Summary: The 1920s

Technology Changes Lives
During World War I, many Americans moved to cities. They worked in factories or other businesses. Technology changed American lives. Many people bought cars. Electricity made people’s lives easier. It made doing household chores easier and gave people more free time.

A Changing Society
During the 1920s, or the “Roaring Twenties,” women did things they did not do before. They worked outside their homes. They went to college and played sports. Most important, they won the right to vote.

Music changed, too. Jazz began among African Americans in the South. Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City, was famous for jazz, art, and literature.

America’s first radio broadcast was in 1920. Soon many families owned radios. Families sat together and listened to news reports, music, sports, mystery stories, and comedy shows. In 1927, people watched the first movie with sound.

In the 1920s, aviators began to fly long distances. In 1927, Charles Lindbergh flew the first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. Amelia Earhart and Bessie Coleman were famous aviators who inspired many women.

Problems of the 1920s
In the 1920s, a group called the Ku Klux Klan spread hatred and prejudice against African Americans and other groups. Klan members attacked and sometimes killed people they thought were “un-American.”

In 1917, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. It made selling and drinking alcohol against the law. This was called Prohibition. Criminals made and sold alcohol. Illegal activities led to violence. In 1933, the government ended Prohibition.

After World War I ended, the Allies did not need American crops. Some farmers could not earn enough to pay back money they borrowed. Many had to sell their farms.