

Tensions in 1920s USA Knowledge Organiser

Key Terms

anarchism	A political ideology that wishes for voluntary governments with no legal pressure to follow a government at all.
communism	A political ideology that puts the community above the individual and wishes for a world without money or class.
deportation	The act of sending a person away from a country, usually to their country of origin.
immigrants	People moving from one country to another to live.
lynching	The mob killing of a person outside of the law, but often overlooked by the authorities.
moonshine	Illegal alcohol brewed in crude conditions. Often more poisonous than regulation alcohol.
Volsstead Act	The Act that made alcohol illegal in the USA; passed in 1920.

Immigration

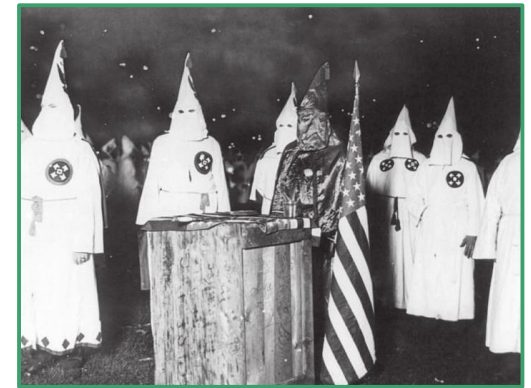
As a melting-pot of different cultures, the USA prided itself on taking in immigrants from around the world. Successive wave of immigrants formed a hierarchy during the 1920s with Italian-Americans, Irish-Americans and German-Americans at the top, above the disliked Eastern European immigrants and with African-Americans, Mexicans and Chinese immigrants at the bottom. Competition was high between these groups for respect and jobs.



The Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan was re-established in 1915 and was at the height of its popularity and power during the 1920s. This group hated Catholics, Jews and black people. In 1925 there was a march of 50,000 Klansmen in Washington DC protesting the groups that they hated.

The Klan would lynch African-Americans and burn crosses to intimidate people. Three hundred African-Americans were killed by the Klan between 1919 and 1925.



Racism

1920s America may have been the home of a booming economy but life was hard for many people due to racism.

African-Americans, especially those living in the south, were the victims of racism on a regular basis. The southern states had laws in place to keep races segregated, known as the Jim Crow laws, which ensured African-Americans went to separate schools, used separate transport and even used separate toilets to white people. Even in the north, life was difficult as jobs were hard to come by and unemployment soared.

Native Americans and Chinese immigrants also faced harsh racism, being seen as second-class citizens they were openly mocked by the media.

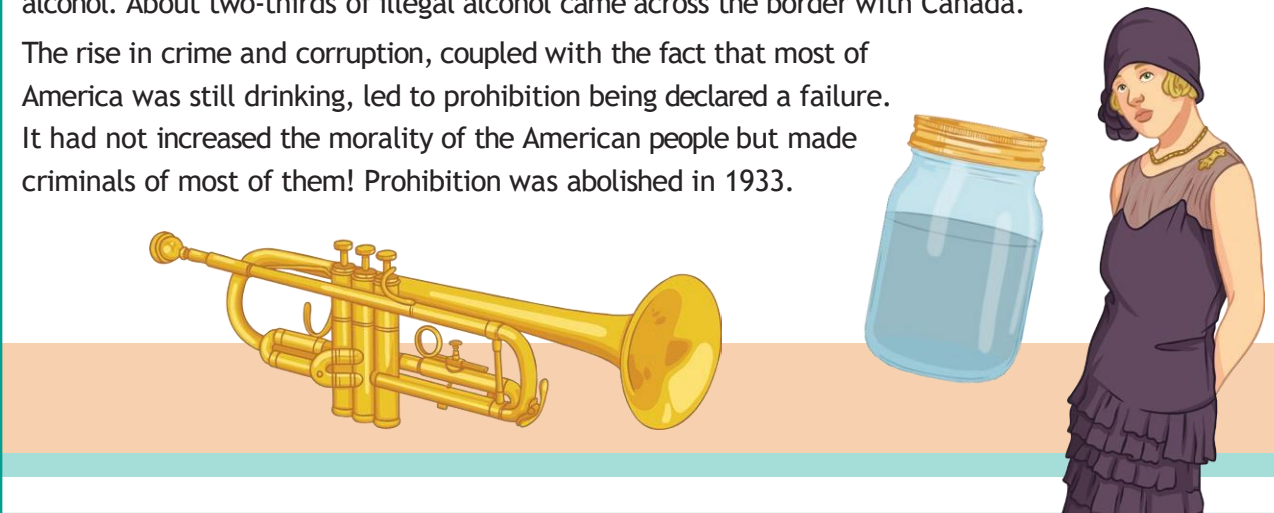
Prohibition

January 1920 saw the beginning of a nation-wide ban on alcohol sales, consumption and production. Known as prohibition, the Volstead Act was encouraged by Christians who saw alcohol as damaging and ungodly.

Prohibition saw the level of alcohol consumption fall by around 30% in the early 1920s, however, many people kept on drinking. Secret distilleries produced moonshine that was easy to come by. Secret saloons and bars known as speakeasies were popular places for people to meet, drink and listen to jazz music.

Corruption boomed as police officers became part of the illegal alcohol trade; taking bribes to not raid speakeasies. Organised crime boomed too as gangs were formed to produce, sell and transport alcohol. About two-thirds of illegal alcohol came across the border with Canada.

The rise in crime and corruption, coupled with the fact that most of America was still drinking, led to prohibition being declared a failure. It had not increased the morality of the American people but made criminals of most of them! Prohibition was abolished in 1933.



The Red Scare

Following communist revolution in Russia in 1917, American fears about the influx of political radicals from Eastern Europe led to the arrest and deportation of 10,000 people based on their suspected political ideals. It was true that some immigrants agitated for communist or anarchist rules, but of the 10,000 people deported, only 556 of them could be accurately proven to be any danger to the USA.

Al Capone

One of the most famous winners in the prohibition age was Al Capone. Head of a criminal gang known as the Chicago Outfit, Capone became a celebrity and much-admired figure in Chicago. He moved to Chicago after fleeing a murder charge in New York in 1919 and became the head of a crime network that paid off local officials and police, traded in illegal alcohol and murdered rival gang members. From 1926-7, there were 130 gangland murders and no convictions as the law had been paid off.

The Valentine's Day Massacre, where Capone's gang killed seven of Bugs Moran's gang whilst pretending to be police officers in 1929 outraged the public and led to the ending of prohibition.

Capone was eventually brought to justice in 1931 based on his lack of paying the correct taxes.



The Great Depression Knowledge Organiser

Key Terms

crash	The term used to describe a suddenly failing economy or stock market. Crashes follow a boom.
depression	A period where a country is experiencing negative growth - a reduction in the amount of wealth a country is producing from year to year.
Democratic Party	One of the two main political parties in the USA; seen as more left-wing and liberal than Republicans.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product: the measure of a country's wealth in dollars.
Republican Party	One of the two main political parties in the USA; seen as more conservative and business-friendly than the Democrats.

President Herbert Hoover

Herbert Hoover was elected as President in 1928, before the Wall Street Crash. He was a Republican, like all presidents in the 1920s. His background was as Secretary for Commerce, an important role in the government centring on managing the economy. Born into a poor family, Hoover made his way up the political ranks until his eventual election after much public support.

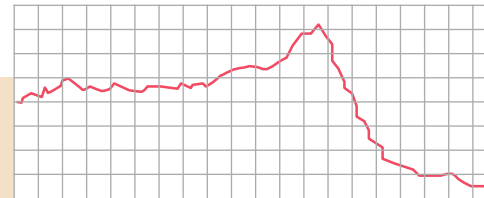


Herbert Hoover with his dog 'King Tut'

The Wall Street Crash

In October 1929, the boom in the US economy suddenly came to a halt with the Wall Street Crash. Shares in the stock market suddenly lost all their value, causing those businessmen who traded stocks to lose their money overnight. As a result of this, America was plunged into depression. The rest of the world followed suit, as depressions spread across Europe.

Years of spending and over-confidence in the eternal growth of the stock market had led people in the USA to buy too much on credit, put too much money into shares and had seen interest rates rise throughout the 1920s. This boom led to a sudden bust which was first seen on Wall Street.



Unemployment

As the economy collapsed businesses failed and millions of workers were left without a job. The unemployment rate had been at a stable rate of 5% during the 1920s. By 1933, unemployment had hit almost 25%. This meant that a huge amount of people in America were now living in poverty.

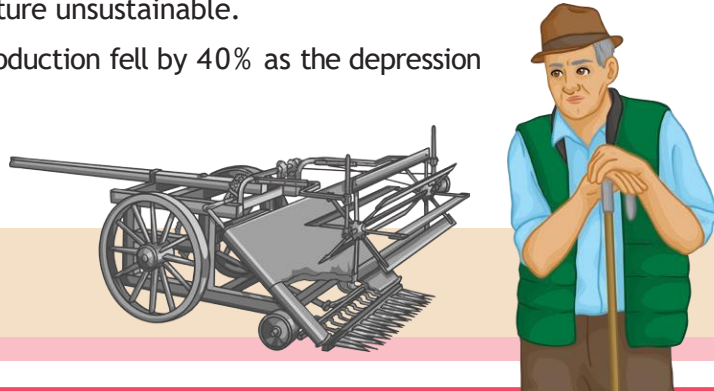
Most of the unemployment was to be found in cities, with food banks and other charities desperately trying to feed millions of people across America.



Farmers

The agricultural industry, an industry that never really benefitted from the boom times, was hit particularly hard by the crash. Record numbers of farmers failed to keep up payments on their mortgages and were kicked off their land as a result. The price of producing food and delivering it to market became higher than the amount farmers would be paid for it, making agriculture unsustainable.

Agricultural production fell by 40% as the depression deepened.



Bad for Business

As the depression hit the USA, businesses were the first to feel the shock. By 1933, 10,000 banks had closed, and 100,000 businesses went bankrupt. The US GDP fell by nearly 50% from \$103 billion before the crash to \$56 billion in 1933.

The Wall Street Crash saw very rich people lose everything instantly. Many businessmen became unemployed, struggling as much as the people who previously worked in their companies. The suicide rate across the USA spiked at the end of 1929 and remained high throughout the depression. 1929 saw a rise of 50% in the average rate of suicides as businessmen took a drastic way out of their horrible financial circumstances.



The Dust Bowl

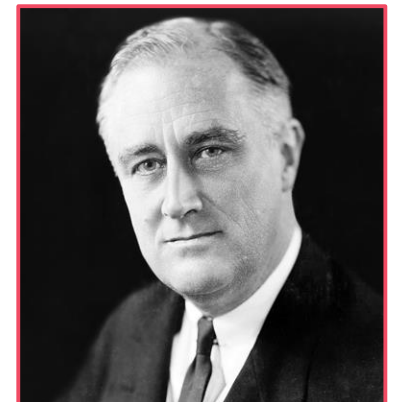
The 1930s saw farming become more desperate in the Southern Plains states (from Texas to Nebraska). Over-farming during the 1920s had left this region vulnerable to poor weather conditions and the 1930s saw a toxic mixture of drought and storms turn this area into a wasteland of blowing dust; impossible to farm. The depression meant that struggling farmers could not manage these environmental conditions and thousands of families were forced to leave their homes and seek work in other states such as California. A famous novel, 'The Grapes of Wrath' was written about a family struggling with the dust bowl. It was turned into a movie in 1940.

Hoover in Denial?

Many Americans lost faith in their president as the depression deepened and people lost more and more money. Hoover seemed to be in denial about the length and severity of the depression, stating that 'prosperity is just around the corner'. He did little to improve the financial fortunes of America and, when peaceful protestors gathered outside of the White House in 1932, Hoover had General Douglas MacArthur violently break up the group with tear gas and fire. Hoover may have been the least popular president in American history by the time he was replaced at the end of 1932.

A New President

Hoover was replaced by Democrat Franklin D Roosevelt in 1932. Roosevelt won his election by 7 million votes, soundly beating the Republicans. People across a wide range of groups were fed up with Hoover's seemingly 'can't do' attitude and voted for change. Roosevelt promised a 'New Deal' for Americans and a return to prosperity.



The New Deal Knowledge Organiser

Key Terms

AAAThe Agricu	ltural Adjustment Agency
ActA law that	is created.
CCCCivilian Co	nservation Corps
federal government	The branch of government, led by the president, that has overall control of nation-wide laws.
NRAThe Nation	al Recovery Association
PWAThe Public	Works Administration

The Hundred Days

Roosevelt got straight to work on his New Deal. His first hundred days as president saw a closing of all banks which were then checked by accountants. Only the most trustworthy banks could re-open, around 5,000.

He set up the AAA to improve farming. By setting limits on the amount of food that could be produced he hoped to raise prices. He encouraged farmers to modernise and use new technology that helped preserve soil quality.

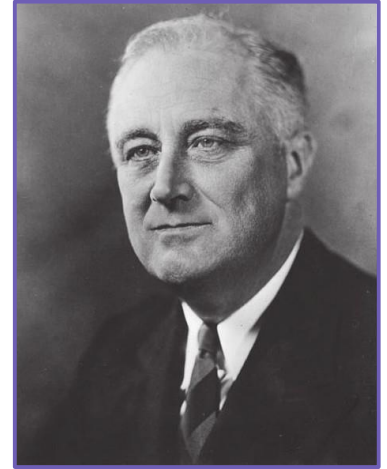
The CCC was set up to give young men jobs. Around 2.5 million young men were given jobs in environmental projects that would improve America and let them earn a living.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration was established to give help directly to those in poverty in the form of food, blankets and nursery schools.

Roosevelt's Plan

Roosevelt was elected in 1932 promising a 'New Deal' for Americans. He told Americans that he would be more proactive than Hoover was before him and laid out his main goals for the nation, Roosevelt promised:

- more help for the unemployed, old and sick;
- to reduce unemployment;
- to revive industry and agriculture;
- to protect American's savings and homes.



Fireside Chats

Roosevelt believed that Americans should know what he was doing to help them. He made weekly radio broadcasts explaining his plans and actions which were listened to by 60 million people. These became known as his 'fireside chats'.

NIRA

Roosevelt passed the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933. This Act allowed him to take direct control of many aspects of the economy. Two organisations that grew from this Act were:

- The NRA, which improved the working conditions for labourers and outlawed child labour. Roosevelt hoped to increase standards and wages, giving workers more money to spend and boosting the overall economy.
- The PWA, which provided money for public services and infrastructure such as school and road building. This gave many people jobs in the construction industry.



1935

1935 saw the New Deal start to receive criticism. Many people thought that the measures and organisations put in place by Roosevelt were not working quickly enough. Roosevelt answered these criticisms with a flurry of new Acts:

- The Resettlement Administration helped struggling farmers to relocate to better areas, even building camps for farmers and their families to live in;
- The Wagner Act allowed Trade Unions to develop and take more control in workplaces, fighting for better rights and conditions;
- The Works Progress Administration encouraged all industries to find ways of creating new jobs from office workers to artists;
- The Social Security Act saw an increase in pensions, help for the sick and the introduction of unemployment insurance, a safety net for those who lost their jobs.



TVA

Roosevelt set up the Tennessee Valley Authority to address the problem of the dust bowl. This agency worked across multiple Southern Plains states to improve the conditions of the landscape. Hydroelectric dams were built to better irrigate the soil and provide electricity to local people. The region was rejuvenated, reducing the hopeless poverty of the areas' population.

These measures took time to create but were successful in the long term.

Criticisms

Republicans criticised the New Deal for giving too much power to the federal government. They tried to stop many policies with the Supreme Court which was mainly Republican and saw Roosevelt as messing with things that should be left to the public and business. Some Democrats criticised the New Deal for being too soft. Louisiana Senator Huey Long wanted to take a more drastic step by restricting wealth to \$3 million per person. Long was assassinated for his views in 1935.



Some Successes and Failures of the New Deal

Successes	Failures
Millions of new jobs were created.	The USA took longer to recover from depression than European countries.
The banking system was stabilised.	Big business still had massive influence across America.
Working standards improved.	Some considered Roosevelt's policies as 'too communist'.
Unions gained more power over workplaces.	Local government lost powers to federal government.
Creations such as Social Security would help poor people for years to come.	Unions sometimes caused problems, with strikes being violently broken up.

Post-War USA to 1960 Knowledge Organiser

Key Terms

agitators	People that push for political change by spreading ideas amongst the population.
capitalism	A system based on business and money markets that encourages the growth of economies and personal wealth.
communism	A system that aims to do away with money and create a society based on the sharing of wealth and resources.
FBIThe Federal	Bureau of Investigation
suburbs	A district on the edge of a town where people live at a convenient distance from a city centre, but not within it.

Recovery

Unlike other countries that took part in the Second World War, the USA became economically richer rather than poorer thanks to their natural resources, industrial sector and the lend lease programme. Consumer spending rose as American businesses became stronger and new convenience technologies were created such as refrigerators, televisions and washing machines.

Consumer spending on credit led to a growth in the banking sector and the US economy boomed.

Whilst Europe and Asia rebuilt from war-damage, America had no need as it was barely touched by violence during the Second World War.



Consumerism

The American appetite for consumer goods rose from 1945 to 1960. Spending was preferred over saving by many Americans who wanted new gadgets, time-saving devices and motor cars. Buying goods on hire-purchase using credit was common - you didn't have to have money up-front, you could pay for TVs or cars by instalments. Shopping became a pass-time, and this was reflected in popular culture. The growing youth culture, who started to become known as 'teenagers' became consumers as well as their parents, building the economy further.



The Suburbs

As middle-class white Americans became richer and more aspirational, the vision of success became a family house in the suburbs, far from the bustle and crime of the inner cities. Some suburban areas became exclusive communities where African-Americans were excluded, usually by the cost of the houses or by the policies of the companies that built the houses - they often thought that rich white people would not want their neighbourhoods 'ruined' by black people.



The American Dream

During the 1950s, the phrase 'American Dream' became popular across the world. The 'dream' was one of wealth, freedom and happiness. White Americans aimed for the dream, and those sections of society that felt excluded from the economic benefits of post-war America aimed to achieve the same status as the wealthy. Immigrants from other countries moved to the USA following the 'dream', in the belief that anything was possible in liberal America for those who worked hard and dreamed big. This image was strengthened by a boom in advertising on TV. These adverts would show Americans what success looked like, and it always involved buying more products.



The Second Red Scare

As the Cold War raged in the shadows, America became increasingly worried about the existence of communist spies and agitators living in secret in American society. Just as it had in the 1920s, communism was feared and people started to root out communist influence from the government, the arts and business. The fear only increased as the USA joined the Korean War to fight against the communist North Korea.



McCarthyism

The man tasked with removing the communist threat was Senator Joe McCarthy. He had a deep fear and loathing of communism and began a witch-hunt that would lead to him arresting and putting on trial hundreds of suspected communist sympathisers. Many of the suspects that McCarthy put on trial were in fact innocent and arrested with little or no proof of their guilt. At first, McCarthy's policies seemed popular but as his trials began to be televised and he started to point the finger at military officers who had fought hard against communism, the public lost trust in him.

J Edgar Hoover

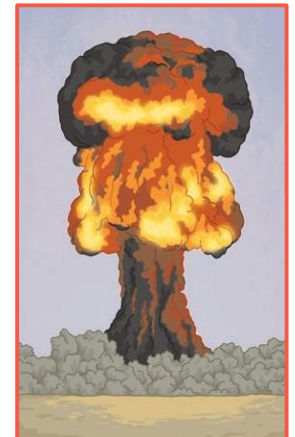
As McCarthy publicly hunted communists, J Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI took up the job of fighting communists in the shadows with great zeal. The FBI opened intelligence files on over 1 million suspected communists and kept tabs on their movements and attitudes. Hoover would later use the same techniques on members of the civil rights movement, such as Martin Luther King Jr.



The Cold War

As the Second World War ended, it was replaced by the Cold War. The USA and the USSR stockpiled nuclear weapons at such a rate that they soon had the capabilities to destroy each other at the push of a button. The two superpowers had radically different political ideologies; the USSR was communist and the USA was a liberal, capitalist democracy.

As the two powers glared at each other, the world held its breath and America was overshadowed by the constant threat of nuclear extinction, taking the shine from the new consumer-led America.



Culture in the USA 1920-1960 Knowledge Organiser

Cinema

Cinema was a massive industry in the 1920s. Hollywood, a suburb of Los Angeles in California, became the hub for movie making. For much of the 1920s, movies were silent. Ticket sales reached a hundred million per week by 1929.

Cinema remained popular through the 1930s and 1940s. Films now had sound and often reflected the hard times of the depression and raised morale of the people. Cinemas played an important part in informing people about the Second World War.



Cinema remains popular, but begins to be replaced by television as more and more people get sets at home. TV is dominated by advertising and begins to cater to children with special programmes aimed at them.

1927

The first 'talkie' is released - a movie with sound!



1929

'Gold Diggers of Broadway' becomes the top-selling movie of the year, grossing \$5.25 million.

1935

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers star in 'Roberta', the first of many movies that feature the feel-good double act.

1937

Walt Disney releases the first feature-length animation 'Snow White'.

1951

'I Love Lucy' is the most-watched TV show in the USA.

Women in Culture

The 1920s saw women wearing clothes that covered them up thoroughly and they were not supposed to hang around with boys without a chaperone. As the 1920s progressed 'flappers' emerged; women in short skirts that would show in public!



Women became an important part of the economy as the USA joined the Second World War. They worked in many industries and developed more freedom. Women were often glamorous stars of Hollywood movies.

Life for women became increasingly easier as time-saving technology such as washing machines became commonplace in the home. Women increasingly worked more, but were not paid equally; often seen as housewives and nothing else.

1920

Women gain the right to vote in all US states.

1929

10 million women are in work.

1941

35% of married women are in work.

1945

50% of married women are in work.



1951

Lucille Ball becomes the first woman to appear pregnant on TV, although the word 'pregnant' was seen as too shocking to be used and was changed to 'expecting'.

Youth Culture

1920s youth culture was built around Jazz and Blues music. Dancing, less-formal clothing and the habits of drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes made older generations see Jazz as a corrupting influence.



Prohibition and the war make youth culture less flamboyant. Many young American men go to fight in Europe and Asia.



The birth of Rock and Roll sees an upsurge of rebellion amongst the youth. Older generations again blame music for corrupting the youth and the term 'teenager' is first used.



Music

The 1920s saw Jazz music as the most popular genre. African-Americans created Jazz and this became immensely popular across American society, leading the 1920s to be known as the Jazz Age.

Jazz continued to be the most popular form of music throughout the 1930s and the Second World War. American Jazz bands such as the Glenn Miller Big Band would tour Europe, raising the morale of American and Allied troops.

The 1950s saw the birth of Rock and Roll music. Superstars such as Elvis Presley used instruments such as electric guitars to wow the youth and spawn a new feeling of teenage rebellion.

1921
There is one licenced radio station in the USA.

1922
There are 508 radio stations in the USA.



1939
28 million homes own a radio.

1956
Elvis Presley releases his Rock and Roll song 'Hound Dog'.

Sport

The two most popular sports in the 1920s were boxing and baseball. Boxing was seen as a way for people from immigrant families to become rich and famous. Baseball made teams a lot of money, with high profile fans such as Al Capone.

Baseball remains the number one sport in the USA. Basketball becomes popular too, with teams like the Harlem Globetrotters become superstars.

Attendance at baseball games gradually fell through the 1950s. Many things were blamed, but mostly the growth of TV and even the popularity of Elvis. The New York Yankees dominated the decade.

1919-1926
Jack Dempsey holds the title of world heavyweight champion.



1927
The Harlem Globetrotters team is formed.



1951
The New York Yankees win their 15th World Championship title.

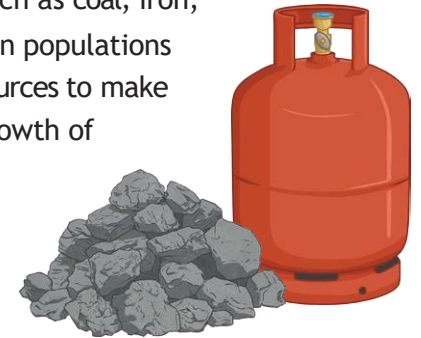
Boom in the USA Knowledge Organiser

Key Terms

boom	Fast-paced economic growth.
credit	Buying things using the promise of paying in the future, usually with interest payments on top.
hire purchase	Buying a product and paying for it later in instalments.
shares	A small percentage of a company that can be purchased and traded. Shares give their holder a share in the company's profits each year, called a dividend.
suburbs	The area on the edge of a city that is predominantly made up of homes.

Resourceful USA

The USA had a booming economy by 1920. The First World War saw great demand from countries like the UK and France for American resources for the war effort. Following the war, America was in a better financial position than Europe as it had not been part of the war long. Most American wealth came from its huge amount of natural resources such as coal, iron, oil and gas. The growth of factories and urban populations meant that the USA could harness these resources to make a lot of money. The USA enjoyed economic growth of approximately 40% between 1920 and 1929.



Republican Party Policies

The Boom was sustained by the government which was run by the Republican party throughout the 1920s. This government had three important policies to encourage economic growth:

- Low Taxation: low taxes left consumers with more money to spend on consumer goods and businesses with more money to spend on growth.
- Laissez Faire: the idea that people and businesses should be left alone by the government and be allowed to spend, earn and grow as they wished.
- Tariffs: taxes on goods coming into America (imports) meant that people preferred to buy American-made goods. This encouraged growth in American businesses.



Consumerism

Low taxation and growing businesses meant that people had more disposable income. Advertising in cinemas and newspapers encouraged people to buy the latest gadgets and time-saving inventions such as fridges, radios and Hoover vacuum cleaners. Sales of clothing, cigarettes and other consumer goods increased too. Larger items were made available to poorer people through the use of buying things on credit using hire purchase schemes.

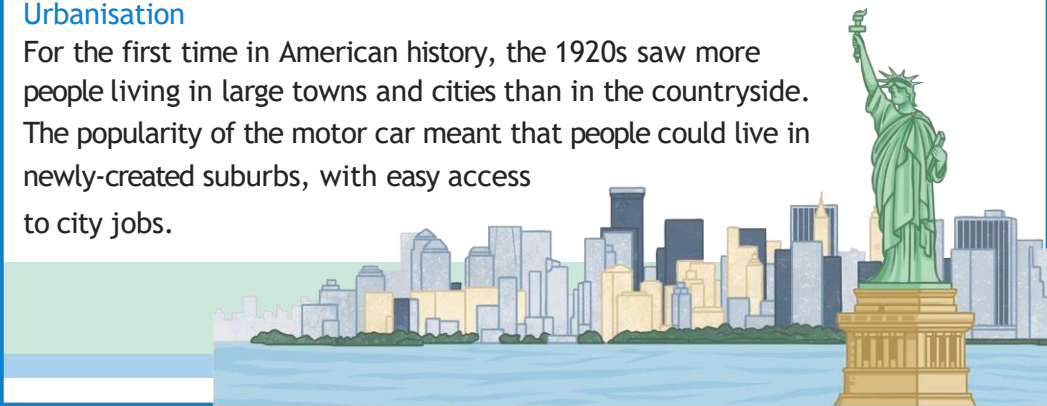


The Stock Market

Growth in business in turn led to growth in the stock market. Shares were available to many Americans and the trading of these made many people a lot of money as businesses grew. The selling of shares then provided businesses with more money with which to expand, meaning they could sell more shares. This cycle seemed to be able to create wealth indefinitely.

Urbanisation

For the first time in American history, the 1920s saw more people living in large towns and cities than in the countryside. The popularity of the motor car meant that people could live in newly-created suburbs, with easy access to city jobs.



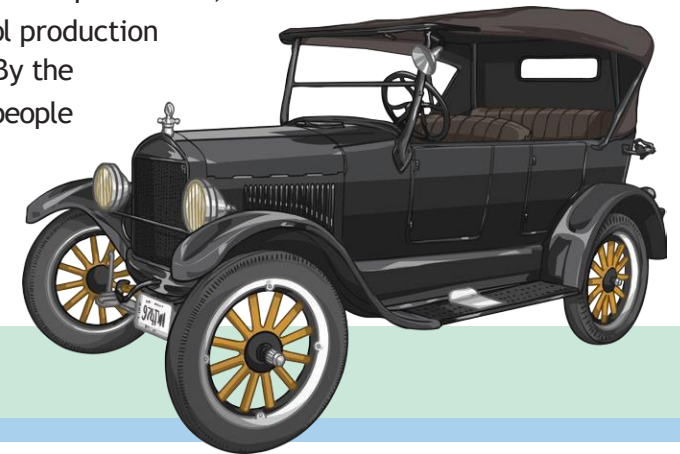
Distribution of Wealth

The USA saw a growth in the middle classes who became steadily wealthier based on new businesses and resource markets. Not everybody benefited though. The richest 5% of Americans owned 32% of the wealth, with 42% of Americans sharing 10% of the wealth.

Traditional industries such as textile production and coal mining did not grow during the boom, keeping workers in these industries poor. Farmers suffered a reduction of \$9 billion in their industry between 1919 and 1929. Farms found that by using modern methods they were overproducing food which meant that prices dropped.

Henry Ford

The motor car industry was the most valuable and growing industries in 1920s America. Henry Ford revolutionised car production with new mass production techniques that used the first moving production line. His Model T car sold in huge numbers. In 1900, 4,000 cars were made in America by 1929 that had increased to 4.8 million, many of which were Model Ts. This industry in turn helped to grow the glass, steel, leather and rubber industries as these were important resources used in car production, as well as a boom in petrol production to keep the cars running. By the end of the 1920s, 1 in 5 people in America owned a car, compared to 1 in 43 in the UK and 1 in 7,000 in the USSR.



The Unemployed

Innovations such as the stock market and mass production meant that money was being made without the need for extra employment. The number of unemployed people remained stable at 5% throughout the boom period. The majority of unemployed people were African-Americans who were shut out of many jobs because of the colour of their skin. The Republican government used their laissez faire ideology to do nothing to help unemployed workers or reduce their number. This level of unemployment led to a reduction in the amount of consumer spending in the USA.