Essential Question:

*How did newfound prosperity change American life in the 1920s?*
Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will be able to explain how social and economic life changed from previous eras.
2. Students will be able to describe the cultural identity of the United States during this era.
3. Students will be able to evaluate how American culture changed from earlier periods.
Turn-Of-The-Century Immigration
Nativism and Immigration Policies

- Did America experience economic growth in the 1920s? YES!
- Were there problems during this period? YES!
  - Economic recession hit
  - An influx of immigrants
  - Cultural tensions
- Fear and prejudice spread – all immigrants were questioned/feared
- *Nativism* = a belief that one’s native land needs to be protected against immigrants
- During WWI immigration dropped
- 1921: immigration returned to normal levels
- Americans blamed the bombings, strikes, and recession on immigrants 😞
The Sacco-Vanzetti Case

- Where do we see an example of immigrant hysteria?
  The Sacco-Vanzetti Case
- April 15, 1920: 2 men robbed/murdered 2 employees at a Massachusetts shoe factory
- Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were arrested (Italian immigrants)
  - Anarchists – people who oppose all forms of government
  - Sacco owned a gun similar to the murder weapon
  - Reported the bullets matched those used
  - No ballistics testing at this time
  - Jury found them guilty – based on circumstantial evidence = executed after 6 years of appeals
The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti

- This was a stinging commentary on social justice in the 1920s.
- Painted from 1931-1932, this is part of a mural.
- People in America were torn concerning this **verdict** (many felt their conviction unjust)
- Ben Shahn painted the mural from arrest/trial to execution
  - The executed lie in the coffins
  - Shown standing are 3 members of the commission who said the trial was fair.
  - The wall of a government building, and a judge’s portrait remind the people of the trial.
Where is Nativism seen in American society and policy?

• **Which group wanted to restrict immigration the most?** The Ku Klux Klan (KKK)
  - This group began in the South after the Civil War – used threats and violence to intimidate people
  - In the 1920s, this group targeted Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and anyone deemed “un-American”
  - By 1924: membership had grown to almost 4 million (would decline in late 1920s)
  - Spread beyond the South to other regions of America

• **How did America attempt to curb immigration?** National Origins Act (1922)
  - New immigrants were seen by many as radicals
  - President Harding signed the *Emergency Quota Act (1921)* – limiting annual admission to the United States.
  - *National Origins Act (1922)* – set a quota at 2% of each national group based on the 1890 census
Increasing Mexican Immigration

• Did employers still need workers in the 1920s? YES
• How did America meet this need? Mexican immigrants
• Mexican immigration was NOT limited by the National Origins Act!
• REMEMBER: Mexican immigration had increased with the *Newlands Reclamation Act (1902)* – funded irrigation projects that eventually created large farms.
• By 1929: 700,000 Mexicans had migrated to the United States
A Clash of Cultures
• Many in America wanted to preserve “traditional values”
• “New Morality” – the idea that individuals are entitled to freedom and equality
• Where were people most concerned about the changing morality? WOMEN!
  • 1920: women gained the right to vote (19th Amendment)
  • Women attended college – pursuing careers outside the home
  • Work was a way to make money & break away from parental authority
  • Marriage was now based on the idea of LOVE!

• Who is influencing the people at this time? Sigmund Freud

• How did women change in the 1920s?
  • “bobbed” their hair/dyed it black
  • Short dresses (at or slightly below the knee)
  • Smoked cigarettes
  • Drank alcohol (in the age of Prohibition)
  • Wore makeup and sleeveless dresses

FLAPPERS
Religious Fundamentalism

• What did Fundamentalists believe:
  • The Bible is 100% true (no errors)
  • Staunchly religious – humans should get moral behavior from God (not society)
  • Rejected Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution
  • Believed in Creationism

• Who were popular Fundamentalist preachers?
  • Billy Sunday (former baseball player)
  • Aimee Semple McPherson

• What challenged Fundamentalism in the 1920s?
The Scopes Trial
Fundamentalism and the Scopes Trial
Prohibition

• What was prohibition? The ban on the sale, manufacture, and distribution of alcohol.

• People believed that banning alcohol would:
  • Reduce unemployment
  • Reduce domestic violence
  • Reduce poverty

• 18th Amendment passed January 1920
  • Volstead Act supported this amendment
  • Increased federal power dramatically
  • 540,000 arrests for breaking the 18th Amendment

• How did people subvert the law?
  • Speakeasies – secret bars
  • Bootlegging – illegal production of alcohol
  • Smuggling alcohol from Canada
  • Organized crime