

Summary: The 1920s

A Growing Economy

During the 1920s, the United States became one of the richest nations in history. The automobile industry grew very fast. Henry Ford changed the way factories made cars. He used assembly lines and division of labor. Ford's ideas made it faster and cheaper to make cars. As the auto industry grew, the steel, rubber, and oil industries also grew. Its success helped the nation's economy grow.

Americans believed the economy would keep growing. This changed the way they bought goods. Many people used credit to buy items. They made small payments. This was easier than making one big payment with cash. Credit allowed many people to own homes for the first time. Using credit also meant people owed money.

A Changing Society

The 1920s was an exciting time. In 1920, women won the right to vote. Women changed the way they lived. They wore modern clothes. They took jobs in business. They played sports.

Many African Americans moved north to work in industrial cities. In New York City, African Americans formed new communities. One community was called Harlem. Many writers and artists lived in Harlem. Some African American musicians played jazz. This was a new kind of music. Millions of people heard jazz on the radio. They danced to jazz. The 1920s were called the Jazz Age.

During this time, many Mexicans came to the United States. They worked on large farms. Some worked in Texas. Other Mexicans worked in California.

Movies, like radio, became popular in the 1920s. People heard about new heroes on the radio. In 1927, they heard about Charles Lindbergh. He flew over the Atlantic Ocean alone. People from different parts of the country had more in common.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

assembly line *noun*, a line of workers or machines that puts a product together piece by piece

division of labor *noun*, a system in which workers perform different parts of a large task

credit *noun*, getting an item today, but paying for it later with small payments



After You Read

REVIEW How did credit change the way people paid for goods? How did people make payments? Underline the sentence that tells you.

REVIEW In what way did the lives of American women change in the 1920s? Circle the sentences that answer the question.