The 1920s
(“Jazz Age”, “Roaring 20s”)
I. Life in the 1920s:

A. Changing Role of Women:

- 19th Amendment (1920) – granted women suffrage (right to vote)
- New jobs opened up during WWI and the women didn’t want to give their jobs up when the men came back home – so...more women began to go to college
I. Life in the 1920s:

- Jeanette Rankin – first woman elected to Congress (1916) – served throughout the 1920s
- Flappers – modern women of the 1920s – young, rebellious, fun-loving, and bold – short hair, short dresses (to the knees), more makeup (esp. lipstick) – attitudes changes – ex: began to smoke and drink in public
The 1926 fashion plate displays the typical "flapper" dress styles.
I. **Life in the 1920s:**

B. **Prohibition Era (1919-1933):**
   - 18th Amendment (1919) – prohibited the making, selling, or transportation of alcohol
   - Volstead Act – law passed by Congress to enforce prohibition – ignored by most of the cities on the east coast
I. Life in the 1920s:

- Success of prohibition:
  - consumption of alcohol decreased
  - arrest for drunkenness decreased

- Why did Prohibition eventually fail?
  1) Not enforced – some police depts. were corrupt, just didn’t care, or were scared of the gangsters
  2) Most people didn’t take prohibition seriously – drank anyway
I. **Life in the 1920s:**

3) The crime wave that began made most people think that the amendment should be repealed.

-organized crime got involved in **bootlegging** (the illegal selling of alcohol)

-the most famous gangster of the 1920s was **Al Capone** from Chicago
I. Life in the 1920s:

- **Al Capone** – nicknamed “Scarface”
  - had a talent for avoiding jail by buying off policemen, city officials, and politicians
  - made up to $60 million a year from bootlegging
  - convicted of tax evasion in 1931 and sent to prison
  - released in 1939 after becoming ill with syphilis – died in 1947
I. Life in the 1920s:

- 21st Amendment (1933) – repealed the 18th Amend. and allowed local communities to decide whether or not to legalize alcohol

- Slang Words from prohibition era:
  - bathtub gin
  - moonshine (made at night)
  - white lightning
  - speakeasy – secret club or bar – usually in a basement – needed a password to get in
I. Life in the 1920s:

C. Entertainment in the 1920s:

- Shorter working hours and higher wages gave Americans more spare time and more money for entertainment

1) Radio – first radio station in Pittsburgh, PA in Nov. 1920 – only news at first – baseball and music broadcasted later
I. Life in the 1920s:

2) Moving Picture Shows ("movies") – all movies were silent films at first (had music but no talking)
- Charlie Chaplin was the most famous silent film star
- first "talking" movie was The Jazz Singer (1927) starring Al Jolson
- famous movie stars of the 20s:
  - Rudolph Valentino, Clara Bow, Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, Charlie Chaplin
I. Life in the 1920s:

3) Sports – the 1920s is often called the “Golden Age of Sports” – radio made sports more popular – baseball became “America’s Favorite Pastime” – famous athletes included:
I. Life in the 1920s:

a) Babe Ruth – nicknamed “The Sultan of Swat” or “The Great Bambino”

-most famous baseball player of the 20s

-played most of his career with the NY Yankees

-hit 60 homeruns in 1927 (remained a record until 1961)

-hit 714 career homeruns (remained a record nearly 40 years)
I. Life in the 1920s:

b) Harold “Red” Grange – famous football player
   - nicknamed “The Galloping Ghost”
   - played for Illinois Univ. and Chicago Bears
   - made Pro football very popular
I. Life in the 1920s:

c) Jack Dempsey – famous heavyweight boxer

-over 100,000 attended his 2nd match with Gene Tunney, which Dempsey lost
I. **Life in the 1920s:**

d) **Man “o” War** – famous race horse
- named horse of the century
- lost only 1 time in 21 races
- the horse that beat him was named… **Upset**
I. Life in the 1920s:

e) Gertrude Ederle – 1st woman to swim across the 35 mile wide English Channel - her time beat the men’s record by nearly 2 hours
I. Life in the 1920s:

4) **Music / Dance** – the radio made music more popular

- **Jazz** was the most popular music of the 20s – started in New Orleans

- **Louis Armstrong** was the most popular jazz musician of the 20s

- **George Gershwin** was a popular composer – wrote “Rhapsody in Blue”

- Popular dances included: Charleston, Fox-trot, and Tango
I. Life in the 1920s:

5) Literature – famous authors included:
   - F. Scott Fitzgerald – The Great Gatsby
   - Sinclair Lewis – Main Street
   - Ernest Hemingway – A Farewell to Arms
I. Life in the 1920s:

D. Transportation

*Henry Ford – “made the 20s happen”
-responsible for changing the automobile industry by using the assembly line – each worker had a specific job
-1920 – 8 million cars on the road
-1929 – 23 million
-developed the Model T car (every one was exactly the same
I. **Life in the 1920s:**

- before the assembly line it took approx. 12 hrs to build a car
- after assembly line it took approx. 28 minutes to build a car
I. Life in the 1920s:

- Charles Lindbergh – nicknamed “Lucky Lindy” or the “Lone Eagle”
- the first to fly solo, non-stop across the Atlantic
- flew from NYC to Paris May 20th and 21st of 1927
- no parachute, no radio, no heat, no sleep
- name of the airplane was “Spirit of St. Louis”
- son was kidnapped and killed in the early 1930s (great mystery)
I. **Life in the 1920s:**

- **Amelia Earhart** – the 1st woman to fly across the Atlantic without stopping (1932) – disappeared while trying to fly around the world.
I. Life in the 1920s:

E. Return of the Ku Klux Klan
   - From the Greek word *kyklos* which means “circle”
   - Revived in the 1920s
   - Membership:
     - 1916 - 100,000
     - 1924 - 2 million
     - 1928 - 4 million
     - Today - approx. 6,000
   - Attacked African Am.’s, Jews, Catholics, and immigrants
I. Life in the 1920s:

F. Scopes / “Monkey” Trial
   ♦ The state of TN passed a law in 1925 that made it illegal to teach evolution (Charles Darwin theory) in public schools
   ♦ John Scopes, a teacher from Dayton, TN, was chosen by the ACLU to challenge the law
I. Life in the 1920s:

- He was arrested and charged – defense attorney was Clarence Darrow
- William Jennings Bryan was the prosecutor
- The judge refused to allow scientists to testify for the defense since “they were not around during creation”
- Scopes was found guilty and fined $100, however the law was later changed
I. Life in the 1920s:

G. The Red Scare

- The fear of radicals (esp. communists and socialists)
- Causes:
  1) the communist revolution in Russia (1917) scared many Americans – “If it can happen there, it can happen here.”
  2) terroristic violence in the U.S. – mail bombs were sent to local, state, and national leaders
I. Life in the 1920s:

- Because of the Red Scare and the power of the KKK, limits were placed on immigration.
- **Sacco and Vanzetti Case** – two Italian immigrants, who were anarchists, were accused of killing 2 men during a robbery in MA – convicted without a fair trial – both were executed in 1927.
MOVE TO SAVE VANZETTI AND SACCO TO BE MADE TODAY

Will Ask Governor to Name Committee For ‘Impartial’ Probe.

BOTH ARE UNDER DEATH SENTENCE

Little Hope That Men Can Be Saved From Execution.

Boston, April 10.—(AP)—An appeal to Governor Fuller tomorrow to appoint an investigating committee of “impartial citizens” will be the first step in the newest battle to save Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti from death in the electric chair. In the week of July 10, the sentence passed on them yesterday by Judge Webster...
I. **Life in the 1920s:**

H. Republican Presidents

1) **Warren G. Harding** – won the election of 1920 by promising a “return to normalcy” - remembered for scandals

- his advisors, called the Ohio Gang, were corrupt (sold gov’t offices, took bribes, etc.)

- died in 1923
I. Life in the 1920s:

2) Calvin Coolidge – became Pres. after the death of Harding
   - nicknamed “Silent Cal” because he was a very quite man
   - also won the election of 1924
I. Life in the 1920s:

3) **Herbert Hoover** – won the election of 1928 because people were pleased with the economy and didn’t want a lot of change.

- promised “a chicken in every pot, and a car in every garage”

- also said, “I have no fears for the future of our country, it is bright with hope.”
Within 4 years, the Hoover policies had furthered the greatest economic depression in American history...

Homeless WWI vets camp in DC demanding war benefit pay from Hoover