World War I sapped the nation’s energy for sacrifice and reform. During the 1920s, many Americans turned inward, enjoying the economic boom triggered by the growth of big business. An expanding middle class took advantage of its new-found buying power to purchase new consumer goods and to escape in pastimes such as movies or baseball. However, there was no escaping the explosive issues that still troubled American society—cultural conflicts over religion, immigration, the rights of African Americans, and more.
Scopes “Monkey” trial captures national attention.

Diego Rivera works on famous murals in Mexico City.

Ernest Hemingway writes The Sun Also Rises.

The General Strike paralyzes Great Britain.

Charles Lindbergh makes solo transatlantic flight; First “talking” motion picture, The Jazz Singer, is released.

Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin; Stalin announces Five-Year Plans in Soviet Union; Chiang Kai-shek wins control of China.

Herbert Hoover becomes President.

Uruguay wins soccer’s first World Cup.

Created by an unknown artist, this example of an Art Deco panel entitled Illumination captures the urban sophistication that characterized the 1920s.
There was music from my neighbor’s house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On weekends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler’s thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby’s enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d’oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o’clock the orchestra has arrived, no thin five-piece affair, but a whole pit full of oboes and trom-
bones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos, and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors, and hair shorn in strange new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside, until the air is alive with chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other’s names.

The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music, and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath; already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group, and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light.

Suddenly one of these gypsies, in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and, moving her hands like Frisco, dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her, and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray’s understudy. The party has begun.

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby’s house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby’s door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.

Dressed up in white flannels I went over to his lawn a little after seven, and wandered around rather ill at ease among swells and eddies of people I didn’t know—though here and there was a face I had noticed on the commuting train. I was immediately struck by the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all well dressed, all looking a little hungry, and all talking in low, earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans. I was sure that they were selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They were at least agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key.

As soon as I arrived I made an attempt to find my host, but the two or three people of whom I asked his whereabouts stared at me in such an amazed way, and denied so vehemently any knowledge of his movements, that I slunk off in the direction of the cocktail table—the only place in the garden where a single man could linger without looking purposeless and alone.

Responding to Literature

1. Fitzgerald has been called the “chronicler of the Jazz Age.” Based on this excerpt, how would you define the era?

2. What is the narrator’s attitude toward the lifestyle and values of the wealthy? Explain.
Getting on With Business

OCTOBER 28, 1925: MISSING EPISODE OF ANNIE PUBLISHED

From the moment the orphan with the frizzy curls appeared in American homes on August 5, 1924, she found her way into the hearts of all.

On October 27, 1925, the Chicago Tribune accidentally left Little Orphan Annie out of the newspaper. Reader response was so strong that an apology, along with 2 Annie comic strips, was seen in the next day's paper.

How could a comic strip capture so much attention? In part, Annie’s innocent strength seemed to reflect the self-image of the United States in the era following World War I. Annie’s creator, Harold Gray, had left her without relatives or entanglements. This gave Annie the freedom to do what she wanted and go where she pleased.

Annie’s foster father, Daddy Warbucks, was a weapons tycoon who showered Annie with kindness, gifts, and love. His character sent a resounding message that businesspeople could be honest and decent. In the big business era of the 1920s, millions of people seemed to agree.

HISTORY JOURNAL

How does the image on the opposite page illustrate the bustle of business that characterized the 1920s? Identify details from the photograph to support your answer.

HISTORY Online

Chapter Overview
Visit the American Odyssey Web site at americanodyssey.glencoe.com and click on Chapter 11—Chapter Overview to preview the chapter.
This 1922 photo of New York City’s Times Square captures the high energy that filled the country after World War I.
In 1921 Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti had been convicted of murdering a paymaster and a shoe factory guard during a robbery in South Braintree, Massachusetts. Many people believed that the men had been found guilty only because they were immigrants and radicals, advocating political and social revolution. By 1927 Sacco and Vanzetti had exhausted every legal appeal. Now they were about to be executed.

In his final defiant words to Judge Thayer, Vanzetti declared that he was innocent of the murders but unshakable in his unpopular beliefs:

I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian; I have suffered more for my family and for my beloved than for myself; but I am so convinced to be right that if you could execute me two times, and if I could be reborn two other times, I would live again to do what I have done already.

—Bartolomeo Vanzetti, speech to Judge Thayer, 1927

The years of the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti showed the United States desperately struggling to defend itself against the dangers following World War I. Many Americans feared immigrants whose ways appeared different and threatening. For a time, many Americans also believed that the radical politics of the 1917 Russian Revolution might overtake this country. Sacco and Vanzetti seemed to represent all the fears of the United States during the turbulent postwar years.
Sacco and Vanzetti
A Miscarriage of Justice

Some criminal evidence linked Sacco, a shoemaker, and Vanzetti, a fish peddler, to the murders. Neither man had ever been accused of a crime before his arrest, and none of the money from the robbery was ever traced to the men.

Their trial, too, was marked by serious breaches of fairness. The judge, Webster Thayer, had repeatedly denounced Sacco and Vanzetti for their immigrant backgrounds and for their belief in a radical political theory called anarchism. Anarchists believe that the restraint of one person by another is evil, and they do not recognize the authority of any government.

During the six years the men stayed in jail, Judge Thayer refused repeated motions for a new trial. Finally, the Massachusetts governor appointed a special committee to review the case one more time. The committee included Abbott Lawrence Lowell, president of Harvard, and Dr. Samuel W. Stratton, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

One witness told the committee that, even before the trial, the foreman of the jury had declared, “They ought to hang anyway.” The committee agreed that the judge had not behaved properly when he had referred to Sacco and Vanzetti as “dagos” and worse. The committee, however, still backed Judge Thayer’s decision to execute the prisoners.

Prominent Americans, including future justice of the Supreme Court Felix Frankfurter, protested the scheduled executions. Sacco and Vanzetti, Frankfurter argued, were being punished for their “alien blood and abhorrent philosophy,” rather than for murder.

Americans were not the only protesters. During the six years of appeals, the Sacco and Vanzetti case had become world famous. When Sacco and Vanzetti were executed, riots broke out from Japan to Warsaw, from Paris to Buenos Aires. Crowds menaced the United States Embassy in Rome, and workers went on strike in France, Italy, and the United States.

Sacco’s last words were “Long live anarchy!” Before he died, Vanzetti gave an interview to a reporter. In broken but eloquent English, he said:

If it had not been for these thing, I might have live out my life, talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for joostice [justice], for man’s understanding [understanding] of man, as now we do by an accident.

—Bartolomeo Vanzetti,
New York World, May 13, 1927
Fifty years to the day of their execution, August 23, 1977, Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis cleared the names of Sacco and Vanzetti. Their trial, Dukakis said, had been “permeated with prejudice.”

The Red Scare

Anti-Communist Panic

Judge Felix Frankfurter described the atmosphere in Boston during the Sacco and Vanzetti trial. He said that outside the courtroom “the Red hysteria was rampant; it was allowed to dominate within.”

Indeed, Boston had become one of the centers for the Red Scare, a violent wave of anti-Communist panic that swept through the United States in 1919 and 1920. In November 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution had installed a Communist government in Russia. Communist uprisings in Hungary and Bavaria made it seem as though communism were spreading rapidly.

Two small Communist parties had formed in the United States in 1919. Their total membership never exceeded 70,000, just one-tenth of 1 percent of the adult population. Even so, many people began to fear that a Communist revolution like the one in Russia was brewing in this country.

During World War I, George Creel’s Committee on Public Information had whipped up public hatred of Germans. After the war many Americans transferred this hatred to anyone who had been born in another country. Foreigners were especially vulnerable to attack when, like Sacco and Vanzetti, they favored radical politics.


A Climate of Fear

A progressive lawyer and politician from Pennsylvania, Palmer had no doubt that Communists were about to take over his country’s government. For one thing, Palmer had spent the war serving as an alien property custodian. In this job he had collected and been shocked by reams of anti-American propaganda. As a pacifist Quaker, Palmer despised the Bolshevik theory that promoted violent revolution.

To Palmer the Bolshevik plan to take over the world seemed to become a reality on June 2, 1919, when bombs exploded in eight cities throughout the United States. One of the bombs shattered the front of Palmer’s Washington, D.C., home. Although the bomb thrower was killed in the blast, evidence suggested he was an Italian immigrant and anarchist.

After the bombings, Palmer asked for and got an appropriation of $500,000 from Congress to launch a campaign to “tear out the radical seeds that have entangled American ideas in their poisonous theories.” Within the Justice Department’s Bureau of Investigation, Palmer established the General Intelligence—or antiradical—division. Under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover, this division began to gather information about domestic radical activities.

The Palmer Raids

In November 1919, Palmer’s men staged raids on the Union of Russian Workers in 12 cities. In December, 249 aliens were deported to Russia on a ship the popular press nicknamed “The Soviet Ark.” Most of the deportees had never participated in any terrorist or criminal activity but merely favored nonviolent radical causes.

The following month Palmer’s men arrested more than 4,000 people, many of them United States citizens, in 33 major cities during a single night of raids. Seized without warrants, many of these prisoners were denied attorneys and deprived of food, water, heat, and even bathroom facilities. In Boston one detainee leaped 5 stories to his death, 2 prisoners died of pneumonia, and another went insane. In New York guards beat many prisoners.

Some critics challenged Palmer’s methods. William Allen White, newspaper editor, called Palmer’s raids “un-American.” He went on to argue:
A man desires to preach any doctrine under the shining sun, and to advocate the realization of his vision by lawful, orderly, constitutional means—let him alone. If he is Socialist, anarchist, or Mormon, and merely preaches his creed and does not preach violence, he can do no harm. For the folly of his doctrine will be its answer. The deportation business is going to make martyrs of a lot of idiots whose cause is not worth it.

—William Allen White, Emporia (Kansas) Gazette, January 8, 1920

The public, however, generally applauded Palmer’s January raids. Even though most of the prisoners eventually were released because they had nothing to do with radical politics, the Washington Post proclaimed that this was “no time to waste on hairsplitting over infringement of liberty.” Six hundred radicals were expelled from the country before the Department of Labor, in charge of aliens, halted the deportations.

By midsummer the height of the Red Scare seemed to be over. The raids and deportations had demoralized American radicals. Businesses had broken a rash of strikes. Bolshevism had failed to spread beyond Russia.

In September 1920, a bomb exploded at the corner of Broad and Wall Streets, the center of New York City’s financial district, killing more than 30 people and injuring hundreds more. If the bombing had occurred the year before, Americans might have interpreted it as part of a plot to overthrow the government. Now the United States seemed to be determined not to give way to panic. One newspaper reported:

The public is merely shocked, not terrorized, much less converted to the merits of anarchism. Business and life as usual. Society, government, industry functioning precisely as if nothing had happened.

—Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 18, 1920

Labor Unrest

In the middle of the Red Scare, an outbreak of strikes brought the threat of revolution uncomfortably close to home. The cost of living had more than doubled from pre-war levels. When their wages lagged far behind, angry workers went on strike.

Of the 3,600 strikes during 1919, the Seattle general strike, the police strike in Boston, the steel strike, and the coal strike proved the most disruptive. Each major strike further inflamed an already fearful public. During the Boston police strike, all the Boston newspapers called the strike “Bolshevistic.” When labor leader Samuel Gompers asked Massachusetts governor Calvin Coolidge to help settle the strike, Coolidge wired back the refusal that launched his national political career: “There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, anytime.”

The 350,000 steelworkers who went on strike in September 1919 worked a 12-hour day, 7 days a week. Each time they changed between the day and the night shift, they had to work 24 hours straight, risking injury and death. Elbert Gary, the head of United States Steel, denied their simple demand—one day’s rest out of the week. At first the public sympathized with the strikers. Supported by the press, however, the steel companies portrayed the strike as a radical outbreak and dangerous uprising. As public opinion began to turn against them, the strikers had little chance.

The steel owners provoked riots, broke up union meetings, and employed police and soldiers to end the strike. African Americans recruited from the impoverished South to replace the striking workers also helped break the strikes. In the end, 18 strikers were killed, and the steelworkers’ union won none of its demands.

The coal strike lasted for a month in the late fall of 1919 and threatened to paralyze a country that depended on coal to heat its homes and run its factories. When the 394,000 striking miners finally obeyed a presidential order to go back to work, they went back to the same working conditions.

All the major strikes of 1919 were portrayed in the press as anti-American actions that threatened the United States government. The issues of long hours and poor working conditions got lost in the shuffle.

The Great Migration

Opportunities in the North

Between 1916 and 1920, half a million African Americans left the South for new jobs in the North. Many of these migrants were World War I veterans. These

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>Increase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>62,831</td>
<td>90,119</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>70,256</td>
<td>99,127</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>109,458</td>
<td>233,903</td>
<td>114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>34,815</td>
<td>73,339</td>
<td>111%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>40,838</td>
<td>120,066</td>
<td>194%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>15,579</td>
<td>38,894</td>
<td>150%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>152,467</td>
<td>327,706</td>
<td>115%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>134,229</td>
<td>219,599</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>110,701</td>
<td>132,955</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

African American populations increased in urban areas across the United States from 1920 to 1930. What two cities had the largest increases?
soldiers bitterly resented the discrimination they had experienced in the war. No longer satisfied to struggle on Southern farms, African Americans began to seek better opportunities in the North.

Many African Americans corresponded with a newspaper, the Chicago Defender, a key source of information about jobs and conditions in the North. One man wrote to the Defender to explain why so many African Americans were migrating north. In the South, he wrote, the wages of a grown man were 50 to 75 cents a day for all labor. “He is compelled to go where there is better wages and sociable conditions, . . . many places here in this state the only thing that the black man gets is a peck of meal and from three to four lbs. of bacon per week, and he is treated as a slave.”

**African Americans Find Better Pay**

In the North, African Americans took jobs as meatpackers, metalworkers, and autoworkers, all for more pay than they could have made in the South. A migrant to Chicago who had found employment in the sausage department of a meatpacking plant wrote: “We get $1.50 a day and we pack so many sausages we don’t have much time to play but it is a matter of a dollar with me. . . .”

Only 50 African Americans worked for the Ford Motor Company in 1916. By 1920 Ford had 2,500 African American employees. Six years later their numbers had quadrupled to 10,000.

Between 1910 and 1930, the Great Migration swelled Chicago’s African American population from 44,000 to almost 234,000. Cleveland, the home of 8,500 African Americans in 1910, sheltered 68,000 by the end of the 1920s.

**Racial Unrest**

In 1917 race riots erupted in 26 Northern cities. Racial conflicts escalated even further after the war. Riots broke out in many cities, including the nation’s capital, during the hot summer of 1919.

Southern African Americans who had migrated to Washington, D.C., during the war had been competing for jobs in an atmosphere of mounting racial tension. Newspaper reports of rumored African American violence against whites contributed to the tension.

Following one such newspaper story, 200 sailors and marines marched into the city, beating African American men and women. A group of whites also tried to break through military barriers to attack African Americans in their homes. Determined to fight back, a group of African Americans boarded a streetcar and attacked the motorman and the conductors. African Americans also exchanged gunfire with whites who drove or walked through their neighborhoods.

President Wilson had to call in federal troops to control the crowds, which finally dispersed in a driving rain. When the Washington riot ended, 4 days after it began, 4 men had been killed, 11 had suffered serious wounds, and dozens more had been injured. Three hundred people were arrested for rioting or for carrying weapons.

Few cities escaped racial violence during the early 1920s. Knoxville, Omaha, and Tulsa all experienced deadly attacks on African American neighborhoods. Several radical African American groups sprang out of this ferment. Marcus Garvey’s “Back to Africa” movement became the most famous.

**The Garvey Movement**

A black man from Jamaica, Marcus Garvey had grown up at the very bottom of Jamaican society. Black Jamaicans had no economic or political voice in this white-controlled British colony.

Educated as a journalist and filled with ambition, Garvey arrived in New York City at the age of 28. There
he found an enthusiastic audience for his particular version of Booker T. Washington’s African American self-help doctrine.

Where Washington advocated separate development in the United States, Garvey encouraged African Americans to return to Africa “to establish a country and a government absolutely on their own.” To this end, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association, which peaked at a membership of 250,000. With its program of African American pride and power, Garvey’s “Back to Africa” movement foreshadowed the Black Muslim movement of the 1960s.

Garvey’s message encouraged poor African Americans, who were his most fervent supporters. A member of the NAACP’s board of directors said:

*The sweeper in the subway, the elevator boy eternally carrying fat office men and perky girls up and down a shaft, knew that when night came he might march with the African army and bear a wonderful banner to be raised some day in a distant, beautiful land.*

—Mary White Ovington, *Portraits in Color*, 1927

Thousands invested in Garvey’s Black Star Line of ships that would take back African Americans to their “home” in Africa. The Black Star Line collapsed, however, partly because unscrupulous white business dealers sold Garvey leaky ships and faulty equipment. Arrested and charged with mail fraud, Garvey was deported as an undesirable alien.

Whites called Garvey the “Moses of the Negroes,” but some African American leaders, particularly W.E.B. Du Bois, criticized his unconventional methods and personal flamboyance. Marcus Garvey, however, gave African Americans pride and hope for the future.

### Progressivism Endures

#### New Social Reforms Enacted

Even during this period of labor unrest and social tension, the reform impulse endured. For example, Senator George Norris of Nebraska successfully resisted efforts to turn over the government power plant at Muscle Shoals to business interests. The Women’s Joint Congressional Committee lobbied for social reforms throughout the 1920s. On the state level, reformers also succeeded in instituting such programs as old-age pensions, workers’ compensation, and city planning.

The postwar decade began with two important reforms whose roots were firmly planted in the Progressive Era. The Eighteenth Amendment established national Prohibition in 1919, and the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920.

#### Prohibition

Between 1906 and 1919, 26 states had passed laws limiting the sale of liquor. Progressives supported prohibition, or a ban on alcohol. They championed national Prohibition, a law that would forbid the manufacturing, transporting, and selling of liquor, arguing that an outright ban on drinking would be a great boon to society. In the House of Representatives debate on the Prohibition amendment, Congressman Richard Austin from Tennessee predicted that “a [prohibition] law which has emptied the jails in Tennessee and virtually wiped out the criminal side of the docket of the courts will do the same in every State.”

During the war, antialcohol advocates successfully linked Prohibition with patriotism. Conserving the grain that would have gone into liquor became part of the war effort. The antialcohol league also stirred up the country’s anti-German hysteria, blaming German brewers for making American soldiers unfit.

By 1918, three-quarters of the population lived in “dry” states or counties. The cities, with their large immigrant populations, however, remained “wet” until the national amendment was ratified in 1919. This amendment was enforced by the Volstead Act, a law passed in 1919 declaring beverages containing one-half of 1 percent of alcohol intoxicating. When the Volstead Act took effect in January 1920, many Americans had high hopes that the new law would reduce poverty and wipe out
prostitution and crime. John Kramer, the first Prohibition Commissioner of the United States, enthusiastically proclaimed: “We shall see that it [liquor] is not manufactured. Nor sold, nor given away, nor hauled in anything on the surface of the earth or under the earth or in the air.”

**Suffrage**

Like the fight for Prohibition, women’s struggle for voting rights got its final push from the war experience. Women had begun pursuing the right to vote in 1848, but the fight died down in the decades before the Progressive Era.

Progressives supported suffrage because they believed women’s votes could help pass a variety of reforms, especially those that protected women and children. A new period of activism, beginning around 1910, won rewards when several states—mostly in the West—approved suffrage.

Agnes Geelan, who later became mayor of her town and state senator from North Dakota, remembered: “We were allowed to vote in state elections . . . but there were restrictions. Women could only vote for women candidates. Men could vote for either men or women, and I didn’t like that discrimination.”

The campaign for national suffrage gathered steam in 1916, thanks to Carrie Chapman Catt’s National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and Alice Paul’s Congressional Union, later the National Woman’s party. The two groups argued intensely over tactics. The Woman’s party favored radical actions, such as picketing the White House and going on hunger strikes when arrested. In a somewhat less radical way, NAWSA

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**WOMAN SUFFRAGE BEFORE THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT**

Women had voting rights in four Western states before 1900. Which parts of the United States did not allow women to vote until after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment?

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**WOMEN’S RIGHTS MOVEMENT, 1848–1923**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Voters elect Jeanette Rankin of Montana to the United States Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>The Nineteenth Amendment is ratified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>The Seneca Falls Convention meets in New York.</td>
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<td>February 18, 1890</td>
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publicized women’s contributions to the war effort, an argument President Wilson used in urging Congress to approve suffrage. Ratification of the national suffrage amendment finally came on August 26, 1920.

The right to vote did not grant women full equality. In many states, a woman still could not serve on juries, hold office, enter business, or sign contracts without her husband’s permission. Despite the years of hard work that went into gaining the right to vote, two out of three women who had the vote failed to use it in the 1920 election.

After winning the vote, women united to support one important piece of legislation, the Sheppard-Towner Maternity Act of 1921. Stimulated by high rates of maternal and infant mortality, the act provided funds for states to employ public health nurses, hold child-care conferences, and educate new mothers. The Sheppard-Towner Act was the first allocation of federal funds for welfare purposes. It had faced opposition from the American Medical Association. Other opponents argued that the bill was “inspired by foreign experiments in communism.” Even so, Congress passed the Sheppard-Towner Act almost unanimously. It stayed in effect until 1929 when Congress failed to renew it.

Decline of Progressivism

Despite the passage of Sheppard-Towner, the 1920s hardly proved friendly for reform. Progressive legislation that survived Congress or state legislatures frequently fell victim to a hostile Supreme Court.

For example, in 1916 Congress had passed a Child Labor Act, controlling the employment of children. Two years later the Court declared the act unconstitutional on the grounds that Congress could not use its commerce power to regulate labor conditions. To make it uneconomical for businesses to hire children, Congress passed a new law establishing a prohibitive tax on child-manufactured products. The Court found the new law unconstitutional as well.

Laws to benefit working women fared little better. In 1923 the Court struck down a Washington, D.C., law enacting a minimum wage for women.

Progressivism declined for other reasons besides a hostile Supreme Court. After the brutality of World War I, many reformers had lost faith in finding political solutions to social problems. The turmoil of the postwar years also helped to weaken the Progressive movement. Many progressives were middle-class property owners. Shocked by violent strikes and fearful of radical political ideas, many progressives began to sympathize more firmly with big business.

Section Assessment

Main Idea
1. Use a diagram like this one to show causes of social tensions during the postwar era.

Vocabulary
2. Define: radical, anarchism, prohibition.

Checking Facts
3. How did Sacco and Vanzetti symbolize the fears of many Americans in the postwar era?
4. Identify progressive reforms that continued in the 1920s.

Critical Thinking
5. Determining Cause and Effect List the factors that led many African Americans to seek better employment opportunities in the North.
Richard Strout began reporting for the Christian Science Monitor in 1922 and continued for 62 years. The first three Presidents he covered—Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover—could not have been more different.

Richard Strout said that Warren Gamaliel Harding, a fun-loving man who was elected in a landslide in 1920, did not have the answers. “He was furthermore aware of his inadequacies, and he was pathetic... He said, ‘Gentlemen, gentlemen, go easy on me. I just want to go out on the golf course today and shoot a round.’”

Calvin Coolidge, Harding’s stern Vice President, succeeded to the presidency when Harding died. Coolidge then handily won the 1924 election. In an interview concerning the thirtieth United States President, Strout said:

Calvin Coolidge only answered written questions from the press, and so, one time, we all got together and wrote down the same question. We wanted to know if he was going to run for re-election in 1928. So Coolidge looked at the first question and put it aside. Then he looked at the second and did the same thing. He went through all the slips of papers, I think there were a total of twelve, and on the last one he paused, read it to himself, and went on dryly: “I have a question about the condition of the children in Poland.” We all smiled. He may have smiled too. And that concluded the press conference.

—as told to Tom Tiede, American Tapestry, 1988

Campaign Buttons
Republicans held the White House through the 1920s.

Main Idea
Rejecting the social reforms of the Progressive Era, the three Republican Presidents of the 1920s—Harding, Hoover, and Coolidge—put their faith in big business, both at home and abroad.

Vocabulary
- internationalism
- disarmament

Read to Find Out . . .
- how the policies of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover supported big business.
- how Republican foreign policy moved away from military and political involvement in Europe.
- the reasons for United States involvement in Latin America.
Herbert Hoover, the engineer who had performed brilliantly as secretary of commerce under Harding and Coolidge, easily won the presidency in 1928 after Coolidge declined to run. In the same interview, Strout said:

Herbert Hoover was the first great man in my life. I thought he was going to be the greatest president we ever had. . . . He had each of us ask our questions, and then he would remember all of the questions and answer them one by one. It was remarkable. “As for your question, Mr. Strout, blah, blah, blah.” He did it perfectly. I always thought he had a great mind, and he did.

—As told to Tom Tiede, American Tapestry, 1988

Although their personalities were strikingly different, the three Republican Presidents pursued similar policies in the 1920s. Rejecting the social reforms of the Progressive Era, the Republican Presidents—Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover—put their faith in big business, both at home and abroad. If government allowed business to prosper, all Americans would reap the rewards.

Harding and the Teapot Dome
Scandals Strike the Administration

In 1920 Warren G. Harding trounced Democrat James M. Cox in the general election. Many observers saw this as a rejection of Woodrow Wilson’s brand of internationalism, his policy of cooperation and involvement with other countries. As a senator, Harding had fought against joining Wilson’s League of Nations. Now he promised, “We do not mean to be entangled.” Harding owed his success to Americans’ exhaustion with the war years, with progressivism, and with the turbulence of 1919. Tired of reformers’ attacks and President Wilson’s demands for self-sacrifice, the country longed for a rest.

Return to Normalcy

Harding reassured the American people. In a campaign speech in 1920 he said, “America’s present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity.”

“In our supreme task is the resumption of our onward normal way. Reconstruction, readjustment, restoration—all these must follow. If it will lighten the spirit and add to the resolution with which we take up the task, let me repeat for our nation we shall give no people just cause to make war upon us. We hold no national prejudice; we entertain no spirit of revenge.”

Inaugural Address, March 4, 1921

BACKGROUND
- Born 1865; Died 1923
- Republican, Ohio
- Elected lieutenant governor of Ohio 1903
- Elected to the Senate 1914
- Elected President 1920

ACHIEVEMENTS IN OFFICE
- Washington Disarmament Conference (1921)
- Signing of peace treaties with Austria and Germany (1921)
People were not always sure exactly what the word *normalcy* meant—it was not even in the dictionary. Harding sounded presidential, however, and he most certainly looked presidential—tall, handsome, and stately.

Harding’s first two years in office began well. He called a presidential conference to consider the problem of unemployment. Well aware of his own limitations, Harding named some bright and able officers to his cabinet: Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon, and Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover.

Harding also surrounded himself with his old friends from Ohio. People called these friends “The Poker Cabinet” or “The Ohio Gang.” Alice Roosevelt Longworth described the White House atmosphere under Harding: “the air heavy with tobacco smoke, . . . cards and poker chips at hand—a general atmosphere of waistcoat unbuttoned, feet on desk, and spittoons alongside.”

Some of Harding’s poker buddies used their positions to line their pockets with money. The head of the Veterans Bureau was fined and sent to jail for selling off veterans hospital supplies for a personal profit. Eventually, another adviser resigned in disgrace and another narrowly avoided going to prison. Two of Harding’s other advisers committed suicide rather than face public humiliation.

**Teapot Dome Affair**

Of the many scandalous situations that occurred during Harding’s administration, the Teapot Dome Affair became the most famous. Harding’s secretary of the interior, Albert Fall, leased government oil fields—one at Teapot Dome, Wyoming—to wealthy friends in exchange for hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes. Eventually, Fall made history by being the first cabinet officer to go to prison, but the wealthy businessmen who bribed him were never punished. A popular joke at the time quipped, “In America, everyone is assumed guilty until proved rich.”

Upon hearing the news of a Senate investigation of oil leases, Harding grew depressed and distraught over his friends’ betrayal. He became ill in Seattle, contracted pneumonia, and died in San Francisco on August 2, 1923, before the press began to reveal news of his administration’s corruption. Americans mourned Harding, whom they had loved. Indeed the public seemed less angry at the corrupt government officials than they did at the exposers of the scandals. Senators Thomas J. Walsh and Burton K. Wheeler, who attempted to bring the crimes to light, were labeled “the Montana scandalmongers” by the *New York Tribune* and “assassins of character” by the *New York Times*. After decades of exposure, the American public had tired of muckraking and truly wanted a return to “normalcy.” They got it when Harding’s Vice President, Calvin Coolidge, succeeded to the presidency.

**Silent Cal and Big Business**

*Business Prospers Under Republicans*

Coolidge had a dry personality that symbolized the old-fashioned virtues of the New England in which he had been raised. The journalist William Allen White once remarked that Coolidge had the expression of one “looking down his nose to locate that evil smell which seemed forever to affront him.” Alice Roosevelt Longworth said he looked as if he had been “weaned on a pickle.”

**Yankee Background**

Born on a Vermont farm that his family had worked for five generations, Coolidge attended a one-room schoolhouse. After Harding’s death, Coolidge’s father, a justice of the peace, administered the presidential oath to his son by the light of a kerosene lamp. With his upright Yankee background and unquestioned reputation for complete honesty, Coolidge soon erased any damage the Harding scandals had caused the Republican administration.

Although he lacked Harding’s personal warmth, Coolidge carried out Harding’s programs. Both administrations rejected government programs to help ordinary citizens. When the victims of a Mississippi River
flood appealed to the government for help, for example, President Coolidge replied, “The government is not an insurer of its citizens against the hazards of the elements.” (See One Day in History, pages 394–395 for more on the 1927 flood.)

**Policies Toward Business**

Big business was another matter. The *Wall Street Journal* could justly brag that “Never before, here or anywhere else, has a government been so completely fused with business.” The Harding and Coolidge administrations gave big business a boost in three ways. They appointed businesspeople to commissions that were supposed to regulate business. They selected Supreme Court justices who ruled against progressive legislation. Finally, they named conservatives to powerful cabinet positions.

Harding and Coolidge appointed to regulatory commissions people who opposed regulation. The Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Bureau of Corporations soon began to overlook business’s violations of antitrust laws.

Harding and Coolidge made five conservative appointments to the Supreme Court. From its origin in 1789 until 1925, the Supreme Court had struck down only 53 acts of Congress. During the 1920s the Supreme Court found 12 progressive laws unconstitutional, including the child labor law and the Washington, D.C., minimum wage law for women.

Cabinet positions in the Republican administrations went to wealthy business leaders who used their positions to protect big business interests. Andrew Mellon—secretary of the treasury under Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover—showed where the heart of 1920s politics lay. The third wealthiest person in the United States, Mellon immediately set out to cut government spending and reduce taxes on corporations and on people with high incomes.

**Andrew Mellon’s Influence**

Mellon feared that if high taxes deprived a business person of too much earnings, “he will no longer exert himself and the country will be deprived of the energy on which its continued greatness depends.” The multimillionaire with the straggly bow tie almost completely overturned the progressive tax policies of the Wilson years. Thanks to Mellon’s efforts, a person making a million dollars a year in 1926 paid less than one-third of the taxes a millionaire had paid in 1921.

Coolidge agreed with Mellon; government should interfere with big business as little as possible. “Four-fifths of all our troubles in this life would disappear if we would only sit down and keep still,” said Silent Cal. When Coolidge chose not to run in 1928, America’s beloved humorist, Will Rogers, commented that Coolidge retired a hero “not only because he hadent [sic] done anything, but because he had done it better than anyone.”

**Herbert Hoover, The Wonder Boy**

**From Engineer to President**

As secretary of commerce under both Harding and Coolidge, Herbert Hoover was a key architect of the Republican era. An intelligent and dedicated President, Hoover inherited the blame when the Republican prosperity later came crashing down.
Hoover, a successful mining engineer (once chief engineer for the Chinese Imperial Bureau of Mines), had brilliantly managed the United States Food Administration during World War I. As director of the Belgian Relief Committee, which provided food to starving Europeans, Hoover’s name was a household word in the United States years before he became President.

**Secretary of Commerce**

Coolidge, who prided himself on restraint, sneered at Hoover’s optimistic energy and called his secretary of commerce the “Wonder Boy.” Indeed, during the 1920s, it seemed there was nothing the “Wonder Boy” could not do.

Hoover expanded the Commerce Department to control and regulate airlines, radio, and other new industries. He helped organize trade associations—groups of firms in the same line of business—to minimize price competition, which Hoover thought inefficient. Hoover also pushed the Bureau of Standards to standardize everything manufactured in the nation from nuts and bolts to tires, mattresses, and electrical fixtures.

Hoover supported zoning regulations, eight-hour workdays in major industries, improved nutrition for children, and conservation of natural resources. He even pushed through the Pollution Act of 1924, the first effort to control coastline oil pollution.

**Attitudes Toward Business**

Hoover believed above all in volunteer effort and free enterprise. As secretary of commerce, Hoover had argued that American business was entering a new era. With the growth of trade associations, Hoover hoped businesses would show a new spirit of public service.

In 1928 many Americans agreed with Will Rogers, who said, “I always did want to see [Hoover] elected. I wanted to see how far a competent man could go in politics. It has never been tried before.”

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**Republican Foreign Policy**

**Business Ties Replace Political Ties**

After World War I, the United States shied away from political involvement in Europe. Nevertheless, all three Republican administrations increased the country’s economic ties to Europe and the rest of the world. During the 1920s military assistance gave way to economic expansion and control. Herbert Feis, who was an influential historian of United States policy, wrote, “The soldiers and sailors had done their part, [and now] the dollar was counted on to carry on their work. It was regarded as a kind of universal balm.”

In the 1920s the government encouraged United States firms to dramatically expand their international business. During this decade, American businesses came to dominate world markets in cars, tractors, electrical equipment, and farm machinery. “World peace through world trade” was how business leaders like Thomas J. Watson of International Business Machines (IBM) put it.

**The Dawes Plan**

Although the United States government did not direct this worldwide economic expansion, its policies fostered the international expansion of big business. The Dawes Plan showed how the United States influenced European economics without direct government intervention.

After World War I, the Allies owed $10 billion in war debts to the United States. Americans insisted on repayment, but the Allies could not pay unless they got the $33 billion Germany owed them in war reparations.

When Germany defaulted on its payments in December 1922 and January 1923, French soldiers marched into Germany’s Ruhr Valley. To avert another war, the United States stepped in. The United States sent a business leader instead of an army. Charles G. Dawes, a wealthy Chicago banker, negotiated loans from
private American banks to Germany and set up a new payment schedule.

These negotiations took shape as the Dawes Plan, a way for Germany to meet its financial obligations and avoid war. United States banks loaned Germany $2.5 billion so that Germany could make war reparations to the Allies. In turn, the Allies repaid this money to the United States government. Even though this money represented only a fraction of what the Allies and the United States were actually owed, the Dawes Plan restored payments that otherwise would not have been made. As a result, the potential for war on that score was reduced.

The most powerful nation in the world during the 1920s, the United States proved to be a reluctant giant. To stay clear of Europe’s power struggles, the United States embarked on a twofold policy. The United States attempted to destroy the weapons of war through the Washington Conference. The United States also signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact to outlaw armed struggle.

**The Washington Conference**

In November 1921, Charles E. Hughes addressed the nine nations meeting at the Washington Naval Conference to discuss disarmament, the limitation or reduction of weapons. The delegates knew they were to discuss specifically the limitation of naval arms. Hughes, United States secretary of state, shocked his fellow world leaders when he asked them to destroy their battleships. Eventually, three major treaties emerged—making this the first successful disarmament conference in modern history.

After much controversy, the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy pledged to limit the number of their largest ships and to stop constructing new ships. Great Britain and the United States got to keep 500,000 tons of ships each; Japan, 300,000 tons; and France and Italy, 167,000 tons each. The Japanese ambassador complained that the ratio of 5:5:3 sounded like “Rolls-Royce, Rolls-Royce, Ford.” Japan agreed only after winning concessions that prohibited new American, British, and Japanese naval bases on the western Pacific islands.

For its part, Japan promised to respect China’s sovereignty and independence. Despite this pledge, which kept the China market open to American business, the United States was concerned about Japanese power and ambitions in the Pacific.

**The Kellogg-Briand Pact**

The United States’s second attempt to free itself from involvement in Europe, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, began as a two-nation pact initiated by France’s foreign minister, Aristide Briand, to outlaw war and ensure France’s security. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg, however, wanted a world treaty to outlaw war.

Fourteen nations initially signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. Although the treaty declared war illegal, it failed to include punishments for future attackers.
Many people scorned it as a “parchment peace,” but the pact demonstrated Americans’ high hopes for an end to military entanglements with Europe.

**Relations with Latin America**

Although the United States wanted to avoid political involvement in Europe, it chose to protect its interests in Latin America. During the 1920s, American business firms continued their long-standing expansion to the south, searching for markets and raw materials. By 1924 the United States controlled the financial policies of 14 out of 20 Latin American countries.

United States control of Latin America represented more than an extension of business-government cooperation. The United States felt it had the right and the duty to extend its civilization south of the border.

Though the United States government had begun to reduce its military presence in Latin America after World War I, it still did not hesitate to use soldiers to protect its business interests. From 1909 to 1933, United States Marines were present almost continuously in Nicaragua, where American bankers and policymakers essentially controlled the economy. Coolidge withdrew troops from Nicaragua briefly in 1925, but sent them back in 1926 when factional fighting threatened to destabilize the country.

United States authorities mediated a peace agreement between the factions, but some of the players on the liberal side refused to sign. Among them was liberal nationalist César Augusto Sandino. At first fighting to restore the Nicaraguan constitutional government, he kept his grassroots army together to fight the United States forces until they withdrew from the country.

Congress criticized Coolidge’s military action, but he argued that the United States was “not making war on Nicaragua any more than a policeman on the street is making war on passersby.” Yet congressional resistance and popular opposition to Coolidge’s use of troops in Nicaragua hinted at a shift in United States policy toward Latin America. By 1929 American policymakers had finally begun to recognize that United States troops in Latin America created resentment abroad and criticism at home.

Domestically and internationally the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover administrations showed a firm commitment to promoting the country’s business interests. Most Americans shared the firm belief that United States business could spread peace and prosperity to the nation and to the world at large.

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**Section Assessment**

**Main Idea**

1. Use a diagram like this one to show Republican policies that promoted the growth of big business, both at home and abroad.

**Vocabulary**

2. Define: internationalism, disarmament.

**Checking Facts**

3. What did the Dawes Plan show about Republican attitudes toward business and government?

4. What were American businesses looking for in Latin America?

**Critical Thinking**

5. **Making Comparisons** Briefly compare and contrast Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover.
Bruce Barton’s subject—big business—and his hero—Jesus—seemed an unlikely combination for a book. Surprisingly, Barton’s *The Man Nobody Knows* became America’s best-seller during 1925 and 1926. A one-time journalist and the founder of a large advertising agency, Barton told Americans that Jesus had been the first modern business leader. After all, he wrote, Jesus “picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world.”

Barton explained that when Jesus said he must be about his father’s business, he had meant more than simply religion. Barton wrote:

> Ask any ten people what Jesus meant by his “Father’s business,” and nine of them will answer “preaching.” To interpret the words in this narrow sense is to lose the real significance of his life. It was not to preach that he came into the world; nor to teach; nor to heal. These are all departments of his Father’s business, but the business itself is far larger, more inclusive. For if human life has any significance it is this—that God has set going here an experiment to which all His resources are committed. He seeks to develop perfect human beings, superior to circumstance, victorious over Fate. No single kind of human talent or effort can be spared if the experiment is to succeed. The race must be fed and clothed and...
housed and transported, as well as preached to, and taught and healed. Thus all business is his Father’s business. All work is worship; all useful service prayer.

—Bruce Barton, The Man Nobody Knows, 1925

### The Glorification of Business

**Business Grows in Power and Prestige**

The America that made Bruce Barton’s book a best-seller changed business almost into a religion and elevated the successful businessperson to the status of a religious hero. In 1921, after touring and examining 12 of the country’s biggest businesses, writer Edward Earl Purinton published an article idolizing big business. He praised the business manager of Gary, Indiana, the world’s largest one-industry city, saying that successful business leaders were naturally suited to be powerful religious leaders:

*He is called upon by the pastors and priests of churches of a dozen different faiths and nationalities, whose members are employees of the U.S. Steel Corporation, to address the congregations in some helpful, appropriate way. Because he is a fine business man, with power, skill and money back of him, the men of the city want to hear what he has to say. And because he is a gentleman, kind, thoughtful, and sympathetic, the women of the church listen gladly to his lay sermons.*

—Edward Earl Purinton, “Big Ideas from Big Business,” *The Independent*, April 16, 1921

Not only wealthy Americans revered business. After all, President Coolidge had said, “The man who builds a factory builds a temple—the man who works there worships there.” As profits, salaries, dividends, and industrial wages rose during this decade, the gospel of big business became a national creed. Popular magazines printed articles praising corporate leaders, such as Walter Chrysler, *Time* magazine’s Man of the Year in 1929.

A list of 59 people who “ruled” the United States appeared in newspapers in the 1920s. The list omitted all elected officials but included John D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, a number of Du Ponts, and Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon. The person who had compiled the list explained, “These men rule by virtue of their ability.” Too busy to hold public office themselves, “they determine who shall hold such office.”

Even universities, traditionally hostile to business matters, joined in the admiration for business leaders. In 1925 the Princeton University newspaper asked:

*What class of men is it that keeps governments, businesses, families, solidly on their feet? What class of men is it that endows universities, hospitals, Foundations? . . . What class of men are the fathers of most of us—fathers who provide decently for their families, who educate their children, who believe in order and justice, who pay taxes to support jails, insane asylums and poor houses, which neither they nor theirs are likely to occupy?*  

—*Daily Princetonian*, January 7, 1925

Predictably, the one answer to all the questions was businessmen.

### A Booming Economy

**Industry on the Go**

Americans thanked big business for the prosperity they enjoyed during the 1920s. The nation had emerged from World War I in a splendid economic position. At
the beginning of the war, the United States had owed other countries money. Now the United States was a creditor nation, collecting debts from war-torn Europe.

Unlike other major powers whose farms and factories had been devastated by the war, America’s productive capacity had expanded. Following a short period of postwar social and economic unrest, the United States bounded into several years of record-breaking prosperity.

Between 1922 and 1928, industrial productivity—the amount of goods each hour of labor produced—rose by 70 percent. Corporate investors reaped the largest rewards, but many ordinary workers also earned higher wages than at any other time in United States history.

America’s productivity soared as new technology and techniques increased manufacturing efficiency. Electrical motors powered 70 percent of machines in 1929, compared with only 30 percent in 1914. The assembly line that revolutionized the auto industry in 1914 soon moved into other industries as well.

When American business boomed, companies needed bigger and better offices. A growing urban population required new apartment buildings, and a spreading suburban population demanded new roads and houses. As a result, building and road construction took off during the decade.

New Industry

New industries also added to the decade’s rapid growth. Production of light metals, such as aluminum; a brand-new synthetics industry; motion picture production; and radio manufacturing all provided new jobs and products for the American public.

Automobile manufacturing ranked as the most important of all the new industries. Henry Ford was one of several automobile makers, but it was his name that became a synonym for the booming new industry. In 1923 a public opinion poll declared Henry Ford would be a more popular candidate for President than President Harding. In another contest, college students voted Ford the third greatest figure of all time. Only Napoleon and Jesus got more votes.

In 1907 Ford had declared:

I will build a motor car for the great multitude. It will be large enough for the family but small enough for the individual to run and care for. It will be constructed of the best materials, by the best men to be hired, after the simplest designs that modern engineering can devise. But it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one—and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God’s great open spaces.

—Henry Ford, quoted in American Civilization in the First Machine Age: 1890–1940, 1970

During 1913 and 1914, Ford introduced the moving production line, an innovation that made it possible to assemble his car in 93 minutes instead of the 14 hours it had taken a year before. By 1925 a completed auto rolled off the Ford assembly lines every 10 seconds. The auto industry’s dramatic expansion in the 1920s gave birth to a host of related industries: steel, rubber, petroleum, machine tools, and road building.

The New Commercial Downtowns

As roads and automobiles remade the horizontal landscape of the United States, skyscrapers began to revolutionize the country’s vertical landscape. During the war, construction had been abruptly halted. Now it seemed Americans were reaching for the sky as they made up for lost time.

In 1910 travelers to New York City had been surprised by 20-story skyscrapers. On May 1, 1931, the new Empire State Building dwarfed even the Bank of Manhattan’s 71 stories and the Chrysler Building’s
Chinese American Joe Shoong founded National Dollar Stores, Inc., with one small store in 1903. It had grown into a chain of stores by the 1920s. How might management of a group of chain stores differ from that of a single store?
too, as large banks swallowed smaller ones. By 1929, 1 percent of the banks controlled more than 46 percent of the country’s banking resources.

A smaller and smaller number of American businesses began to wield unmatched economic power. By 1929 half of America’s corporate wealth belonged to its 200 largest corporations.

As small firms went out of business, chain stores and other large companies thrived. The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (A & P) expanded from 400 stores in 1912 to 15,500 stores by 1932. A single strong leader could no longer run big businesses like the A & P. The new companies demanded a new type of leadership.

### The Managerial Revolution

Everyone knew who Henry Ford was, but during the 1920s, the average American could no longer identify the chairperson of the board of directors of any other large corporation. Anonymous, replaceable managers rather than the strong personalities of the past now directed big firms.

Colleges stepped in to train the new leaders for the large corporations. Indeed, during the 1920s, almost every leading university established its own business school. In 1924 the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration dedicated 23 elegant new buildings on a site across the Charles River from the university. The president of the First National Bank of New York had given $6 million toward the building of Harvard’s business school.

During the 1927–1928 school year, Northwestern University offered more than 30 courses on business, from “Bank Practice and Policy” to “Psychology of Business Relations.” New York University students could even take a course in “Restaurant, Tea Room, and Cafeteria Organization.”

Smaller businesses that had grown more complicated also required a more specialized kind of managerial know-how. New college-trained business managers soon began to replace the company-trained general managers of an earlier generation.

By 1924 in Muncie, Indiana, for example, the old job of general manager of the glass factory had been divided into five new jobs: production manager, sales manager, advertising manager, personnel manager, and office manager. Companies grew by adding laborers. To supervise these larger workforces, however, they now seemed to need more layers of management.

Another plant in the same city had employed 200 workers in 1890 and supervised them with a small staff: a president, a vice president who was also general manager, a secretary, treasurer, and two foremen. By 1924 the same plant had 6 times as many workers, but now required 15 times as many foremen, as well as the addition of 2 superintendents, an auditor, and assistants to the secretary and treasurer.

### Industry’s Labor Policies

#### Suppressing Union Organization

Big corporations with specialized managerial staffs had almost complete control over the workforce during the 1920s. Immediately after the war, the Red Scare had struck a crushing blow to labor by associating unions with Communists. For the rest of the decade, corporations kept labor submissive with an effective combination of punishment and reward. The American Plan was the punishment, and welfare capitalism was the reward.

#### The American Plan

The American Plan was made up of a variety of activities companies used after the war to demoralize and destroy unions. Corporations called it the “American Plan” to give it the ring of patriotism. One of the plan measures, open-shop associations, allowed employers to stick together in blacklisting union members.
Companies also employed spies who joined unions and then informed employers about labor discontent and identified labor organizers.

As part of the American Plan, many companies offered their workers only “yellow-dog” contracts. With a yellow-dog contract as a condition of employment, an employee agreed not to become a member of a union or to organize fellow employees.

Big business, of course, tried to make it sound as though the American Plan was in the worker’s best interest. Elbert H. Gary, head of U.S. Steel, wrote:

> The principle of the “open shop” is vital to the greatest industrial progress and prosperity. It is of equal benefit to employer and employee. It means that every man may engage in any line of employment that he selects and under such terms as he and the employer may agree upon; that he may arrange for the kind and character of work which he believes will bring to him the largest compensation and the most satisfactory conditions, depending upon his own merit and disposition.


The Supreme Court favored management over labor with several key rulings. In 1915 the Court had upheld the yellow-dog contract. In 1921 it declared a union boycott illegal and drastically limited workers’ rights to picket. In the 1925 Coronado case, the same Court that so carefully guarded the rights of big businesses ruled that unions could be sued for damages under antitrust rules.

Between 1921 and 1929, union membership dropped from about 5 million to about 3.5 million. Phil Bart, a lifelong union organizer, recalled how difficult it was to organize strikes in the auto industry in 1928:

> There were no laws to protect strikers then, and there wasn’t much public sympathy either. We had to struggle against the place and time. The authorities were intolerant, and when we set up a line the police might come right in and knock hell out of us. The strikers could try to protect themselves by putting up a fight or something, but you could not go to the courts, you could not go to the government; they didn’t care. . . . We never forced management to bargain, but working conditions did get better.

—Phil Bart, quoted in *American Tapestry*, 1988

### Welfare Capitalism

Working conditions got better partly because employers sought to reduce the appeal of independent unions. The combination of programs employers adopted in order to convince workers they did not need unions became known as welfare capitalism.

During the 1920s most employers improved plant conditions, hired company doctors and nurses, and provided a variety of activities from glee clubs to sports teams. For example, the Hammermill Paper Company sold its workers cheap gasoline, while Bausch and Lomb established dental and eye care clinics for its employees.

In 1922 the president of General Electric Company, Gerard Swope, had told a group of foremen in Schenectady, New York, “You are constantly being hounded to increase your output. One of the ways of getting it is to have your men cooperate with you.” American business leaders heeded this message and began practicing welfare capitalism in their own companies.

During the 1920s most United States companies offered safety programs and group insurance. A few of the largest corporations instituted stock purchase opportunities and pension plans. In the 1920s U.S. Steel alone paid out more than $10 million a year in worker benefits. Even Elbert Gary, the head of U.S. Steel, had come to believe that such generosity to workers actually profited his company. In 1923 he told his stockholders, “It pays to treat men in that way.”
Many companies also began programs in which workers could elect representatives to speak to management. Employers called this “industrial democracy” and boasted that it would erase the differences between workers and bosses. Edward Purinton wrote that by providing employee representation on the board of directors, “owners of a business now give the manual workers a chance to think and feel in unison with the bosses. All enmity is between strangers. Those who really know each other cannot fight.”

Employers may have believed that the interests of worker and employer were identical and that company unions were a form of democracy. The workers knew that the company unions had no real power and called them “Kiss Me Clubs.” Welfare capitalism maintained the power inequalities that gave management full authority over labor. Indeed, Charles M. Schwab, the head of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, made the owners’ position very clear: “I will not permit myself to be in a position of having labor dictate to management.”

Welfare capitalism may not have ended the vast inequities between employer and employed, but by the 1920s, worker-led unions were in sharp decline. By 1929 only about 1 in 12 workers belonged to a union.

While the United States was prosperous, welfare capitalism seemed to keep the workforce content. In January 1929, the head of the Chicago and Alton Railroad boasted, “In our shops since the strike of 1922, the shop employees have been very quiet. The employee is much happier. . . . He is a peaceful worker and a peaceful citizen.”

As employee well-being increased efficiency and profits, welfare capitalism paid off for big business. Corporations also used welfare capitalism to restore their public image after the muckraking scandals of the Progressive Era.

During the 1920s, professional public relations experts promoted the idea of humane businesses that not only looked to the welfare of their employees but also acted in the service of society. The Western Electric Company, for example, offered to send literature teaching household management to women.

The science of managing a home indicates the use of electrical appliances, but the company wants to teach the science whether it sells the goods or not. This is “good business” because [it is] genuine service.

—Edward Earl Purinton, “Big Ideas from Big Business,” The Independent, April 16, 1921

The idea of public service became an ideal for big business during the 1920s. Business leaders joined service groups such as the Rotary Club, whose motto became “He profits most who serves best.” According to the Rotarians, “the businessman was no longer a profit-maker or even a bread-winner, he was a public servant.”

Keeping the Workforce Content A company-sponsored basketball team was a benefit these employees received under welfare capitalism. What other benefits did welfare capitalism offer, and why?

Section Assessment

Main Idea
1. Use a diagram like this one to show how big businesses improved their public image in the 1920s.

Vocabulary
2. Define: industrial productivity, capital, corporation, oligopoly, welfare capitalism.

Checking Facts
3. List three examples showing the respect Americans had for big business.
4. What two methods did corporations use to manage labor in the 1920s?

Critical Thinking
5. Recognizing Ideologies Why would Coolidge appoint someone opposed to the activities of the FTC to be its chairperson?
The Automobile

By the 1920s Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler dominated auto manufacturing, and gasoline-burning internal combustion replaced the once wide array of power sources. Gasoline and automobile industries and related businesses drastically changed the look, pace, and values of the country.

**AUTOMOTIVE STATUS**

Even as more people could afford automobiles, cars remained symbols of status and glamour, such as this 1929 Packard Roadster. Many independent auto makers did not survive the depression of 1920–1921, but Packard survived to become the leading luxury car of the decade. Sales of luxury cars peaked in 1928 and 1929.

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**AUTOMOBILE DEVELOPMENTS**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1920s</th>
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<th>1940s</th>
<th>1950s</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POST–WORLD WAR I</strong>&lt;br&gt;The industry adopts wartime technology with superchargers for greater speed and shock absorbers for a better ride.</td>
<td><strong>NEW FEATURES</strong>&lt;br&gt;By 1930 balloon tires are widely used for a smoother ride; electric lights become standard.</td>
<td><strong>POST–WORLD WAR II</strong>&lt;br&gt;Wartime gas rationing ends and pleasure driving returns, with bigger, more powerful cars.</td>
<td><strong>STYLE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Decorative tail fins inspired by Lockheed P-38 fighter planes dominate styling.</td>
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### PUBLIC SERVICES
Motorization of public services gave increased speed and efficiency to police and fire departments, the post office, even library bookmobiles. The United States Postal Service’s rural free delivery (RFD) reduced rural people’s isolation, and door-to-door package delivery boosted mail-order sales of companies such as Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward.

### ROADSIDE SIGNS
Mass auto travel prompted businesses to advertise in big, loud signs that would catch the eye of passing motorists. In the 1920s, Elizabeth Boyd Lawton led a movement to reform what she saw as a threat to outdoor beauty. She formed the Committee for the Restriction of Outdoor Advertising in 1923. One Lawton supporter lamented, “Where highways run, where the motor car goes [one sees an] eruption of filling stations, hot-dog stands, Tumble Inns, garages, vegetable booths, scarifying field and forest for rods around.”

### GASOLINE
Originally a little-used waste product of kerosene production, gasoline was an essential commodity by the 1920s. It was sold on city street corners and on country roads. The “pump” evolved from a hand-operated tank with a measurement container to a self-measuring, price-calculating machine.

### PORTFOLIO PROJECT
**THE WORLD THAT CARS MADE**
How have cars affected your environment? Look around your neighborhood and identify and describe features that are there only because of cars. How would it look if electricity were the primary car fuel?

### IMPORTS
<table>
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<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AMERICAN small cars</strong>&lt;br&gt;first compete with imports.</td>
<td><strong>OIL</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Volkswagen Beetle surpasses the Model T as the best-selling car ever. After the 1973 oil crisis, government mandates high mileage standards.</td>
<td><strong>NEW METHODS</strong>&lt;br&gt;Computer-aided design, computer-aided engineering, and factory robots replace traditional design and manufacturing processes.</td>
<td><strong>OLD IDEAS</strong>&lt;br&gt;Environmental concerns and limited oil resources renew interest in electric cars and alternative power sources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1924, the typical factory worker worked on an assembly line, repeating one small task. Sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd wrote of one such worker: “The worker is drilling metal joint rings for the front of a well-known automobile. He stands all day in front of his multiple drill-press, undrilled rings being brought constantly to his elbow and his product carted away.”

The man described above drilled a pair of joint rings 3 times each minute, over and over again. In a 9-hour day, he performed his job 1,620 times.

Although a worker’s contribution to making an automobile usually involved tedious work, many factory laborers could still hop into their own cars and drive home at the end of the workday. In that sense, Henry Ford’s dream of 1907 had come true. The assembly line sped up car manufacturing and reduced the cost of producing automobiles. Ford passed that savings on to his customers by slashing the prices of his cars.

Henry Ford
Workers’ Lives Change

Henry Ford was one of the first industrialists, people who dealt with the commercial production and sale of goods and services, to act
Before the advent of the assembly line, skilled workers operated general purpose machine tools for all phases of the production process. With the introduction of the assembly line, workers with fewer skills were able to operate specialized machines designated for specific tasks. This system changed production and factory working conditions forever.

**Working for Henry Ford**

In an era when $2 a day was considered a generous wage, Ford offered $5 a day to workers of “thrifty habits.” Workers who refused to learn English, rejected the company detective’s advice, gambled, drank, or pursued “any malicious practice derogatory to . . . moral behavior” did not get the raise. In 2 years, three-quarters of Ford’s workers made $5 a day.

Other industrialists called Ford a “traitor to his class” because his actions defied the conventional wisdom of keeping wages low and prices high. Ford, however, reasoned that well-paid workers would be less likely to seek other jobs and more likely to do their boring jobs willingly. In 1926 Ford again delighted the workers and shocked the business world by reducing the workweek at his plant from a 48-hour, 6-day week to a 40-hour, 5-day week.

Ford could easily afford to cut back his workers’ hours and increase their pay beyond the standards of the time. The assembly line methods that permitted mass production made tremendous profits for Ford, whose company earned an estimated $264,000 per day in 1922.

In addition to their increased wages, Ford’s workers gained some other benefits from the new assembly line work. Because the jobs required no skills and little training, laborers could master their work quickly. Almost anyone who wanted to work could do the new jobs.

Henry Ford employed ex-convicts, as well as the physically and mentally challenged. He believed a worker to be “equally acceptable whether he has been

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**THE EFFECTS OF HENRY FORD’S ASSEMBLY LINE**

Before the advent of the assembly line, skilled workers operated general purpose machine tools for all phases of the production process. With the introduction of the assembly line, workers with fewer skills were able to operate specialized machines designated for specific tasks. This system changed production and factory working conditions forever.

**1903**
- **12 Workers**
- **144 Cars**

**1906**
- **300 Workers**
- **7,900 Cars**

**1908**
- **6,867 Workers**
- **82,388 Cars**

**1912**
- **12,880 Workers**
- **230,788 Cars**

**1914**
- **32,696 Workers**
- **738,811 Cars**

**1916**
- **128,188 Workers**
- **2,120,898 Cars**

**1920**
- **1913 Ford’s Labor Force**
  - 2% Mechanics/Subforemen
  - 26% Skilled Workers
  - 51% Operators
  - 21% Unskilled Workers

**1914**
- **$5.00 Employee Wages 8-Hour Day**

**1919**
- **$6.00 Employee Wages 8-Hour Day**

**OUTPUT**
- **1903**
  - 12 Workers
  - 144 Cars

**1905**
- 300 Workers
- 7,900 Cars

**1912**
- 6,867 Workers
- 82,388 Cars

**1914**
- 12,880 Workers
- 230,788 Cars

**1916**
- 32,696 Workers
- 738,811 Cars

**1923**
- 128,188 Workers
- 2,120,898 Cars

**LABOR FORCE**
- **1903 Ford’s Labor Force**
  - 100% Skilled Workers

**Employee Wages 10-Hour Day**
- **1903**
  - $1.50
- **1908**
  - $1.75
- **1912**
  - $2.30

**Employee Wages 8-Hour Day**
- **1913**
  - $2.50
- **1914**
  - $5.00
- **1919**
  - $6.00

The industrial boom of the 1920s owed much to the revolutionary assembly process Henry Ford first implemented in 1913 and 1914. How much did automobile prices decline between 1903 and 1914?
in Sing Sing or at Harvard and we do not even inquire from which place he has graduated. All that he needs is the desire to work.” Henry Ford prided himself on hiring thousands of immigrants and members of minority groups who might not otherwise have had good job opportunities.

**Man or Machine?**

The Czech immigrants who worked for Henry Ford and in other factories brought a new word to the United States during the 1920s. The word *robot* came to mean a machine that acts like a person or a person who acts like a machine. In the new factories, it began to be difficult to tell where the worker ended and the machine began.

Typically, a mechanized assembly line delivered the material to workers at waist level, so they did not have to waste valuable time walking, stooping, reaching, or bending. Each worker, doing a tiny part of the total job, worked at a pace set by the machine:

> There were presses that punched sheet steel. All that the worker had to do was to insert the steel before the press descended and withdraw his hands quickly. But some men became fatigued, or surrendered to the numbness or monotony, or were simply careless. The machines cut off their hands.


The steel company prevented these accidents by chaining the workers’ hands to their machines. All day, the men’s hands jerked back and forth, even when they were out of material. As one visitor to a model steel plant wrote, “There they work, chained to their machines, as galley slaves were chained to their oars.”

Mass production meant skilled jobs got broken down into their most basic operations, to be repeated without pause almost all day long. Many workers, not just those who worked in Ford plants, held these repetitive jobs on assembly lines. Skills that had taken a lifetime to master soon became unnecessary. In 1924 a steelworker lamented:

> You had to know how to use the old carbon steel to keep it from gettin’ hot and spoilin’ the edge. But this “high speed steel” and this new “stellite” don’t absorb the heat and are harder than carbon steel. You can take a boy fresh from the farm and in three days he can manage a machine as well as I can, and I’ve been at it twenty-seven years.

—Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown*, 1929

The new simple factory jobs did not require much training or thought. To do the job quickly and efficiently, however, demanded discipline. Foremen at the Ford plant prohibited the workers from leaning on their
machines, sitting, squatting, singing, talking, whistling, smoking, or smiling on the job. Laborers had to talk like ventriloquists, not moving their lips, in what they called the “Ford whisper.” They set their faces in frozen grimaces that became known as “Fordization of the face.” Describing the atmosphere in his auto plant, Ford explained, “There is not much personal contact. The men do their work and go home.”

Breaking down skilled work into tiny jobs increased production and profits, raised the wages of laborers, and provided jobs for thousands of people in need of work. It also, however, threatened to turn the workers into machines. Although Henry Ford was the first to use the assembly line for large-scale mass production, the blessings and the curses of the new mass production stemmed from the theories of Frederick Taylor.

Scientific Management
Efficiency Equals Profits

Born into an upper-class family in Pennsylvania, Frederick Taylor joined the Midvale Steel Works in Philadelphia as a laborer in 1878 at the age of 22. Within 6 years, the young man had become chief engineer and a careful observer of his coworkers.

For himself, Taylor appreciated the virtue of hard work, calling it “the real monotonous grind which trains character.” The wealthy young man concluded, however, that most of his fellow factory workers were lazy and sloppy in performing their jobs. Taylor argued that developing more efficient working methods would heighten the workers’ productivity, raise their wages, and profit the company.

Taylor’s theory, which came to be known as scientific management, suggested that efficiency, or time-study, experts analyze each work operation and find ways to minimize the time necessary to do a job. Breaking each job into its simplest operations, time-study experts would train workers to carry out their simplified tasks and then time them to see if they could meet the new standards. Taylor advised management to offer cash incentives to workers who produced more than the standard quantities that had been established for their jobs.

Taylor successfully tested scientific management at Midvale Steel. At first both management and labor criticized Taylor’s ideas. The bosses at Midvale opposed scientific management because it disrupted their long-established routines. For their part, the workers remained unimpressed by the money incentives. They suspected scientific management of being simply the “scientific sweating of labor.”

One new industry, however, had no traditional routines to be upset by Taylor’s revolutionary new methods. The auto industry adapted Taylor’s ideas from the very beginning.

In 1911 Taylor published his major work, The Principles of Scientific Management. That same year, the Taylor Society was founded to spread Taylor’s ideas. Four years later, Taylor’s book had been translated into eight European languages and Japanese.

By the 1920s many established industries had gotten the message that saving time meant greater profits. Scientific management truly came into its own during the antiunion era that followed the post-World War I strikes. In the 1920s the Taylor Society boasted new members from some of the country’s biggest corporations: General Electric, Du Pont, and American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T).

The New White-Collar Workers
Business Occupations Surge

Frederick Taylor’s ideas about the organization of the workplace influenced these new workers. During the 1920s even the physical layout of offices began to resemble factories with their assembly lines. Papers passed from worker to worker along a moving belt. A writer described one such firm in 1929:

Orders are passed along by means of a belt and lights from a chief clerk to a series of checkers and typists, each of whom does one operation. The girl at the head of the line interprets the order, puts down the number and indicates the trade discount;
During the 1920s more new workers than ever before were going to work each day dressed in business clothes. Although women were among their ranks, these workers—professionals, wholesale and retail salespeople, and clerks—became known as white-collar workers because of the white shirts and ties uniformly worn by the men.

As corporations grew larger and more complex, the industrial transformation of the early twentieth century gave rise to a host of new occupations—from typist, clerk, and stenographer to junior manager. Thriving insurance and banking industries added to the growing need for still more white-collar jobs.

**Scientific Management Creates New Jobs**

Moreover, between 1920 and 1930, the ranks of white-collar workers swelled by 36 percent, from 10.5 million people to 14.3 million people. During the same decade, the number of manual workers increased only 13 percent, from 16.9 million to 19.2 million.

White-collar work got another boost from thriving United States factories. By 1929, led by the supercharged automobile industry, 9 of the 20 biggest United States corporations were turning out consumer goods. Exploding with new products, businesses now needed to persuade consumers to buy these new goods. Two growing white-collar professions—sales and advertising—proved indispensable to big business.

**The Lure of Sales**

Popular magazines in the 1920s advertised, “Don’t envy successful salesmen—be one!” Descriptions of salespeople making $5,000 to $30,000 a year, at a time when even autoworkers were earning less than $2,000 a year, lured thousands of young people into the profession.

If they showed brashness and drive, salespeople could make a lot of money. The pressure to succeed, however, could be devastating. Many companies used the quota system in which, to keep the job, each salesperson had to sell 20 percent or 25 percent more every year.

To make a quota, a salesperson needed to learn and apply sales psychology taught in a variety of books. According to a 1925 essay by famed lawyer Clarence Darrow, a leading sales textbook of the time even compared selling to hunting for prey: “The expert fisherman tries out the fish—if one kind of bait doesn’t get the strike, he changes . . . He carefully lays his snares, places his bait and then the unsuspecting Prospect falls into the trap.”

Sometimes a salesperson simply could not wait for a prospect to fall into the trap. A more aggressive approach was in order. Selling News, a magazine for salespeople, awarded a cash prize for this winning entry to a “sales ideas” contest. An electric cleaner salesperson who had seen a woman shaking a rug out of a second-story window told the following story. Because the door to her upstairs rooms was open, the salesperson walked right in, pretending to have an appointment to clean the woman’s house. In the words of the salesperson, the woman was “very much surprised, assuring me that I had the wrong number. But during my very courteous apologies I had managed to get my cleaner connected and in action. The result was that I walked out minus the cleaner, plus her contract and check.”

The salespeople who could succeed, using whatever methods, won the biggest rewards. One company gave a yearly banquet at which the best salesperson feasted on oysters, roast turkey, and ice-cream dessert. The runner-up was served the same feast, but without the oysters. So it went, down to the one with the worst sales record. This poor person’s humiliation was served
up before the group on a small plate of boiled beans and crackers.

**The Advertising Worker**

If the salesperson sold Americans what they needed and wanted, it was the advertising worker who persuaded Americans to need and want what was being sold. By 1925, United States corporations spent more than $1 billion a year on advertising. In the 1920s advertiser and author Bruce Barton argued, “Advertising is the spark plug on the cylinder of mass production . . . and sustains a system that has made us leaders of the free world.” The advertising company Barton began started with a $10,000 loan in 1919 and eventually became a multimillion-dollar business.

Who worked for a typical large advertising company? Most advertising workers were young, white college graduates or former newspaper writers. Advertising companies hired women for the special knowledge they could provide about the products women used and wanted. In the largest ad agencies, however, male employees outnumbered females by 10 to 1. As in many other businesses, men in advertising occupied almost all the executive positions. Even the best-paid women copywriters earned far less than men who performed the same jobs.

Advertising workers produced at a hectic pace. One ad copywriter later recalled, “If you have never wrapped a cold towel around your head at three o’clock in the morning in an effort to get a piece of copy ready for delivery before nine, you have never given it your all.” The job turnover was high: More than 1 out of 3 advertising workers switched employers each year. Yet, if an advertising worker could stand the exhausting pace, he or she could earn over $5,000 a year—more than 3 times what an automobile worker earned. Advertisers prided themselves on knowing what Americans wanted. Indeed, they liked to consider themselves not advertising workers but “consumption engineers.” Great business leaders, a 1920s advertising magazine boasted, might someday “learn almost as much about what the people of the United States really know about and are interested in as does the junior copywriter of a fourth rate advertising agency.”

**Women in the Workforce**

**From Factories to Offices**

At the turn of the century, less than 1 in 5 women workers held clerical, managerial, sales, and professional positions. When women began to flood the workforce during the 1920s, however, many left their houses dressed in black skirts and starched white blouses. These women workers were heading for offices and stores, not factories. By 1930, 44 percent of employed women worked at white-collar jobs.

**Typcasting Women**

It all started with the typewriter. E. Remington and Sons sold the first typewriting machines in 1874. Almost all the new typists were middle class, high-school educated, and female. Why? To do the job, a worker needed to be a good speller and possess a knowledge of grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Most lower-class men and women lacked these skills; a middle-class man with a high-school diploma could find a much better-paying job.

For female high-school graduates, however, the story was different. Before the typewriter an educated working woman had few choices: she could become a teacher or a nurse or take a factory job for which she was overqualified. Even if typing paid no better than operating a machine in a factory, the new office work allowed an educated young woman to work in a clean, attractive environment.
Previously, one man or a small group of male clerks, who could expect eventual promotion to managerial positions, had done the clerical work in a typical office. Women, who did not command high wages or look forward to advancement, could operate all the new office technology—typewriters, dictaphones, telephones.

Because any of the new jobs could be performed as easily at one firm as another, the stenographer or typist found herself in a large “pool” of similarly skilled workers. In a book called *The Job*, Sinclair Lewis described such a pool in which an “unrecognized horde of girls . . . merely copied or took the bright young men’s dictation.” He added, “They were expected to keep clean and be quick-moving; beyond that they were as unimportant to the larger phases of office politics as frogs to a summer hotel.”

**Shop Clerks and Telephone Operators**

In the same way that secretarial work provided an alternative to nursing or teaching for female high-school graduates, telephone companies and the new department stores offered women without a high-school diploma a pleasant alternative to factory work or domestic service. By 1930, 736,000 women had gone to work as shop clerks, cash girls, wrappers, stock clerks, cashiers, or switchboard operators.

Women employees eagerly accepted the challenges of their new positions. Shop work involved less manual labor than factory work, and the environment was cleaner. The pay equaled or exceeded what women workers could earn with unskilled labor. The jobs were important, too. It was up to the salesclerk, for example, to see that people’s new needs and wants were satisfied.

**Men and Women in the Office**

By the 1920s offices and stores had two distinct cultures, neatly divided by sex. Women dominated in the clerical, unskilled occupations. There neatness, orderliness, and courtesy played a big role, but job responsibility involved simple, repetitive routines. Women’s jobs provided little chance for advancement except to the positions of cashier or executive secretary, or perhaps to marriage. Secretarial work taught a woman endurance, modesty, and obedience, so many people considered it perfect preparation for marriage.

Men, on the other hand, found jobs as managers, senior cashiers, chief clerks, head bookkeepers, floorwalkers, salespeople, or advertising workers. In these jobs energy, initiative, and creativity paid off and could lead to a better position in the company.

Though the new work environment of the 1920s clearly defined the separate jobs of each gender, it also provided for the first time an opportunity for educated men and women to meet and share the workplace. These new coworkers would soon become consumers of a host of new products thriving United States factories produced.
Learning the Skill

Your history teacher has assigned a presentation on the Prohibition era. You want to develop an interesting presentation that really holds your classmates’ attention. How do you do this? Most presentations are more dynamic and easier to follow if they include diagrams, photographs, videos, or sound recordings. Equipment you may have at home, plus classroom or library equipment and resources, can help you develop interesting multimedia presentations.

Developing a Multimedia Presentation

A multimedia presentation involves using several types of media. To discuss the history of Prohibition, for example, you might create and show timelines of significant events during the period of Prohibition. You could also play recordings of speeches for and against Prohibition made in Congress or present a video about the history of Prohibition.

Another way to develop a multimedia presentation is with computer programs. Multimedia as it relates to computer technology is the combination of text, video, audio, and animation in an interactive computer program.

In order to create multimedia productions or presentations on a computer, though, you need to have certain tools. These may include traditional computer graphic tools and draw programs, animation programs that make still images move, and authoring systems that tie everything together. Your computer manual will tell you which tools your computer can support.

Practicing the Skill

Plan a multimedia presentation on a topic found in the chapter, such as women’s struggle for voting rights. List three or four major ideas you would like to cover. Then think about how multimedia resources could enhance your presentation. Use your school or local library to do a preliminary survey of materials that may be available and list them. Use your imagination when planning your presentation. Answer the following questions:

2. Which forms of media on my chosen topic are available at my school or local library?
3. Which of these media forms does my computer support?
4. What types of media can I create myself to enhance my presentation?
5. Is there a “do-it-all” program I can use to develop the kind of presentation I want?

Applying the Skill

Make the presentation you planned a reality. Create a multimedia presentation about some topic in the chapter. Use as many multimedia materials as possible, including those that you create, such as photographs, drawings, charts, graphs, posters, music recordings, or videotapes. Share your multimedia presentation with the class.

Additional Practice

For additional practice, see Reinforcing Skills on page 373.
The Roaring Twenties

During the 1920s—the golden age of jazz—Americans danced to the decade’s joyous music at a frantic and ever accelerating pace. Inspired by jazz, Americans began to improvise leisure time activities that had no purpose other than having fun. People roared through the decade intent on enjoying every exciting moment of it, as though everyone shared an unspoken premonition that it could not last.

**COMIC HERO**

Charlie Chaplin’s comic film character, “the Tramp,” captured the country’s imagination. His mustache, derby hat, bamboo cane, and outsize shoes were recognized around the world—and often imitated, as these young fans attest.
SINGING THE BLUES
In the flourishing world of African American music, arts, and letters in the Jazz Age, singer Bessie Smith reigned as “Empress of the Blues.” Guitarist Danny Barker said, “She could bring about mass hypnotism.”

DAREDEVILS IN THE AIR
A passion for flying possessed the nation, and novelty-crazed audiences were not satisfied by planes simply flying in straight lines. At almost any open field, stunt flyers looped, spiraled, and even played airborne tennis for thrilled spectators.

FAD FEVER
Of the fads that roared in and out of the 1920s, flagpole-sitting may have been the oddest. Started as a publicity stunt by “Shipwreck” Kelly in 1924, the idea took off. In Baltimore, Maryland, flagpole fervor reached epic proportions after Avon Foreman set an endurance record there. One week in 1929, as many as 20 people perched on poles at various points around the city.

DANCE CRAZES
The Charleston and the tango were the hot dances of the decade. The dance-until-you-drop marathons inspired other wacky dance endeavors, such as this couple’s tango from Santa Monica to downtown Los Angeles.
Chapter 11 Assessment

Reviewing Key Terms
On a separate sheet of paper, identify the person, people, or group from the following list that was associated with each concept in the numbered list below.
- Frederick Taylor and Henry Ford
- large employers
- César Augusto Sandino
- Woodrow Wilson
- industry-dominating businesses
- Sacco and Vanzetti

1. anarchism
2. internationalism
3. oligopoly
4. welfare capitalism
5. scientific management

Recalling Facts
1. Name at least three contributing causes of the Red Scare.
2. Why did so many African Americans migrate from the South to the North from 1916 to 1920?
3. List three factors that contributed to the decline of progressivism in the 1920s.
4. What do you think Harding meant by normalcy?
5. Why did Andrew Mellon believe millionaires should not pay taxes?
6. How did technology affect productivity in the 1920s?

7. Name two factors that contributed to the development of oligopolies in the 1920s.
8. List three types of welfare capitalism programs.
10. How did Henry Ford apply the theory of scientific management?

Critical Thinking
1. Drawing Conclusions Women and men had been organizing, marching, and asking for the vote for 72 years. Using information in the text, why do you think women were able to win the vote in 1920?
2. Synthesizing Information The Republican Presidents of the 1920s supported big business and rejected programs for the public welfare. How did the government’s support of big business affect ordinary citizens both positively and negatively?
3. Making Comparisons Compare the careers of women and men in white-collar professions in the 1920’s.
4. Making Comparisons Use a diagram like this one to compare the careers of women and men in the white-collared professions in the 1920’s.

5. Determining Cause and Effect The idolization of business and business leaders created a national climate that benefited big business. What do you think might have been some negative effects of the glorification of business?

Portfolio Project
Research the requirements for setting up a small business in your community. Investigate areas such as government regulations, financing, and the costs of leasing space and buying equipment. The local chamber of commerce might direct you in your research. Write a report on your findings, and include your final report in your portfolio.

Cooperative Learning
Work in small groups to research and report on one of the following industries between 1919 and 1929: textiles, railroads, shipping, farming, aviation, or chemistry. As part of your research, find out whether the industry did well or had problems, and describe the causes of the success or struggle. As a group, choose a medium for presenting your findings, such as a newspaper article, skit, or collage, and share your project with the rest of the class.

Reinforcing Skills
Developing a Multimedia Presentation Study the list of topics below and select one. Write a brief summary describing the 3 types of media you would use in a presentation to teach the topic most effectively to your class.
- The Red Scare
- The Garvey Movement
- Prohibition
GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

U.S. City Population, 1930

Study the map to answer the following questions:

1. Which cities had more than 1 million residents in 1930?
2. Which regions of the country had the densest urban population? Which had the sparsest? What might explain this population distribution?
3. How does this population map from 1930 reflect the Great Migration of African Americans from the South?
4. How does the location of the nation’s five largest cities show the importance of geography in determining where large population centers are located?
5. Note that few states in the West had large population centers in 1930. How do you account for this?

Technology Activity

Developing a Multimedia Presentation Search the Internet or your local library to find additional information about the 1920s. Create a multimedia presentation about the 1920s comparing the social climate of great innovations and conservatism. Identify who did well and who struggled during this period.

Standardized Test Practice

11. The term that best describes the business policies promoted by Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover is
   A. socialism.
   B. free enterprise.
   C. bolshevism.
   D. anarchism.

Test-Taking Tip: Eliminate any answers that do not make sense. For example, the Communist revolution in Russia made Americans fear all radical political theories, which eliminates answers C and D.

2. “The Afro-American population of the large cities of the North and West is being constantly fed by a steady stream of new people from the Southern States.” –The New York Age, 1907

These words describe an early 1900s African American exodus from the South known as the
   A. Garvey Movement.
   B. American Plan.
   C. Great Migration.
   D. Great Awakening.

Test-Taking Tip: This question asks you to remember facts about movements of people during the early 1900s. The dates rule out the the Great Awakening (answer D), a religious revival movement that took shape in the mid-1700s.