Cultural Innovations

Chapter 8 Section 4
US History EOC
How did newfound prosperity change American life in the 1920s?
Students will be able to:

- Describe the popular culture of the 1920s.
- Explain why the youth-dominated decade came to be called the Roaring Twenties.
Art and Literature
Why did American artists and writers challenge traditional ideas?
- They were searching for meaning!

Where was the popular gathering place for artists/writers in the 1920s?
- Greenwich Village (Manhattan)
- South Side (Chicago)

These individuals lived a bohemian lifestyle (unconventional)

Modern Arts in America
- European movements influenced American art
- John Marin, Charles Sheeler, Edward Hopper, and Georgia O’Keeffe
- Art focused on the inner moods and feelings
- Not realistic – often embracing Cubism and Surrealism
Writers of the 1920s

- Sinclair Lewis is the first American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature
  - Criticizes conformity and materialism
- F. Scott Fitzgerald reveals the BAD side of the era’s gaiety and freedom (The Great Gatsby)
- Edna St. Vincent Millay celebrates youth and independence in her poems.

The Lost Generation

- Writers soured by American culture and war settle in Europe (this group is known as the LOST GENERATION)
- Ernest Hemingway introduces simple tough American style writing.
  - The Sun Also Rises
  - A Farewell to Arms
Schools and the Mass Media Shape Culture
High school population increased dramatically in the 1920s:
  - Prosperity & higher standards for industrial jobs
  - Pre-1920s, high school for college-bound students
  - 1920s: high schools offer vocational training
  - Public schools prepare immigrant children who speak no English
  - School taxes increase as school costs rise sharply
What drove the increased spending on entertainment in the 1920s?
- Economic prosperity & new technology

What kind of entertainment was popular?
- Sports, music, theater, and radio

Moving pictures also became popular during the 1920s
- Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., & Rudolph Valentino
- 1st “talkie” 1927: The Jazz Singer
- Just like writings, movies covered the emotions and moods of the 1920s
America Chases New Heroes and Old Dreams
What sports were popular?
- Baseball, boxing, and college football
- In the 1920s: many people have extra money and leisure time to enjoy it
- Crowds attend sports events; athletes are glorified in the media

Who were the favorite athletes?
- Babe Ruth (The Sultan of Swat): hit hundreds of home runs!
- Jack Dempsey (The Manassa Mauler): world heavyweight champion from 1919 – 1926
- Gene Tunney: defeated Jack Dempsey
- Red Grange (The Galloping Ghost)
- Bobby Jones (golf)
- Bill Tilden & Helen Willis (tennis)
- Gertrude Ederle: swam the English Channel
Entertainment and the Arts

- Silent movies were already a national pastime
- TALKIES: sound movies actually lead to greater attendance at movie theaters
- Playwrights and composers break away from European traditions
- George Gershwin uses jazz to create ‘American’ music
- Painters portray ‘American’ realities and dreams
- Georgia O’Keeffe paints intensely colored canvases of New York