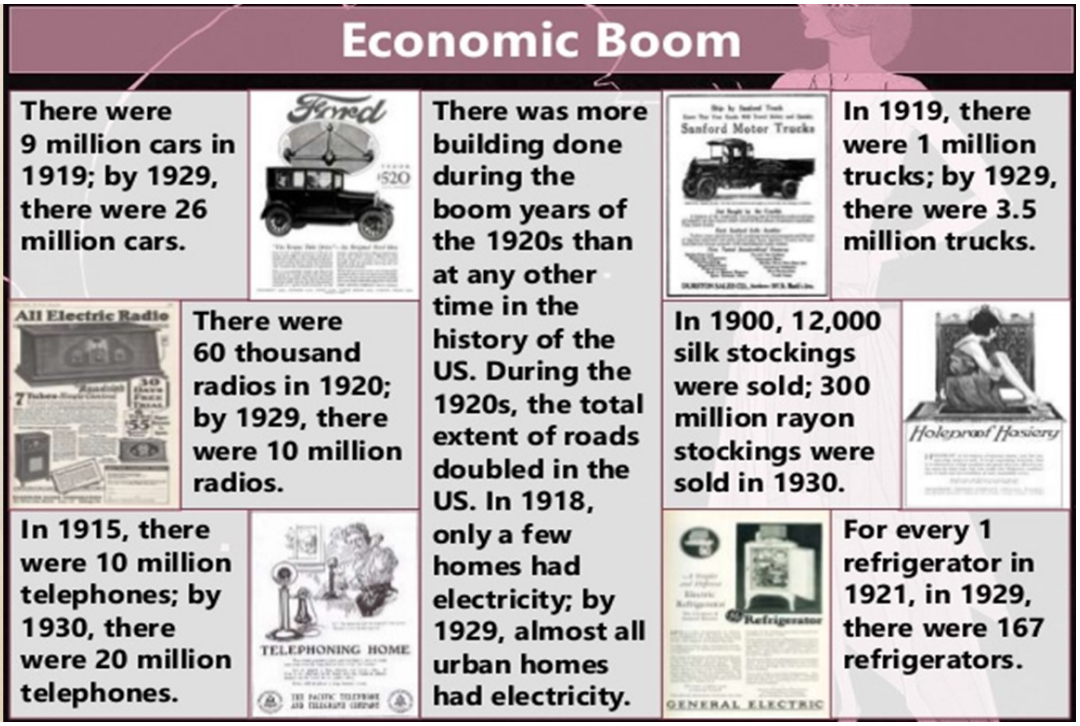
- Lots more jobs/full employment
- Higher wages
- Borrowing money is easier
- Investing in businesses or shares
- Spending spare cash on luxury goods
- Businesses growing
- Increasing profits
- Making more things in factories
- Making more luxury items that are not just necessities
- Lots more trade – buying and selling
- Building boom – construction of lots of new houses and buildings
- Feel good factor – people are happier and feel good



The growth of the US economy in the 1920s.







Who was Henry Ford?

Born in 1863, Henry Ford was the first surviving son of William and Mary Ford, who owned a prosperous farm in Dearborn, Michigan. At 16, he left home for the nearby city of Detroit, where he found apprentice work as a machinist. He returned to Dearborn and worked on the family farm after three years, but continued to operate and service steam engines and work occasional stints in Detroit factories. In 1888, he married Clara Bryant, who had grown up on a nearby farm.

In the first several years of their marriage, Ford supported himself and his new wife by running a sawmill. In 1891, he returned with Clara to Detroit, where he was hired as an engineer for the Edison Illuminating Company. Rising quickly through the ranks, he was promoted to chief engineer two years later. Around the same time, Clara gave birth to the couple's only son, Edsel Bryant Ford.

On call 24 hours a day for his job at Edison, Ford spent his irregular hours on his efforts to build a gasoline-powered horseless carriage, or automobile. In 1896 while working as an engineer for Edison, he completed what he called the "Quadricycle," which consisted of a light metal frame fitted with four bicycle wheels and powered by a two-cylinder, four-horsepower gasoline engine, in the shed behind his home. In 1903, he established the Ford Motor Company, and five years later the company rolled out the first Model T. In order to meet overwhelming demand for the revolutionary vehicle, Ford introduced revolutionary new mass-production methods, including large production plants, the use of standardized, interchangeable parts and, in 1913, the world's first moving assembly line for cars. Enormously influential in the industrial world, Ford was also outspoken in the political realm.

Ford's business philosophy

> It is better to sell a large number of cars at a reasonable, small profit than to sell fewer cars at a larger profit. I believe this because it enables a large number of people to buy and enjoy the use of a car. It also gives a large number of men employment at good wages.

Henry Ford's early inventions and 1st steps into business

Determined to improve upon his prototype, Ford sold the Quadricycle in order to continue building other vehicles. He received backing from various investors over the next seven years, some of whom formed the Detroit Automobile Company (later the Henry Ford Company) in 1899. His partners, eager to put a passenger car on the market, grew frustrated with Ford's constant need to improve, and Ford left his namesake company in 1902. (After his departure, it was reorganized as the Cadillac Motor Car Company.) The following year, Ford established the Ford Motor Company.

Case Study: Henry Ford's car business

The greatest business boom took place in the motor car industry. There were three big car producers in the 1920s: Ford, Chrysler and General Motors. By far the biggest at this time was the Henry Ford Motor Company.

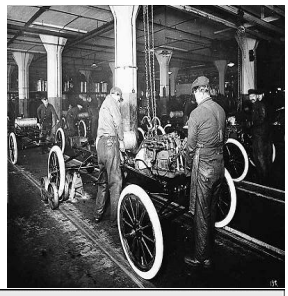
During the 1920s, about $1 billion a year was spent on the construction of a national network of highways. The automobile industry also caused other industries such as steel, rubber, leather and paint to grow rapidly.

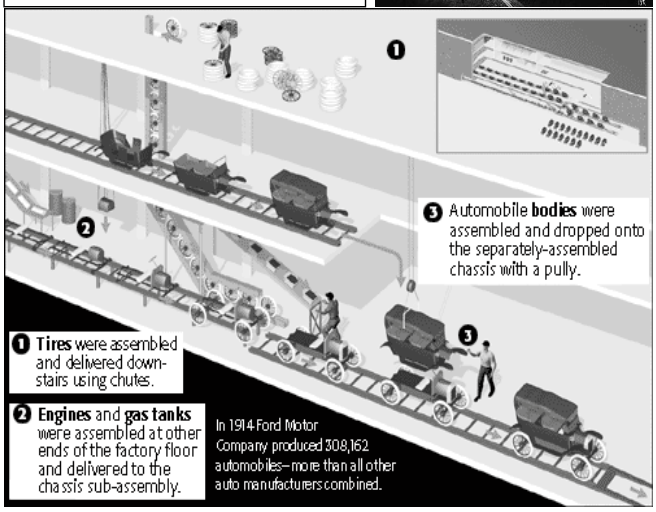
Henry Ford set out to build a car that everyone could afford to buy. Ford started mass-producing his first car, the Model T Ford in 1909. It was slow, ugly and difficult to drive, but for the next eighteen years this car, nick named 'Tin Lizzie', was America's best selling car.

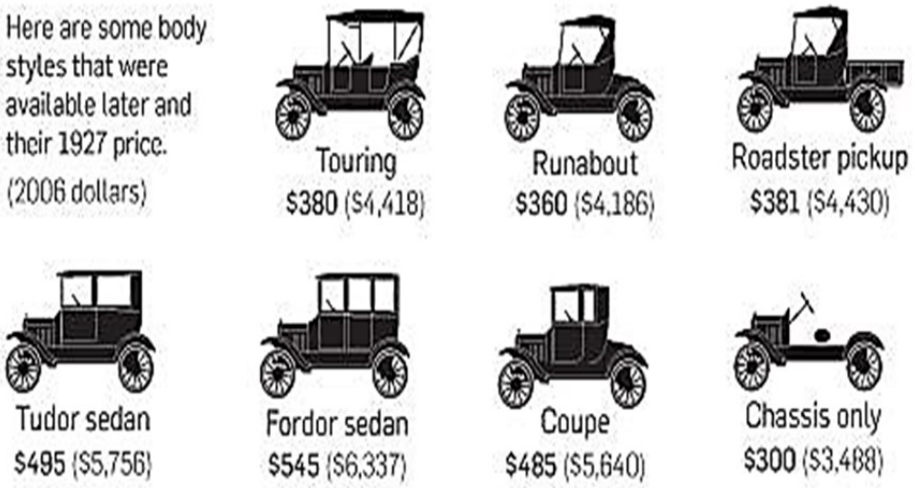
The big attraction of the Model T Ford was its price, it never increased and instead it kept on dropping. Costing $1200 in 1909, the price in 1928 was only $295. By the end of the 1920s Ford was producing more than one car per minute. Ford developed the assembly line and conveyor belt to speed up motor production. Henry Ford's River Rouge plant in Detroit, Michigan became the largest factory in the world.

By 1929, more than 26 million cars were registered in the USA.

Innovation in production methods, especially in the motor industry (by 1925 Ford were producing a car every 10 seconds); this pushed down prices and made goods more accessible for ordinary people (the 'Tin Lizzie' cost $850 in 1910, only $295 in 1920). Other businesses and industries also introduced production lines.







How did Henry Ford do so well in the automobile industry?

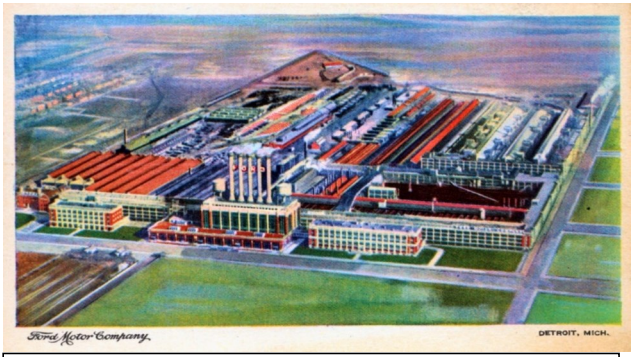
Henry Ford's genius was innovation (taking the ideas of others and combining them)

Henry Ford was able to sell cars more cheaply because they were mass-produced and every part was standardised (only one colour and one engine size were available).

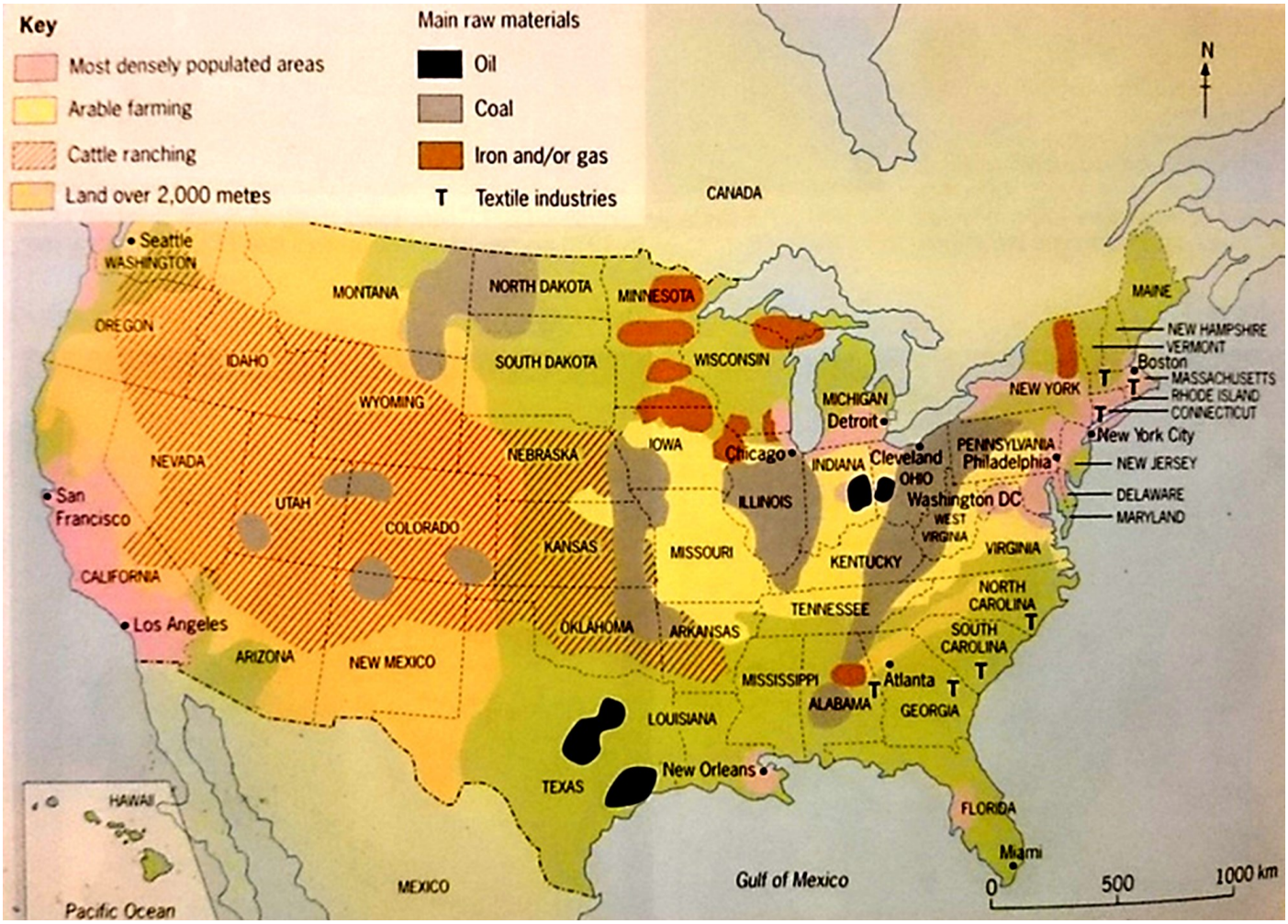
By producing large numbers of cars on an assembly line Ford needed fewer workers, and that cut the cost of paying wages. By standardising the parts he cut production costs even further. Mass production worked by breaking down the job of making a car into smaller jobs that could be done quickly and simply by an unskilled person.

A car would be pass down an assembly line and every time it stopped someone would add an extra part until finally it reached the end of the line and was finished. As Henry Ford said:
"Work is planned on the drawing board and the operations sub - divided so that each man and each machine do only one thing ... the thing is to keep everything in motion and take the work to the man not the man to the work."
The car industry helped to make America richer in the 1920s. Car production used up 20% of America's steel, 80% of her rubber, 75% of her plate glass, and 65% of her leather.

The more cars that were made, the more jobs that there were created in these industries. By the end of the 1920s American cars used seven billion gallons of petrol a year. This helped to create jobs in the oil industry and made the oil state of Texas rich. New roads had to be built for the increased numbers of cars. This meant more jobs for the construction and building industries. And along these new roads sprang up thousands of garages, 'gas stations', restaurants, 'diners' and 'motels' - all creating even more jobs. People with jobs could afford to spend part of their wages on luxury goods such as a new car or a vacuum cleaner!



The influence of the car industry on America
It was Ford's idea to build a car an electrical assembly line. The car would move slowly along the line with each worker only doing one specific task. In this way, it would be possible to build a Ford Model T car in an hour and a half instead of 13.5 hours.
By the mid 1920s, 7,500 cars were being produced daily - one car every 10 seconds!
The car changed America in every way. It led to the construction of new roads and **suburbs**. People's way of life was changing in a big way. The development of the car industry sparked a growth in other industries, eg cars used 90 per cent of America's petrol, as well as 80 per cent of the country's rubber and 75 per cent of its glass.



That's entertainment!

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- new forms of entertainment
- reasons for the growth of the entertainment industry.

During the 1920s, people not only had more money to spend, they had more leisure time. They went out more – to theatres, sports stadiums and racetracks, recreation grounds and clubs – especially clubs playing the latest craze in music, jazz.

The Jazz Age

Jazz music swept from the South to the North in the 1920s, as black people moved from the South, especially to northern cities such as Detroit, Chicago and New York. Jazz music was seen as wild, and the dances that sprang up in these clubs, such as the Charlston, were wild, too. For many people it symbolised a new era, with more freedom. The record industry was soon selling jazz records: people could listen and dance at home, too.

The movies

The most important leisure activity of the 1920s was almost certainly going to the movies. Hollywood became a centre for making movies before the First World War. After the war, movie-making exploded. The first movies had no sound. The movie theatre hired a pianist or organist to play suitable music to go with the action on screen. Some places even hired orchestras. In 1922, cinemas made $4 million a week in ticket sales. Movies had a huge effect on people. The most famous stars were paid huge amounts. As early as 1916, Mary Pickford was paid $10,000 a week (the average national wage was $13 a week). People soon wanted homes, cars and clothes like the movie stars had.

The talkies

People wanted each new movie to be bigger and better than the last. Film directors hunted for the next star, the next 'big thing'. Then, in 1927, the 'talkies' arrived: speech to go with the images on screen. The talkies caused chaos in the movie industry because some famous film stars did not have good speaking voices. Their careers ended as audiences collapsed with laughter when they spoke.

The growing middle class, with larger paychecks and shorter working weeks, had the time and money to follow, even to play, sports. Radio broadcasts of football, boxing and horse racing, and newspaper sports columns boosted the popularity of spectator sports. Babe Ruth [baseball], Jack Dempsey [boxing] and Ruth Ederle [swimming] became national celebrities. Golf and tennis skyrocketed in popularity as men and women flooded to newly built golf courses and tennis courts.

Source A: *From* The 1920s, *written by Kathleen Morgan Drowne and Patrick Huber in 2004.*

People living in the inner cities mostly went to local boxing halls, pool halls or bowling alleys to play sport. Once public transport became more affordable they could go to outlying ballparks and racetracks and watch sport.

Source B: *Leisure activities in the 1920s, described in* City Games, *written by Steven A Reiss in 1991.*

Did you know?

When the movie star Rudolph Valentino died, aged 31, in 1926, over 100,000 people mobbed the undertakers in New York where his body was taken. When his brother took the body to California for burial by train, he said: *you could see men and women kneeling on both sides of the rails, waiting for it to pass through.*

An immoral age?

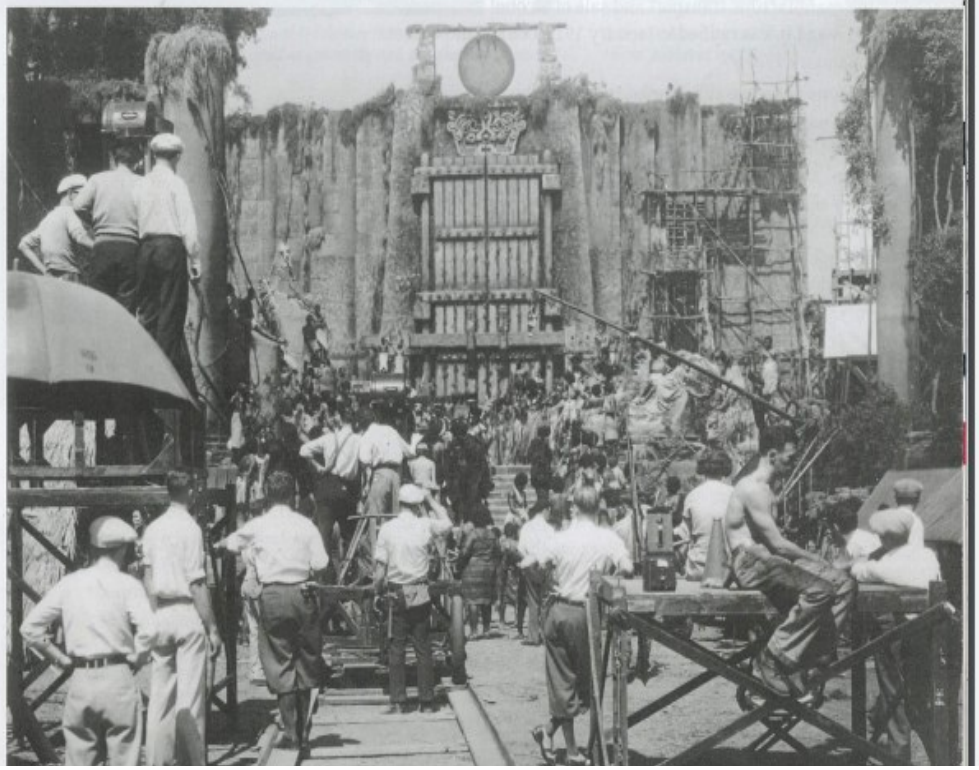
Not everyone was swept away with the glamour of jazz and the movies. Some people thought they encouraged immorality. They thought jazz music, and the dances that went with it, were too sexual. They worried about the lifestyles shown in the movies. Women in the movies smoked and drank. Movies showed crimes being committed. Couples kissed on screen. Critics of the movies argued that this meant that people, especially women, eager to copy film stars would want to start smoking, drinking and kissing (and more) before marriage.

The wild lives of some film stars, reported in movie magazines and the newspapers, gave critics of the movies more ammunition. They said it was time for the movies to have a set of rules that limited what could be shown on screen. In 1930, the Hays Code was published. It set down rules for movies to make sure that, 'no picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it.'

Activities

1. What do Sources A and B tell you about how people used their leisure time in the 1920s?
2. What does Source C tell you about movie making in the 1930s?
3. In pairs, produce a list of four ways that people who criticised the movies and jazz music feared that they might 'lower the moral standards' of many people.
4. a List as many new jobs as you can that were created by the great success of the movies in the 1920s.
   b Explain the effects of the development of the movie industry on the economy. The diagram on page 15 may help you structure your answer.

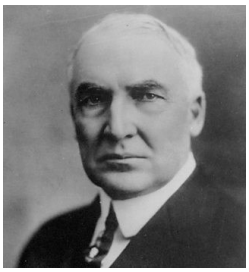
Source C: *Filming the 1933 movie* King Kong. *The movie cost about $650,000 and made over $4m profit after paying off its costs.*



Write this subtitle: How did the US Presidents support the growing economy?

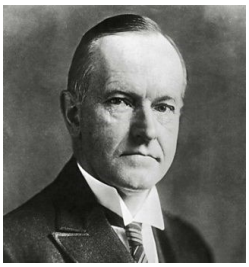
Read: The United States was led by three Republican presidents during the 1920s, namely Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. The policy of these Republican presidents was that government should leave the economy alone – they adopted a **laissez-faire** (free market) policy. This meant that big businesses were free to expand without being held back by the government. Under a laissez-faire policy the government doesn't get involved with very much e.g. there is less government regulation.

President Warren Harding (1921-23)



His promise was **a return to normality.** He reduced taxes to give businesses more money to grow and to put more money in the pockets of ordinary Americans. In 1922, he introduced the **Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act** which imposed a tax on goods from foreign countries. This made foreign goods more expensive than domestic goods, and so this encouraged Americans to buy American goods only. The name for this policy was **protectionism**.

President Calvin Coolidge (1923-29)



'Business is America's business', said Calvin Coolidge. He stuck to the same policy as Harding. Although **he didn't do much (his nickname was 'Silent Cal'),** Americans believed he was a good president because of the strength of the economy. He had a huge respect for businessmen and adhered to the **laissez-faire** policy. He gave businessmen the freedom to make a profit and become rich.

Even the Wall Street Journal praised this policy: 'No government ever before, either here nor in any other country, has succeeded in uniting so thoroughly with the business world'.

President Herbert Hoover (1929-32)

He became president in 1929 following his promise to put 'a chicken in every cooking pot, and a car in every garage'. Hoover **believed in laissez-faire**, but also in **rugged individualism.** This meant that people should not depend on the government for help - they should solve their own problems by working harder. Hoover lost the next presidential election in 1932 because of this viewpoint - it was too severe.

The Growth of Consumerism

The 1920s saw the growth of the culture of consumerism--many Americans began to work fewer hours, earn higher salaries, invest in the stock market, and buy everything from washing machines to Model T Fords.

Why did a boom happen in America during the 1920s?

Core goods
America had plenty of necessary core goods eg, coal and oil.

Effect of the First World War
America was in a strong position after the war compared to European countries. America had plenty of money to invest.

Mass-production
Henry Ford developed a new form of production. He produced the same type of goods on a large scale. This meant that the price of the goods fell.

Technological development
In order to mass-produce, the production line system had to be used. The line was a means of creating goods more quickly.

Laissez-faire
The Republican Presidents believed in giving the economy freedom to develop itself.

Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act
A toll was imposed on imports. This was a way of persuading people to buy goods from America.

Taxes
Taxes were reduced so that business people would invest in factories.

Advertising
People had to be told about the new goods. The method of shopping by ordering from catalogues developed.

Hire Purchase agreements
People were able take out 'buy now, pay later' agreements on new purchases.
This use of credit started off in the car industry and then spread to other products.
6 out of 10 cars were bought on credit, as were 8 out of 10 radios.

Weak Unions
The Republican government and the business owners hated the Labour Unions. They were able to use violence to break strikes and could refuse employment to union members. The car industry banned unions altogether.

New Products
There were many new products and inventions which gave rise to new industries e.g. Refrigerators, Washing Machines, Radios

People Invested in Shares - People made money from buying shares in companies on the Stock Market. Much of this wealth was only paper wealth but it fuelled spending sprees based on credit/hire purchase. Companies floated on the stock market and made money to invest.

Download Print Hide email

New women

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- how the role of women changed in the 1920s
- reasons for this change.

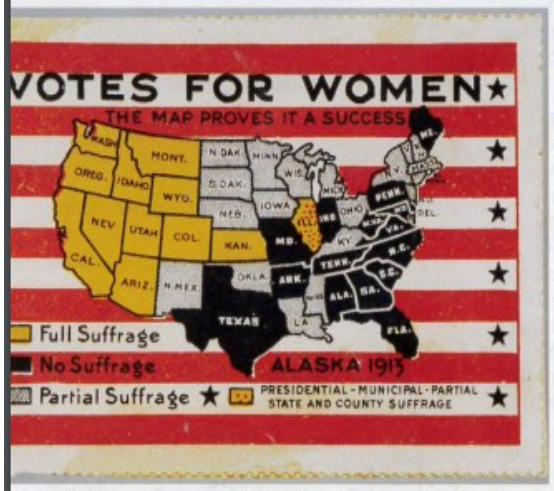
Effects of the war

Before the war, women in the USA were still struggling for **suffrage** (the right to vote). When the USA entered the war, the government asked women to do the work of men who had gone to war. Women went to work in their millions.

The war gave women the experience of independence, of earning wages and of showing what they were capable of doing. They had to work for lower wages than men, but even this was a victory. In 1918, even before the war was over, President Wilson urged the Senate to pass a federal law giving women equal voting rights, saying: 'We have made partners of the women in this war. Shall we allow them only a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil, and not a partnership of privilege and right?' The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, giving women equal suffrage, became law on 18 August 1920. After the war, women were expected to let the returning men have their jobs back. Most young women worked. But this was seen as only temporary, until they married.

	1910	1920	1930
White-collar workers	12.2	63.2	124.1
Male	6,019	7,176	9,564
Female	1,943	3,353	4,756
Manual and service workers	181.5	146.3	182.5
Male	13,469	16,172	18,956
Female	4,327	4,115	5,088
Farmworkers			
Male	10,359	10,221	9,414
Female	1,175	1,169	908
Total workers, male and female	**37,292**	**42,206**	**48,686**

Source B: *Men and women in the workforce, taken from US government statistics (in thousands).*



Source A: *This 'Votes for Women' stamp from 1913, despite its positive message, shows that less than half the US states allowed women the vote on an equal level with men. The map shows states where women have 'partial suffrage' – some voting rights, but not equal to men.*

Examination question

What does Source C tell you about the position of women in the 1920s? (4 marks)

Flappers

'Flappers' was the name given to some young women in the 1920s. They did not depend on men to support them. They helped change western attitudes to women.

Flappers wore silk stockings and short dresses made from modern fabrics. They did not wear the traditional layers of underclothes or corsets, so their bodies were far more evident. They cut their hair short, in a 'bob'. They wore make-up and many of them smoked and drank. Most of them worked, alongside men (if not for equal pay). They went to racecourses, boxing matches and clubs. In short, they did things that previously only men had done. They did not conform to the image of women as home-based wives, mothers and daughters.

Many flappers married eventually. When they did, they had to change their behaviour. However, many of them took advantage of all the new household gadgets to live as labour-saving a home life as possible, and some even continued to work.

> Women were now competing with men in the business world more than ever before. Whereas before prohibition the saloon bar had been a male space, women now drank with men in speakeasies. Women had taken to swearing, smoking and using contraception. They were not keeping inside the limits of their traditional role. They were becoming financially, and therefore in other ways, independent of their fathers and husbands in record numbers.

Source C: *From an article on 'flappers', written in 1969.*

Source D: *One of the covers of a weekly magazine called* Judge *for the year 1925.*

Activities

1. Use Source A to make a list of how many states had full, partial and no voting rights in 1913. How many states had to make changes when women got the vote in 1920?
2. Use a spreadsheet or PowerPoint to find the best way to display the statistics in Source B.
3. In pairs, read the following answer to the question in the Build Better Answers box and decide what level it is.

There were flappers in the 1920s. They were very different from women before the war.

Now write a level 3 version of that answer.

ResultsPlus
Build Better Answers

Explain how the position of women changed in the 1920s. (8 marks)

The examiner is looking for an *explanation of change*. It is not enough to describe how the position of women changed in the 1920s; you will need to give examples of what these changes were, and why they were important. A good answer will always talk about more than one change.

A basic answer (level 1) gives an example of a change, but without details (for example, *women got the vote*).

A good answer (level 2) provides detail for the examples (for example, ... *women got the vote, as a result of all the war work they did. Change had been coming slowly, but the war speeded it up.*)

A better answer (level 3) explains at least two changes in the position of women and how they came about. (For example, ... *women got the vote, as a result of all the war work they did. Also, after the war, more jobs were seen as jobs for women (working in telephone exchanges or offices). There were more of these jobs, so more of a need for working women too.*)

An excellent answer (top of level 3) would lin changes.

Racism

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Jim Crow laws and racist attitudes
- the Ku Klux Klan.

By 1870, the USA had abolished slavery and given black people equal rights as American citizens. In reality, however, black people still faced racism, unequal treatment and violence. All over the USA, black people often did the most unpleasant jobs and were 'last hired, first fired'.

Racism in the South

In the South, 'Jim Crow' laws enforced segregation – the policy of making black people use different, usually worse, facilities from whites. This covered everything from cafés to transport to toilets. States gave black schools less money, so it was hard to pay for books or building repairs. Black people had the right to vote, but white southerners often stopped them from registering to vote. Sometimes they told black people they would lose their jobs if they registered. Sometimes they threatened violence. The law in some states said voters had to be literate (able to read). So in those states, the (always white) person registering voters gave black people a hard test passage to read and white people a simple one. This 'legally' disqualified black people as illiterate.

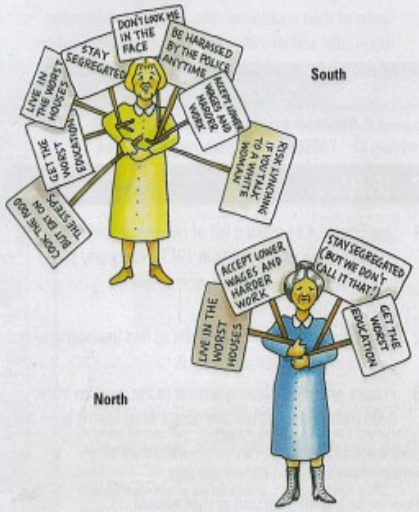
Racism in the North

The North had no segregation laws, but black people often lived in separate neighbourhoods – usually in the worst parts of towns. So local schools and facilities were often all black anyway. But black people did have more opportunities to live a more equal life. They were more likely to get an education, and that education went on for longer. Many black people hoped that their contribution to the forces and war work during the war would help to change racism, especially in the South. It didn't, so many of them left. In the 1920s, black people moved north in their millions. In 1910, the black population of the Harlem area of New York was 10%. In 1920, it was 33% and by 1930 it was 70%.

Homer Plessy went to court to challenge a Louisiana railroad's forcing him to sit in a 'separate but equal' carriage, saying it was a violation of his rights under the constitution. Justice John Marshall Harlan said on his behalf: 'Our constitution is colour-blind'. The other justices did not agree; they ruled for the railroad. Separate but equal was legal. Jim Crow laws affected: public transport, shops, post offices, drinking fountains and libraries. Until the 1940s, the American Red Cross kept negro blood segregated in blood banks.

Source A: *From* Black History for Beginners, *written by Denise Dennis in 1984.*

The stereotypes that white people had of black people in the South and in the North.



Epilogue

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 sit 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

Source B: *From* The Weary Blues, *a collection of poems by the black poet Langston Hughes, written in 1926.*

Source C: *A segregated drinking fountain in the South. The 'colored' label has been nailed to the nearest tree. Legally, segregated facilities had to be clearly marked.*

Activities

1. Turn Source B into a letter to a newspaper, giving the same information and feelings.
2. In pairs, read the question and the answers below. Decide what level you would give the answers.

Explain how racism affected black people in the North differently from the South.

Answer 1: *It didn't affect them as much as the South but they still ended up with the worst deal.*

Answer 2: *It didn't affect them as much as the South, because there they had Jim Crow Laws that meant that if you didn't obey the segregation laws you could be put in prison.*

ResultsPlus
Build Better Answers

Exam question: Explain the effects of Jim Crow laws. (8 marks)

■ **A basic answer (level 1)** will give one effect (for example, *black people had to live separately*) but no detail.

● **A good answer (level 2)** would give details about the effects. (For example, *Black people had to live separately by law, so they could go to prison if they used a drinking fountain for white people or the wrong carriage on a train.*)

▲ **A better answer (level 3)** would give at least two effects and explain how they came about.

▲ **An excellent answer (full marks)** would link them. For example: *They lived in segregated parts of town, usually the worst, bad housing and facilities so they probably got sick more, but then the hospitals were worse. In this way these laws affected their whole lives. The laws meant they were separated and their lives were really very unequal, because of the way one problem led to another.*

Racist violence

White racism was not just a matter of enforcing separation on black people. It was not even a matter of routinely treating them as inferior. There were racist groups who were quite happy to beat up, terrorise, or even murder black people for any reason or, sometimes, for no reason at all.

Lynch law

A lynching is when a mob kills somebody, because the people in the mob believe the person they lynch has committed a crime. In the USA in the early twentieth century it was usually (but not always), a white mob killing a black man. Sometimes the mob hauled their target from jail, sometimes the person had not even been arrested. Lynch mobs almost always beat or tortured their targets, then hanged their bodies from a tree. Many people at the time thought lynching only went on in the South. This was not true. But it was easier to get away with there.

> About 75 people battered down door in the jail to reach the yard. They stripped Thomas Shipp, dragged him out to the jail yard and hung him from a window until he was dead – the 10th person lynched in Indiana this year. They beat Abe Smith unconscious with a sledgehammer, let women trample & scratch him, carried him a block away and hung him to a maple tree in the yard of the courthouse – the 11th person lynched in the state this year. Then they hung Shipp's body by Smith's.

Source A: *A Time magazine article, 18 August 1930, about lynchings in Indiana.*

Source B: *In 1930, Tom Shipp and Abe Smith were arrested on suspicion of murder in Indiana (not a southern state). Before they could be tried, they were taken from jail, beaten, then hanged by a mob of about 1,000 people.*

The Ku Klux Klan

The first Ku Klux Klan was a set up by a group of soldiers from the South in 1865, after they lost the Civil War. Its aim was to stop blacks gaining any real freedom. It was suppressed in the 1870s. In 1915, William Simmons re-formed the Ku Klux Klan. It was still a terrorist organisation, but it expanded its targets a little. The Klan wanted America to be a WASP nation (white Anglo-Saxon protestants). They saw black people, Jewish people, immigrants from non-Anglo Saxon countries, Catholics and people who belonged to left-wing political groups (for example Communists) as 'un-American'. They believed these people should be driven out of the country. The Klan became very powerful, especially in the South. They wore white robes and hoods, to keep their identity secret. In fact, almost everyone knew who was a local Klan member. In some states the police, the law courts and local government were all full of Klan members. It was hard for anyone they persecuted to bring charges against them.

Source C: *One of many songbooks produced for the Ku Klux Klan. 'Uncle Sam', the symbol of America, is carrying a US flag and leading a group of Klansmen.*

Activities

1 Write one or two sentences each to explain what Source A tells you about:
   - **a** the feelings of the lynch mob
   - **b** how the reporter felt about the lynching.

2 In pairs, read the answers to the question below. Using the Build Better Answers box, say which is the better answer.

Explain the key features of the Ku Klux Klan.

- **a** *It was a secret organization, whose members were White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. They wore uniforms with hoods to avoid being recognised, which intimidated blacks and other groups, often by lynching.*
- **b** *They wore hoods and white uniforms and they were terrorists.*

ResultsPlus
Watch out!

Many people make the mistake of calling the 'Ku Klux Klan' the 'Klu Klux Klan'. This is because the last two words both start with 'Kl-'. But the first word does not have an 'l' in it.

ResultsPlus
Build Better Answers

Exam question: Describe the key features of US racism in the 1920s. (6 marks)

Your exam paper will always have a question like this one, which tests your ability to select and communicate factual information.

A basic answer (level 1) will give points without detail (for example, ... *there was segregation and lynching*).

A good answer (level 2) would give details to support each point. (For example, *there was segregation by law in the South. In the North many people did not think of black people as equal and they usually had the worst standard of living. There was violence against black people, more in the South than in the North.*)

An excellent answer (full marks) will give three or more points (depending on the question), each with supporting detail.

Prohibition and crime

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- effects of Prohibition
- reasons for the growth of the gangster culture.

Prohibition

Several groups (such as the Anti-Saloon League, set up in1895) had been demanding an alcohol ban in the USA for a long time. They said drinking broke up homes and families and led to crime (some claimed it led to insanity, too). Employers complained that drinking made many workers unreliable. By 1917, alcohol was banned in several states, and during the war there was also a ban on brewing alcohol from grain, because the grain was needed for food. Congress passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, outlawing the manufacture, transport and sale of alcohol in December 1917, and it was **ratified** in January 1919, coming into effect in January 1920.

Millions of people still wanted to drink. It became clear that people would break this law if they could find a place to serve them. The 'speakeasy' was born. Some speakeasies were like private clubs and served food as well as drink. They served 'bootleg' alcohol smuggled from other countries, such as Mexico. Others were simply bars, and alcohol was also sold in gambling dens. The worst places served 'moonshine' – home-brewed alcohol that could be very dangerous to drink.

Organised crime

Organised crime had existed in the USA for a long time. But Prohibition gave it the perfect conditions to grow. Gangsters took over the sale and distribution of alcohol, and since very many people wanted to drink, there were plenty of customers and plenty of profit. Gangsters ran gambling dens, fixed the betting at dog and horse races and ran brothels and clubs as well. Because they were making a great deal of money, they could often bribe the police, Prohibition Agents, judges, juries and local officials. Each gang controlled its own area and, inside that area, it was the law. Many businesses had to pay 'protection' money to the local gang, who would otherwise damage their business, or even destroy it.

Did you know?

A change to the US Constitution is called an Amendment. The Constitution sets out what has to happen.

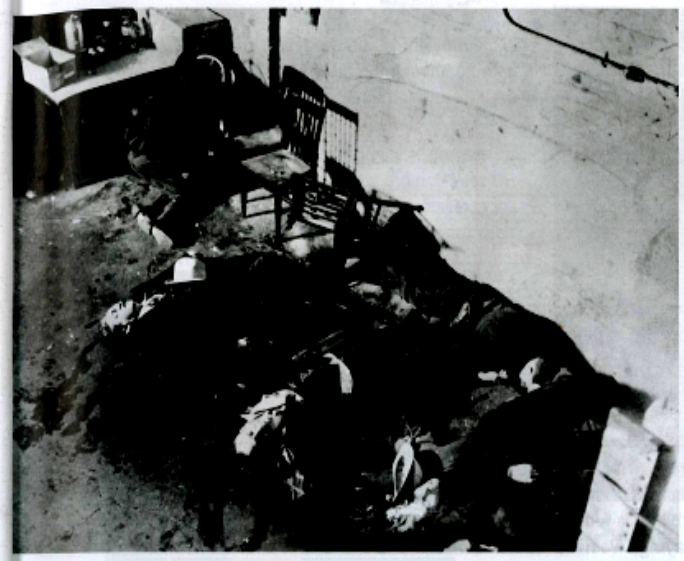
1. The Amendment has to be passed by both houses of Congress with a two-thirds majority.
2. Unlike every other Act passed by Congress, it does not go to the President to be signed or vetoed.
3. The Amendment must be ratified by the **legislatures** of three-quarters of all the states. As soon as the 38th state has passed an Amendment, it becomes law.

A major underlying cause of the corruption in cities like Chicago was Prohibition. The corruption created by this unenforceable law became part of city life. Police and officials saw bribes as part of their income and the reporters who publicly scorned gangsters privately drank their illegal alcohol.

Source A: *From a biography of the gangster Al Capone, written in 1994.*

alcohol sales	$60m
gambling	$25m
brothels, dance halls	$10m
other illegal activities	$10m

Source B: *Profit made by Al Capone, a Chicago gang leader, in 1927 (from a biography of Capone written in 1930).*



Source C: *The St Valentine's Day Massacre of 14 February 1929. Seven members of the Moran gang were trapped in a garage, lined up against the wall, and shot with sawn-off shotguns.*

Source D: *A cartoon call 'The King still reigns', published in 1930.*

Gang war

The powerful rival gangs fought each other for control of parts of cities such as Chicago. The most notorious example was on 14 February 1929, the St Valentine's Day Massacre, when Al Capone's gang killed seven members of the rival Bugs Moran gang in Chicago. No one was ever arrested. This was one of the more spectacular killings, but it was not unusual – that year there were about 400 gang-related killings in Chicago.

Many people blamed Prohibition for the gang violence. Prohibition gave the gangs money and power, and reduced respect for the law, because it involved millions of ordinary Americans in breaking the law. But there were other factors. The war had trained a generation of ex-soldiers, who were used to killing. Cars made it possible to make a surprise attack and a quick get-away. The fact that gangs made so much money meant that they could bribe politicians and the police. The fact that they were so violent meant that very few eyewitnesses were prepared to testify against them.

ResultsPlus
Top tip

When you are asked to 'Explain how...' (like question 3 below) always:

- give more than one way
- support your ways with details
- try to explain the links between the different ways.

Activity

1 a Why did the supporters of Prohibition want to ban alcohol?

b Does this mean that Prohibition cannot have been a cause of the rise of organised crime?

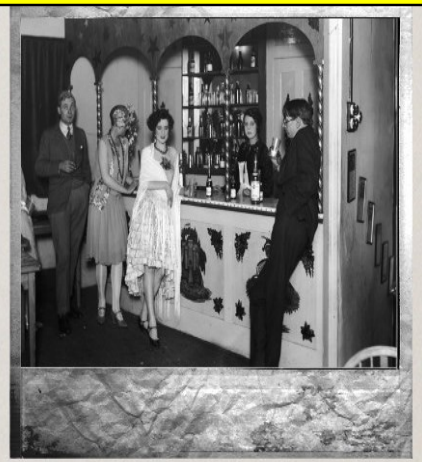
2 Describe the way the United States Constitution is changed.

3 Explain how organised crime became so powerful in USA in the 1920s.

4 Which of the sources in this unit is the best evidence of the power of organised crime in the 1920s?

American Gangsters Rackets – Illegal Businesses

Speakeasies were establishments that illegally sold alcohol. Prohibition gave rise to these places because it was the only place where you could have an alcoholic drink out in public, though it wasn't very public at all. These were also called **blind pigs** or **blind tigers.**



Bootleggers or **Rum Runners** were people who would smuggle alcohol into the country. The term "bootlegging" came about from the practice of hiding flasks of liquor in boot tops. Bootleggers distributed alcohol to speakeasies and restaurants.

A '**Still**' was a homemade distillery making illegal whiskey (Moonshine). They were often in the woods and countryside. The moonshine was often poisonous and there was a huge risk of fire breaking out and destroying the 'Still' and stopping the business.

Gambling was a profitable business to be in. Gambling dens where people could make a fortune, were places where people could also lose a fortune. The odds were stacked in favour of the house and any debts could be brutally collected if needs be.

Hijacking other peoples goods usually during their delivery could make you some money and is a lower risk activity but for less reward than other rackets.

'Contract Murder' was a business in the 1920s. You could make money killing for other people

'**Protection rackets'** were could also be profitable businesses if you had the men or reputation to carry it out. This involved offering to 'protect' businesses from damage from other gangs in return for regular payment. Often they were paying the gangster not to damage or kill them rather than rival gangs.

Organised Crime in the 1920s

- The **Volstead Act** was passed in 1919, making it illegal to make or sell alcohol in America.
- A Federal Bureau of Prohibition was set up to police it.
- Organised crime stepped in to replace legal businessmen who were shut down under the Volstead Act. These gangs were often from immigrant groups such as the Irish, Jewish or Italian communities.
- Organised gangs existed before prohibition but they greatly increased in size and power under prohibition.
- They used a range of methods to gain and keep their illegal activities going.

Bureau of Prohibition and Prohibition Agents

Corruption increased as gangsters **bribed** police officers, judges and politicians to turn a blind eye to their illegal activities. The Bureau of Prohibition was formed to enforce the Volstead Act of 1919. The Bureau of Prohibition's main function was to mostly stop the selling and consumption of alcohol. In 1920 there were only 1,500 agents. The legal system could not cope and so the government tried to solve the problem by appointing a Prohibition Commissioner, John F. Kramer, in **1921**.Before long he increased the number to 3,000 agents.
In **1924** the Investigation Bureau (later called the FBI) was established under J Edgar Hoover. His men had tougher methods.
In **1929**—the year of the stock market crash, which seemingly increased the country's desire for illegal liquor—Eliot Ness was hired as a special agent of the U.S. Department of Justice to head the Prohibition bureau in Chicago, with the express purpose of investigating and harassing gangster Al Capone. Because the men whom Ness hired to help him were extremely dedicated and unbribable, they were nicknamed the Untouchables. The public learned of them when big raids on breweries, speakeasies, and other places of outlawry attracted newspaper headlines.

Corrupt government

Harding and his 'Ohio Gang'

In 1920 Warren Harding was elected President of the USA. He gained a reputation as a weak manager for giving important and influential posts to friends and peers who were members of his cabinet. **The Ohio Gang** was a group of politicians who were in positions of power during Warren O Harding's administration. They betrayed the public's trust in several scandals.
At the beginning of 1924, soon after Harding's death, Congress began investigating reports of corruption and bribery during Harding's administration. Several members of the Gang were charged and imprisoned for corruption:
•Charles R. Forbes was found guilty of fraud, conspiracy and bribery in the **Veterans' Bureau**.
•Albert B Fall was found guilty and imprisoned for his part in the *Teapot Dome scandal* and the **Elk-Hills oil fund** scandal.
•Harry M. Daugherty was found guilty of selling alcohol illegally and giving licences and pardons to offenders.

The problems of Law enforcement

1.There weren't enough **Prohibition agents** to enforce the law - only 1,500 in 1920.
2.The size of **America's boundaries** made it hard for these agents to control smuggling by bootleggers.
3.The **low salary** paid to the agents made it easy to bribe them.
4.Many Americans never gave their **support** to Prohibition and were willing to drink in speakeasies - bars that claimed to sell soft drinks, but served alcohol behind the scenes.

Organised Crime in the 1920s

There were gangsters in every city and during the 1920s groups would fight each other for control of specific areas.
•In Chicago, **Dion O'Bannion** controlled the bootleg business in the south of the city and **John Torrio** in the north. **Al Capone** later became a prominent character. The Mayor of Chicago, **Big Bill Thompson**, was under the influence of John Torrio.
•In New York, **Dutch Schultz** was in control.
•**Chester La Mare** controlled Detroit.
•**The St Valentine's Day Massacre of 1929** was the climax of the gangster wars between Bugs Moran and Al Capone.

The end of the boom: How did the Stock Market Crash end the party?

Background knowledge: Companies sell shares as a way of raising money, and they attract buyers by giving them a share (hence the name) of the profit at the end of each year (this is called the 'dividend'). In America in 1929 about 1.5 million people owned shares.

If a firm is doing well, the value of its shares rise, and people can sell them for more than they bought them. When there is a 'bull' market (when share prices are generally rising) people buy shares solely hoping to make a profit. These people are called 'speculators' and in 1929 about 600,000 of the 1.5 million shareholders were active speculators.

A 'bear market' is one where prices are falling. Speculators fuel a bull market by gambling on future price rises, but they can turn a bear market into a crash by desperately trying to get rid of their shares before they fall any further.

FRIDAY. OCTOBER 25. 1929.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL STORE IN THE WORLD — TROUSSE AUX LINGERIE LAYETTES CHILDREN'S DRESSES — Rouff 130 Avenue des Champs-Elysées PARIS

Daily Mail

CONTINENTAL EDITION

GIVING ALL THE NEWS MANY HOURS IN ADVANCE OF ANY OTHER ENGLISH JOURNAL CIRCULATING ON THE CONTINENT.

Two Fingers Suffice to open the NEW DUNHILL WATCH On sale Throughout France 15, RUE DE LA PAIX, PARIS

SUBSCRIPTION: France 1 month 20.00 .. 3 months 60.00 .. 6 months 150.00 .. 1 year 300.00; Other Countries 1 month 40.00 .. 3 months 120.00 .. 6 months 250.00 .. 1 year 450.00

Paris (2e), 36, Rue du Sentier. Telephones: Central 12-49 & Central 76-49. No. 11,650. PRICE (France): ONE FRANC.

GREATEST CRASH IN WALL STREET'S HISTORY

DELUGE OF PANIC SELLING OVERWHELMS MARKET

19,000,000 SHARES CHANGE HANDS

PRICES TUMBLE LIKE AN AVALANCHE

GREAT FILM FIRE AT HOLLYWOOD

MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF DAMAGE DONE IN LABORATORY OUTBREAK.

NEGATIVES DESTROYED.

MAN KILLED AND LARGE BUILDING SHATTERED BY FORCE OF

ATTEMPT TO KILL PRINCE HUMBERT

BETROTHAL DAY DRAMA

SHOT AT BY SOCIALIST

AN attempt was made to murder the Prince of Piedmont, heir to the Italian throne, in Brussels yesterday—the day on

Minister of National Defence while he inspected the guard of honour.

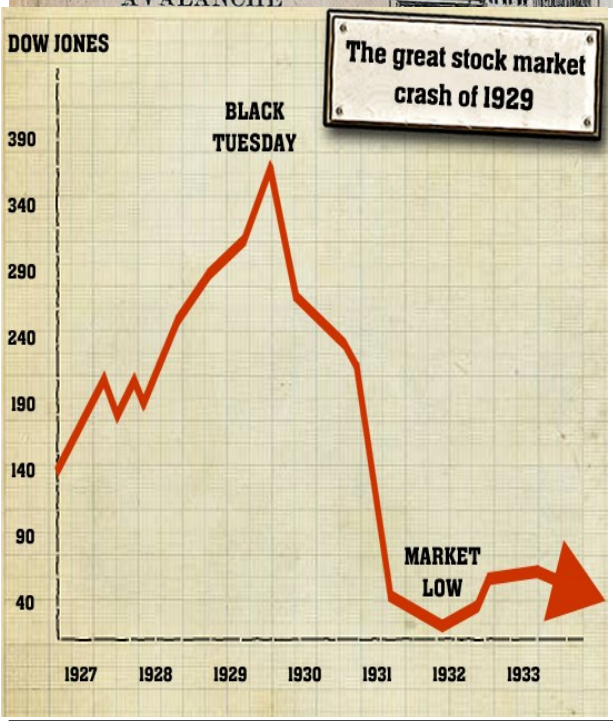
As he very slowly mounted the stone steps of the square to reach his car I waved my hand and shouted "Viva Savoia." He turned and acknowledged

SEARCH FOR NEW FRENCH PREMIER

LEADER OF RADICAL-SOCIALIST PARTY RECEIVES CALL TO ELYSEE.

By THE DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Doumergue has not yet chosen the politician who is to become French Prime Minister in succession to



The Wall Street Crash of 1929 was the greatest stock market crash in the history of the United States.

It happened on the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday October 29, 1929, now known as Black Tuesday. The crash started the Great Depression and stock prices did not reach the same level until late 1954.

The crash signalled the beginning of the 10-year Great Depression that affected all Western industrialized countries. It did not end in the United States until the start of American mobilization for World War II at the end of 1941. More than 13million people had unemployment coming to them after the banks crashed

In October 1929, the booming USA economy came to an abrupt halt - The Wall Street Crash. The causes of the crash are very complex. The results are much simpler. Shares lost their value (see the graph. The red line is the value of the Stock Market). People who had invested all of their savings into shares on the Stock Market lost literally everything. Those that had taken out lots of hire-purchase agreements based on their confidence that the share prices would continue to rise could not pay their debts. Luxury goods like cars were taken away from them. People went bankrupt. Businesses collapsed. People who had been doing very well during the 1920s quickly lost everything and became very poor.

When the Wall Street **stock market** crashed in October 1929, the world economy was plunged into the Great Depression. By the winter of 1932, America was in the depths of the greatest *economic depression in its history.*

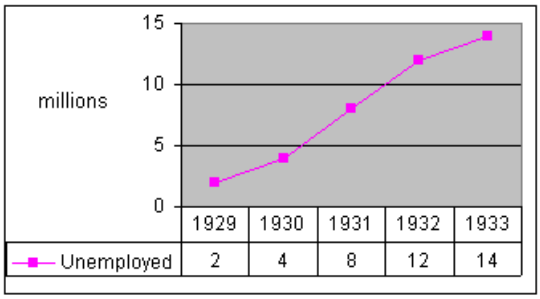
The number of unemployed people reached upwards of 13 million. Many people lived in **primitive conditions** close to famine. One New York family moved into a cave in Central Park. In St Louis, more than 1,000 people lived in shacks made from scrap metal and boxes. There were many similar **Hoovervilles** all over America. Between 1 and 2 million people travelled the country desperately looking for work. Signs saying 'No Men Wanted' were displayed all over the country.

What were the effects of the Depression on the American people?

The Depression that followed the Wall Street Crash was terrible

These are the 'facts' of the Depression as you will see them presented in most textbooks.

1. **Statistics**:
   - In 1931, 238 people were admitted to hospital suffering from starvation.
   - International trade slumped from $10bn in 1929 to only $3 bn in 1932.
   - 5000 banks went bankrupt 1929-1932, including the Bank of America.
   - In 1932 a quarter of a million Americans had their homes repossessed, and a fifth of all farmers lost their farms.
   - In 1932, 20,000 companies went out of business.
   - By 1933:
     - Industrial production had fallen by 40%
     - Prices had fallen 50%
     - Wages had fallen by 60%
     - Share prices had fallen by 80%
     - 5000 more banks went bankrupt.
     - 25% of Americans were unemployed.



2. **Farmers**:
   - The depression was particularly fierce in agriculture, and things were made worse by the 'dust bowl' caused by over-farming.
   - Many farmers could not afford their mortgage repayments and many 'Okies' (from Oklahoma) and 'Arkies' (from Arkansas) had to abandon their farms and go fruit-picking in California (the famous novel *The Grapes of Wrath* is about this).
3. **Welfare and Despair**:
   - America and no Welfare State. Many unemployed Americans were reduced to picking over rubbish dumps or begging (cf the song 'Buddy, can you spare a dime').
   - SOME towns set up soup kitchens and groups like the Salvation Army (and even Al Capone) organised charity hand-outs – hence the term 'on the breadline'.

- In the land of opportunity this was seen as a terrible failure, and 23,000 people committed suicide in 1932 alone

4. **Hobos and Hoovervilles**:
   - Homeless people went to live in shanty towns called 'Hoovervilles' (as an insult to President Hoover). 'Hobos' travelled round looking for jobs, usually riding illegally on freight trucks.
5. **Hatred of Hoover**:
   - The government did not know how to stop the Depression, and Hoover believed in 'rugged individualism', and stuck to the idea that it was not the government's job to interfere with business.
   - In 1930 the Smoot-Hawley Act raised tariffs, in 1931 the Fed raised interest rates, and in 1932 the government raised taxes - all three simply made the Depression much worse.
   - Most Americans came to blame the President for the Depression. Shanty towns were called 'Hoovervilles', but there was also 'Hoover leather' (cardboard soles for shoes) and 'Hoover blankets' (newspapers). 'In Hoover we trusted, but now we are busted'.
6. **Violence**:
   - There were many protest marches and riots. When banks tried to re-possess some farms, local farmer banded together and drove them off with pitch-forks.
7. **Bonus Army**:
   - In 1932, 20,000 unemployed ex-soldiers set up a Hooverville in Washington to ask for their war pension ('bonus') to be paid early; Hoover set the army on them, who drive them away with guns and tear-gas.

Or was it?

1. **Hoover did not do nothing**:
   - In 1930 he cut taxes and the Committee for Unemployment Relief was formed.
   - In 1931 he gave $4000 million to state governments to set up schemes to provide work (e.g. the Hoover Dam). The Davis-Bacon Act encouraged firms to maintain high wages by requiring "prevailing" (union) wages to be paid on federal construction contracts.
   - In 1932 he passed the Emergency Relief Act ($300 million to provide unemployment pay) and the Reconstruction Act (which set up the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to provide $1500 million of loans to help businessmen). The Norris-La Guardia Act protected trade unions and the Glass-Steagall Act helped banks by making it easier for them to borrow from the federal reserve.

   All this is usually either not mentioned at all, or dismissed as 'too little, too late'. In fact, it was exactly what the 'New Deal' was later to copy.

2. **Not all industries or places suffered**:
   - The Depression was worst in farming, and in the old industries (80% of steel workers were unemployed in Toledo. 'New' industries (such as films, electronics and airplanes) continued to expand and pay high wages.
   - Many people who managed to keep their jobs were BETTER off, because prices were much lower.

- Certain areas of the economy thrived. The Empire State Building was finished in 1931, and the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge was started in 1932

Why did the Wall Street Crash happen in 1929?

Economic weaknesses

60 per cent of the country was poor. Other countries had started putting taxes on goods from America.

Laissez-faire

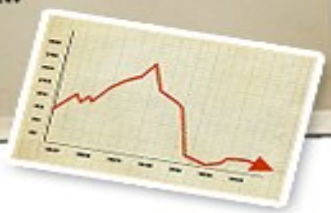
The policy of the Republican Party was to give the economy freedom to improve.

Overproduction

Everyone who wanted new goods had already bought them.

Speculation

Many people had bought shares on credit. People lost their money as their value started to fall.



Loss of confidence

Experts were the first to start selling their shares. Confidence was lost as other people followed them and started selling too.

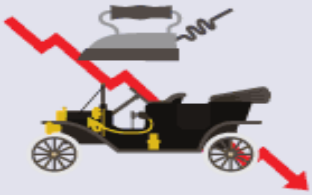
29 October 1929

Panic started as people started selling. 13 million shares were sold on the 24th October, and another 16 million on the 29th.

Long term reasons

Commerce

Overproduction in agriculture



Falling demand for goods

Property prices

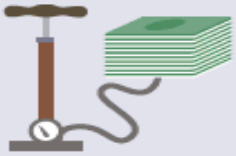
Overproduction in industry

Too many small banks

Short term reasons

The Stock Market

Loss of confidence and a sudden fall in prices



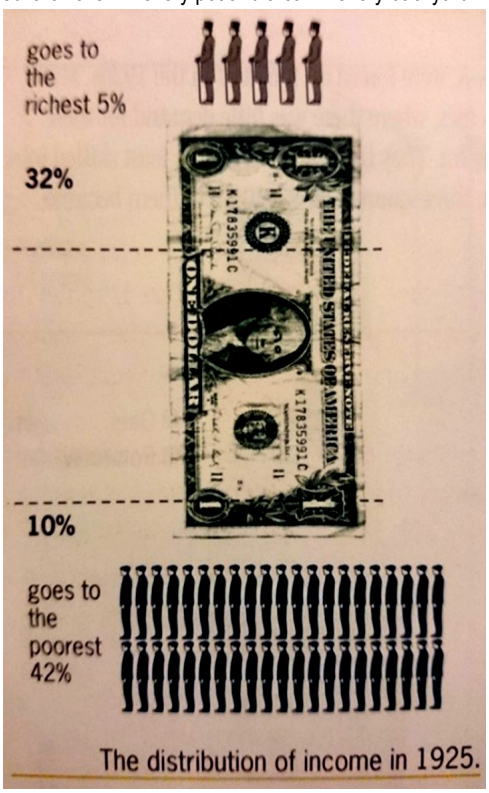
Overspeculation

Was the boom good for everyone?

'We in America today are nearer to the financial triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of our land. The poor man is vanishing from us. Under the Republican system, our industrial output has increased as never before, and our wages have grown steadily in buying power.'

Herbert Hoover, speaking in 1928

During his election campaign, Republicans promised 'a chicken in every pot and a car in every backyard'.



The distribution of income in 1925.

Farmers

Farmers were producing too many crops and couldn't sell them. So prices fell and farmers had to borrow money from the banks to be able to survive. More and more of them got into debt until they eventually had to sell their farms and leave. Many left to go wandering around America looking for any kind of work – at the time, these wanderers were known as 'hobos'. By 1928 half of all USA farmers were living in poverty. Since prices were so low, 600,000 farmers lost their farms in 1924 alone.

Black people

Black people suffered economically, especially in the southern states, where segregation was in effect. The ancestors of the black people in the south had been slaves. The majority worked on small farms owned by white landlords. The black people were labourers or sharecroppers and they lived in immense poverty.

The segregation that was happening in the southern states (Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi) made the situation of black people even worse. White and black people lived separately – they had different education, transport and housing facilities. They were not allowed to use the same toilets and water wells. Anyone who tried to improve the rights of African Americans were challenged and threatened by the Ku Klux Klan. As a result, thousands of black people moved to northern cities like New York, Detroit and Chicago to look for work, but when they got there they had to live in ghettoes.

Immigrants

Many immigrants had not been educated and were willing to work in any kind of job for very low wages. Because of this, they endured more and more prejudice.

Old traditional industries

The traditional industries failed to respond to the new mass production methods of the 1920s, unlike the Ford company that was making a good profit and could pay impressive wages. Also, following a reduction in the powers of Labour Unions (Trade Unions), the workers were not in a position to be able to claim better wages and working conditions in the old industries.

Coal - Coal prices fell and thousands had to be made redundant because the industry was producing too much coal and not enough people and countries wanted to buy it.

Ship building - Another major industry that had to make thousands redundant due to a reduction in the demand for new ships.

Cotton Textiles - New synthetic fibres were being developed, such as rayon. This became a very popular substitute to cotton. It was possible to produce rayon in factories where fewer workers were needed.