Chapter 23
Modern Times
1920–1932

Teaching Resources

Chapter Instructional Objectives
After you have taught this chapter, your students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. How and why did business and government become allies in the 1920s? How did this partnership affect the American economy?
2. How did American foreign policy develop during the 1920s?
3. Why did a mass national culture develop after World War I?
4. How and why did cultural conflict break out in response to the new secular values of the decade?
5. How did intellectuals, writers, and artists react to the postwar era and what caused these reactions?
6. Why did the Great Depression occur? How did it initially affect the United States?
7. How did President Herbert Hoover respond to the economic crisis?

Chapter Annotated Outline
I. The Business-Government Partnership of the 1920s
   A. Politics in the Republican “New Era”
      1. In the 1920 presidential election, Republicans Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge promised a return to “normalcy,” which meant a strong pro-business stance and conservative cultural values. They won against the Democratic James Cox/Franklin Roosevelt ticket, marking the solidification of a Republican dominance that would last until 1932.
      2. Central to what Republicans termed the “New Era” was business-government cooperation.
   3. A new tax cut benefited wealthy individuals and corporations, and for the most part, the Federal Trade Commission ignored the antitrust laws.
   4. The Department of Commerce, headed by Herbert Hoover, assisted private trade associations by cooperating in such areas as product standardization and wage and price controls.
   5. When Harding died of a heart attack in August 1923, evidence of widespread fraud and corruption in his administration had just come to light.
   6. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall became the first cabinet officer in American history to serve a prison sentence; he took bribes in connection with oil reserves in Teapot Dome, Wyoming, and Elk Hills, California.
   7. Vice President Coolidge took Harding’s place as president. Although quiet and unimaginative, his image of unimpeachable integrity reassured voters, and he soon announced his candidacy for the presidency in 1924.
   10. Although there was a decline in voter turnout—owing to a long-term drop in voting by men and not to the absence of votes by newly enfranchised women—Coolidge won decisively.
   11. Many women tried to break into party politics, but Democrats and Republicans granted them only token positions on
party committees; women were more influential as lobbyists.

12. The Women’s Joint Congressional Committee lobbied actively for reform legislation, and its major accomplishment was the short-lived Sheppard-Towner Federal Maternity and Infancy Act. Congress cut the act’s funding when politicians realized that women did not vote in a bloc.

13. The roadblocks women activists faced were part of a broader public antipathy to ambitious reforms. After years of progressive reforms and an expanded federal presence in World War I, Americans were unenthusiastic about increased taxation or more governmental bureaucracy.

14. Other ammunition against reform efforts were the Red Scare and the general prosperity of the era; the Republican policy of an informal partnership between business and government seemed to work and made reforms regulating corporations and the economy seem unnecessary and even harmful.

B. Corporate Capitalism

1. The revolution in business management that began in the 1890s finally triumphed in the 1920s. Large-scale corporate bureaucracies headed by chief executive officers (CEOs) replaced individual- or family-run enterprises as the major form of business organization.

2. By 1930 a handful of managers stood at the center of American economic life. As a result of a vigorous pattern of consolidation, the 200 largest corporations controlled almost half the nonbanking corporate wealth in the United States.

3. During the 1920s businesses combined at a rapid rate. Rarely did any single corporation monopolize an entire industry; rather, an oligopoly of a few major producers dominated the market and controlled prices. The nation’s financial institutions expanded and consolidated along with its corporations. Total banking assets rose from $48 billion in 1919 to $72 billion in 1929.

4. Immediately after World War I, the nation experienced a series of economic shocks. In 1919, Americans spent their wartime savings, causing rampant inflation: prices jumped by a third in a single year. Then came a sharp two-year recession that raised unemployment to 10 percent and cut prices more than 20 percent.

5. Finally, in 1922 the economy began to grow smoothly and almost continuously. Between 1922 and 1929 the gross domestic product (GDP) grew from $74.1 billion to $103.1 billion, approximately 40 percent, and per capita income rose impressively from $641 to $847.

6. An abundance of new consumer products, particularly the automobile, sparked economic growth during the 1920s. Manufacturing output expanded 64 percent during the decade, as factories churned out millions of cars, refrigerators, stoves, and radios.

7. The economy had some weaknesses. Agriculture—which still employed one-fourth of all workers—never fully recovered from the postwar recession. During the war, American farmers had borrowed heavily to expand production, but as European farmers returned to their fields, the world market was glutted with goods. Wheat prices dropped by 40 percent, corn by 32 percent, and hogs by 50 percent.

8. As their income plunged, farmers looked to Congress for help. The McNary-Haugen bills of 1927 and 1928 proposed a system of federal price supports for a few of agricultural products—wheat, corn, cotton, rice, and tobacco. President Coolidge opposed the bills as “class” (special-interest) legislation and vetoed both of them.

9. Between 1919 and 1929, the farmers’ share of the national income plummeted from 16 percent to 8.8 percent.

10. Some urban employees received a larger share of the decade’s prosperity. The 1920s were the heyday of welfare capitalism, a system of labor relations that stressed management’s responsibility for employees’ well-being. At a time when unemployment compensation and government-sponsored pensions did not exist, General Electric, U.S. Steel, and other large corporations offered workers health insurance, old-age pension plans, and the opportunity to buy stock in the company at below-market prices.

11. Welfare capitalism, the American Plan (or nonunion shop), and Supreme Court decisions that limited workers’ ability to strike all helped to erode the strength of unions.

C. Economic Expansion Abroad

1. During the 1920s the United States was the most productive country in the world
and competed in foreign markets that eagerly desired American consumer products.

2. American investment abroad more than doubled between 1919 and 1930: by the end of the 1920s, American corporations had invested $15.2 billion in foreign countries, making the United States the world’s largest creditor nation and causing a dramatic shift of power in the world’s capital markets.

3. European countries had difficulty repaying their war debts to the United States due to tariffs such as the Fordney-McCumber Tariff of 1922 and the Hawley-Smoot Tariff of 1930, which advanced the long-standing Republican policy of protectionism and economic nationalism.

4. In 1924, the nations of France, Great Britain, and Germany joined with the United States in a plan to promote European financial stability. The Dawes Plan offered Germany substantial loans from American banks and a reduction in the amount of reparations owed to the Allies.

5. The plan did not provide a permanent solution because of the instability of the international economic system; if the outflow of capital from the United States were to slow or stop, the international financial structure could collapse.

D. Foreign Policy in the 1920s

1. American efforts to shore up the international economy belie the common view of U.S. foreign affairs as isolationist in the interwar period.

2. Expansion into new markets was fundamental to the prosperity of the 1920s, and U.S. officials sought a stable international order to facilitate American investments in Latin American, European, and Asian markets.

3. American companies, such as General Electric, Ford, United Fruit Company, and Standard Oil, aggressively sought investment opportunities abroad.

4. The United States continued the quest for peaceful ways to dominate the Western Hemisphere both economically and diplomatically but retreated slightly from military intervention in Latin America.

5. There was little popular or political support for formal diplomatic commitments to allies, European or otherwise; the United States never joined the League of Nations or the Court of International Justice.

6. International cooperation came through forums like the 1921 Washington Naval Arms Conference, at which the naval powers agreed to halt construction of battleships for ten years and to limit their future shipbuilding to a set ratio to encourage stability in areas such as the Far East and to protect the postwar economy from an expensive arms race.

7. Through the Kellogg-Briand Peace Act, the United States joined other nations in condemning militarism; critics complained that the act lacked mechanisms for enforcement.

8. U.S. policymakers vacillated between wanting to play a larger role in world events and fearing that treaties and responsibilities would limit their ability to act unilaterally; their diplomatic efforts proved inadequate to the mounting crises that followed in the wake of World War I.

II. A New National Culture

A. A Consumer Society

1. Although millions of Americans shared similar daily experiences, participation in commercial mass culture was not universal, nor did it mean mainstream conversion to materialistic values.

2. Because unequal distribution of income limited many consumers’ ability to buy the enticing new products, many Americans stretched their incomes by buying consumer goods on the newly devised installment plan.

3. Electric appliances made housewives’ chores easier, yet their leisure time did not dramatically increase, as more middle-class housewives did their own housework and laundry.

4. The advertising industry spent billions of dollars annually to entice consumers into buying their goods; advertisers made consumption a cultural ideal for most of the middle class.

B. The World of the Automobile

1. No possession typified the new consumer culture better than the automobile.

2. Mass production of automobiles stimulated the prosperity of the 1920s, and by the end of the decade, Americans owned about 80 percent of the world’s automobiles.
3. Auto production stimulated the steel, petroleum, chemical, rubber, and glass industries and caused an increase in highway construction.

4. Car ownership spurred the growth of suburbs, contributed to real estate speculation, and led to the building of the first shopping center.

5. The auto also changed the way Americans spent their leisure time in that they took to the roads, becoming a nation of tourists; the American Automobile Association, founded in 1902, reported in 1929 that almost a third of the population took vacations by automobile.

6. Cars also changed the dating patterns of young Americans in that the car offered more privacy and comfort than family living rooms or the front porches and contributed to increased sexual experimentation among the young.

C. The Movies and Mass Culture

1. The movie industry probably did more than anything else to disseminate common values and attitudes, the roots of which were the turn-of-the-century nickelodeons, where for a nickel the mostly working-class audience could see a one-reel silent film.

2. By 1910 the moviemaking industry had concentrated in southern California because of its mild climate and varied scenery, in addition to Los Angeles's reputation as an antiunion town.

3. By the end of World War I, the United States was producing 90 percent of the world's films; when studios began making feature films and showing them in large ornate theaters, middle-class Americans began to attend.

4. Early movie stars became national idols who helped to set national trends in clothing and hairstyles.

5. Then a new cultural icon, the flapper, appeared to represent emancipated womanhood. Clara Bow was Hollywood's favorite flapper; like so many cultural icons, the flapper represented only a tiny minority of women.

6. The advent of “talkies” made movies even more powerful influences; The Jazz Singer (1927) was the first feature-length film to offer sound; two years later all the major studios had made the transition to “talkies.”

7. The movies were big business, grossing $1.6 billion in 1926. By 1929, the nation’s 23,000 movie theaters were selling 90 million tickets a year. In two short decades movies had become thoroughly entrenched as the most popular—and probably the most influential—form of urban-based mass media.

8. Jazz was such an important part of the new mass culture that the 1920s are often referred to as the Jazz Age.

9. Jazz music had its roots in African American music forms, such as ragtime and blues, and most of the early jazz musicians were African Americans who brought southern music to northern cities. Some of the best-known black jazz performers were “Jelly Roll” Morton, Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, and Duke Ellington.

10. Numerous women made a name for themselves singing the blues; blues women offered a glamorous image of successful black womanhood that belied the difficult lives that many of them experienced.

11. That jazz, which often expressed black dissent in the face of mainstream white values, also appealed to white audiences signifies the role that African Americans played in shaping the contours of American popular culture.

12. Tabloid newspapers and magazines like The Saturday Evening Post, Reader's Digest, and Good Housekeeping helped to establish national standards of taste and behavior.

13. Professional radio broadcasting began in 1920, and by 1929, about 40 percent of households owned a radio; American radio stations operated for profit, and although the government licensed the stations, their revenue came primarily from advertisers and corporate sponsors.

14. Leisure became increasingly tied to consumption and mass media, as Americans had more time and energy to spend on recreation.

15. Baseball continued to be a national pastime; though tarnished with the 1919 “Black Sox” scandal, it bounced back with the rise of stars such as Babe Ruth. Black athletes such as Satchel Paige played in Negro leagues formed in the 1920s.

16. Thanks to the media's attention, the popularity of sports figures rivaled that of movie stars—Red Grange in football; Bobby Jones in golf; Bill Tilden, Helen
Wills, and Suzanne Lenglen in tennis; and Gertrude Ederle in swimming, when she crossed the English Channel in 1926 in just over fourteen hours.

17. The decade’s most popular hero was Charles Lindbergh, who captivated the nation when he flew *The Spirit of St. Louis* on the first successful nonstop flight between New York and Paris in 1927.

18. *Time*’s first “Man of the Year,” Lindbergh combined his mastery of new technology with the pioneer virtues of individualism, self-reliance, and hard work.

III. Redefining American Identity

A. The Rise of Nativism

1. Some of the innovations of the new era worried more tradition-minded people, and tensions surfaced in conflicts over immigration, religion, Prohibition, and race relations.

2. As farmers struggled with severe economic problems, rural communities lost residents to the cities at an alarming rate; the 1920 census revealed that for the first time in the nation’s history, city people outnumbered rural people.

3. The mass media generally reflected the cosmopolitan values of cities, and many Americans worried that the cities, and the immigrants living there, would soon dominate the nation and its culture.

4. The polarities between city and country should not be overstated. Rural and small-town people were affected by the same forces that influenced urban residents—conflicts that often centered on the question of growing racial and ethnic pluralism.

5. **Nativist** animosity fueled a new drive against immigration, and in 1921, Congress passed a bill based on a quota system that limited the number of immigrants entering the United States to 3 percent of the foreign born from each national group as represented in the 1910 Census.

6. In 1924 the National Origins Act reduced immigration even further to 2 percent, and after 1927 the law set a cap of 150,000 immigrants per year; Japanese immigrants were excluded entirely.

7. A loophole in immigration law permitted unrestricted immigration from countries in the Western Hemisphere—Mexico and Central and South America. Nativists and organized labor lobbied Congress to close this loophole but were unsuccessful until the 1930s.

8. Another expression of nativism in the 1920s was the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, spurred on by the 1915 premiere of the film *Birth of a Nation*.

9. Unlike the Klan that was founded after the Civil War, the Klan of the 1920s harassed Catholics and Jews as well as blacks, and also turned to politics, succeeding in electing hundreds of Klansmen to public office and controlling numerous state legislatures.

10. After 1925, the Klan declined rapidly owing to internal rivalries, the disclosure of rampant corruption, and the revelation that its leader, Grand Dragon David Stephenson, had kidnapped and sexually assaulted his former secretary, driving her to suicide.

B. Legislating Values: Evolution and Prohibition

1. “Modernists” reconciled their religious faith with Darwin’s theory of evolution, but “fundamentalists” interpreted the Bible literally.

2. Preachers like Billy Sunday used revivals and storefront churches to popularize their blend of fundamentalism and traditional values, while Aimee McPherson founded the Four Square Gospel Church; huge crowds either witnessed her theatrical services or listened to her on the radio.

3. Religious controversy entered the political arena when some states enacted legislation to block the teaching of evolution in schools.

4. The John T. Scopes trial of 1925, known as the “monkey trial,” epitomized the clash between the two competing value systems: modernist and fundamentalist.

5. Prohibition summoned the power of the state to enforce social values; drinking declined after passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, but noncompliance was widespread in cities.

6. The “drys” supported the Eighteenth Amendment, but the “wets” argued that Prohibition undermined respect for the law and impinged on individuals’ liberties; the amendment was repealed on December 5, 1933.

C. Intellectual Crosscurrents

1. Some writers and intellectuals of the 1920s were so repelled by what they saw as the complacent, moralistic, and anti-
intellectual tone of American life that they settled in Europe.

2. The war inspired John Dos Passos’s *The Three Soldiers* and 1919 and Ernest Hemingway’s *In Our Time, The Sun Also Rises*, and *A Farewell to Arms*. T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* summed up a general postwar disillusionment with modern culture as a whole, while F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925) showed the corrosive consequences of the mindless pursuit of wealth.

3. The “Harlem Renaissance” was a movement among young writers and artists who broke with older genteel traditions of black literature in order to reclaim a cultural identity with African roots.

4. The Harlem Renaissance produced the writers Claude McKay and Zora Neale Hurston, who represented the “New Negro” in fiction; poets Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes; and sculptor Augusta Savage.

5. The vitality of the Harlem Renaissance was short-lived. The black middle class and the intellectual elite in Harlem were small and could not support the group’s efforts, and many writers were ambivalent about depending on white patronage. However, the writers of the Harlem Renaissance found a new popularity in the 1960s, when their works were rediscovered by black intellectuals during the civil rights movement.

6. The Universal Negro Improvement Association was the black working class’s first mass movement; under Marcus Garvey it published *Negro World* and supported black enterprise. The movement collapsed in 1925 when Garvey was deported for fund-raising irregularities involving the Black Star Line company.

D. Culture Wars: The Election of 1928

1. Cultural issues—the emotionally charged questions raised by Prohibition, Protestant fundamentalism, and nativism—set the agenda for the presidential election of 1928.

2. The Democratic party, now controlled by its northern urban wing, nominated Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York. Smith was the first presidential candidate to reflect the aspirations of the urban working classes and of European Catholic immigrants.

3. The Republican nominee, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, was also a new breed of candidate. Hoover had never run for any political office and did not run very hard for the presidency, delivering only seven campaign speeches. His candidacy rested on his outstanding career as an engineer and professional administrator; indeed, for many Americans, he embodied the managerial and technological promise of the Progressive Era.

4. Hoover won a stunning victory. He received 58 percent of the popular vote to Smith’s 41 percent and 444 electoral votes to Smith’s 87. Because many southern Protestants refused to vote for a Catholic, Hoover carried Texas, Virginia, and North Carolina—breaking the Democratic “Solid South” for the first time since Reconstruction.

5. The Democrats were on their way to fashioning a new identity as the party of the urban masses, a reorientation the New Deal would complete in the 1930s.

6. Ironically, Herbert Hoover’s victory would put him in the unenviable position of leading the United States when the Great Depression struck in 1929. Having claimed credit for the prosperity of the 1920s, the Republicans could not escape blame for the depression.

IV. The Onset of the Great Depression, 1929–1932

A. Causes and Consequences

1. A characteristic feature of the business cycle in capitalist economies, booms and busts were familiar features of the American landscape. Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the United States had experienced recessions or panics at least every twenty years, but none was as severe as the Great Depression of the 1930s.

2. Although a few commentators noted the slowdown in production, many more focused on the rapid rise in the stock market. Stock prices surged 40 percent in 1928 and 1929, as investors got caught up in speculative frenzy.

3. On “Black Thursday,” October 24, 1929, and again on “Black Tuesday,” October 29, the bubble burst. On those two bleak days, more than 28 million shares changed hands in panic trading. Practically overnight, stock values fell from a peak of $87 billion to $55 billion.

4. The crash exposed long-standing weaknesses in the economy. Agriculture was in the worst shape because farm products
sold at low prices throughout the 1920s. In 1929, the yearly income of a farmer averaged only $273, compared to $750 for other occupations. Because farmers accounted for a fourth of the nation’s workers, their meager buying power dragged down the entire economy.

5. A final structural weakness was the unequal distribution of wealth. In 1929, the top 5 percent of American families received 30 percent of the aggregate income while the bottom 50 percent of American families received only about 20 percent—most of which was spent on food and housing. Once the depression began, a majority of the population lacked sufficient buying power to revive the economy.

6. Commercial banks and speculators had invested in stocks; the impact of the crash was felt across the nation as banks failed and many middle-class Americans lost their life savings.

7. The crash destroyed the faith of those who viewed the stock market as the crowning symbol of American prosperity, precipitating a crisis of confidence that prolonged the depression.

8. Long-standing weaknesses in the economy accounted for the depression’s length and severity; agriculture and certain basic industries had already suffered setbacks in the 1920s.

9. Once the depression began, America’s unequal income distribution left the majority of people unable to spend the amount of money needed to revive the economy.

10. The American economy went rapidly downhill following the crash on Wall Street. Between 1929 and 1933, the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) fell almost by half, from $103.1 billion to $58 billion. Consumption dropped by 18 percent, construction by 78 percent, and private investment by 88 percent. Nearly 9,000 banks went bankrupt or closed their doors, and 100,000 businesses failed. Unemployment rose from 3.2 percent to 24.9 percent; 12 million people were out of work, and many who had jobs took wage cuts.

11. The Great Depression became self-perpetuating. The more the economy contracted, the more people expected the depression to last; the longer they expected it to last, the more afraid they became to spend or invest their money.

12. President Hoover later blamed the severity of the American depression on the international economic situation, and his analysis had considerable merit.

13. During the 1920s the flow of international credit hinged on the willingness of American banks and corporations to make loans and investments in European countries, allowing them to pay reparations and war debts and to buy U.S. goods. As the domestic economic crisis deepened, U.S. banks and companies reduced their foreign investments, disrupting the European financial system.

14. As economic conditions in Britain, Germany, and France worsened, European demand for American exports fell drastically. When the Hawley-Smoot Tariff of 1930 raised rates to all-time highs, European governments retaliated by imposing their own trade restrictions. To protect its economy, Great Britain also abandoned the “gold standard,” the system used to adjust the values of international currencies.

15. As other countries quickly followed Britain’s example, European markets for American goods, especially agricultural products, contracted sharply. The troubles of American farmers deepened.

16. As the crisis undermined the economies of the wealthy North Atlantic nations, it had a major impact on world trade. In 1929 the United States had produced 40 percent of the world’s manufactured goods. When American companies cut back production, they also cut back purchases of raw materials and supplies abroad.

17. Their decisions reverberated around the world—reducing the demand for Argentine cattle, Brazilian coffee, Chinese silk, Mexican oil, Indonesian rubber, and African minerals.

18. The Crash of 1929 undermined fragile economies around the globe and brought on a worldwide depression.

B. Herbert Hoover Responds

1. As the depression continued, the president adopted a two-pronged strategy. Reflecting his ideology of voluntarism, the president turned to corporate leaders for help. Hoover asked business executives to maintain wages and production levels and to work with the government to rebuild Americans’ confidence in the capitalist economic system.
2. Hoover recognized that voluntarism from corporate leaders might not be enough, and turned to government action. Soon after the stock market crash, he won cuts in federal taxes in an attempt to boost private spending and corporate investment. He also called on state and local governments to increase capital expenditures on public works.

3. Some of his initiatives failed. The Revenue Act of 1932 stifled both consumption and investment by increasing taxes. His decision to rely on private charity was also a mistake, as the problems associated with unemployment during the depression were too massive for private charities and state and local relief agencies to handle.

4. Hoover’s most innovative program, which was continued during Roosevelt’s New Deal, was the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), which Congress approved in January 1932.

5. The RFC was modeled on the War Finance Corporation of World War I and, like that agency, gave the federal government a crucial role in American economic life.

6. To stimulate economic activity, the RFC provided federal loans to railroads, financial institutions, banks, and insurance companies. This strategy of pump priming, or infusing funds into the major corporate enterprises, was designed to increase production in order to create new jobs and increase consumer spending.

7. This plan might have worked, but the RFC was too cautious in lending the money. Although Congress allocated $1.5 billion to the RFC, the agency had expended only 20 percent of these funds by the end of 1932.

8. Compared with previous chief executives—and in contrast to his popular image as a “do-nothing” president—Hoover had responded to the national emergency with unprecedented scale. But the nation’s needs were also unprecedented, and Hoover’s programs failed to meet them.

C. Rising Discontent

1. As the depression continued, many citizens came to hate Herbert Hoover. Terms, such as “Hoovervilles” (shantytowns where people lived in packing crates) and “Hoover blankets” (newspapers), were introduced into the American vocabulary to reflect the growing discontent with Hoover’s failing policies.

2. Even as some Americans were going hungry, farmers formed the Farm Holiday Association and destroyed food rather than accepting prices that would not cover their costs.

3. Bitter labor strikes occurred in the depths of the depression, despite the threat that strikers would lose their jobs.

4. In 1931 and 1932, violence broke out in cities as the unemployed battled local authorities over inadequate relief; some of the actions were organized by the Communist party.

5. Veterans staged the most publicized—and most tragic—protest. In the summer of 1932, the “Bonus Army” marched on Washington to demand immediate payment of their bonuses; newsreels showing the U.S. Army moving against its own veterans made Hoover’s popularity plunge even lower.

D. The 1932 Election

1. As the 1932 election approached, the nation overall was not in a revolutionary mood. Many middle-class Americans had internalized the ideal of the self-made man and blamed themselves rather than the system for their hardships.

2. The Republicans nominated Hoover once again for president, and the Democrats nominated Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt of New York.

3. In 1921, Roosevelt had suffered an attack of polio that left both his legs paralyzed, yet he emerged from the illness a stronger, more resilient man.

4. Roosevelt won the election, yet in his campaign he hinted only vaguely at new approaches to alleviate the depression. People voted as much against Hoover as for Roosevelt.

5. Elected in November, Roosevelt would not begin his presidency until March of 1933. (The Twentieth Amendment, ratified in 1933, set subsequent inaugurations for January 20.)

6. As FDR waited, Americans suffered through the worst winter of the depression. Nationwide, the unemployment rate stood at 20 to 25 percent. Public-welfare institutions were totally overwhelmed.

7. Despite dramatic increases in their spending, private charities and public relief
agencies only reached a fraction of the needy.

8. The nation’s banking system was so close to collapse that many state governors closed banks temporarily to avoid further withdrawals. By March 1933, the nation had hit rock bottom.

Key Terms

oligopolies In economics, the situation in which a given industry (steel-making, automobile manufacturing) is dominated by a small number of large-scale companies. (709)

welfare capitalism A system of labor relations that stresses management’s responsibility for employees’ well-being. Originating in the 1920s, welfare capitalism offered such benefits as stock plans, health care, and old-age pensions and was designed to maintain a stable workforce and undercut the growth of trade unions. (710)

isolationism, isolationist A foreign-policy stance supporting the withdrawal of the United States from involvement with other nations, especially an avoidance of entangling diplomatic relations. The common view of post–World War I U.S. foreign policy is that it was isolationist, but in fact the United States played an active role in world affairs, particularly in trade and finance. (712)

nationalize, nationalization Government seizure and ownership of a business or natural resource. In the 1890s the Populist party demanded nationalization of American railroads; in the 1950s the seizure by Cuba of American-owned sugar plantations and gambling casinos sparked a long-lasting diplomatic conflict. (712)

nativist, nativism Anti-foreign sentiment in the United States that fueled drives against the immigration of Irish and Germans in the 1840s and 1850s, the Chinese and Japanese in the 1880s and 1890s, migrants from eastern and southern Europe in the 1910s and 1920s, and Mexicans in the 1990s and 2000s. Nativism prompted the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. (718)

fundamentalism, fundamentalist Any religious movement that adopts a “pure” and rigid belief system. In the United States, it usually refers to evangelical Protestants who interpret the Bible literally. In the 1920s, fundamentalists opposed modernist Protestants, who tried to reconcile Christianity with Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection and other scientific discoveries. Fundamentalists’ promotion of anti-evolution laws for public schools led to the famous Scopes trial of 1925; in recent decades, fundamentalists have strongly supported legislation to prohibit abortion and gay marriage. (721)

business cycle The periodic rise and decline of business activity characteristic of capitalist-run, market economies. A quest for profit stimulates a level of production that exceeds demand and prompts a decline in output. In the United States, major periods of expansion (1802–18, 1824–36, 1846–56, 1865–73, 1896–1914, and 1922–28) were followed by either relatively short financial panics (1819–22 and 1857–60) or extended depressions (1837–43, 1873–96, and 1929–39). Since 1945, government intervention (through tax cuts, increased spending, interest rate hikes, and so forth) has moderated the swings of the business cycle. (727)

pump priming Term first used during the Great Depression of the 1930s to describe the practice of increased government spending in the hope that it would generate additional economic activity throughout the system. It is the beginning of a process that is supposed to lead to significant economic recovery. (730)

self-made man The nineteenth-century ideal that celebrated men who rose to wealth or social prominence from humble origins through self-discipline, hard work, and temperate habits. (731)

Lecture Strategies

1. When many Americans think of the 1920s, they imagine the Jazz Age, flappers, and speakeasies. A lecture on this period could contrast the clichés of the Roaring Twenties with the realities of life for the majority of Americans. Some time should be spent examining some of the unique and fascinating aspects of the 1920s—Prohibition, organized crime, jazz music, and changing sexual values—but one should also emphasize how “average” Americans lived and how many people, including immigrants, minorities, and rural Americans, faced challenges in the 1920s.

2. Write a lecture focusing on mass production and mass consumption as vital to understanding the economy of the 1920s. The automobile industry, which was so important to the era’s prosperity, provides an excellent case study of the various innovations of the period, including the assembly line, research and development, scientific management, mass advertising, and credit purchases.
3. Many instructors of American history survey courses find it convenient to treat the foreign policies of the 1920s in the same lecture as the foreign policies of the 1930s and the origins of World War II. Older interpretations of the period emphasized America’s reluctance to become involved in world affairs when, in fact, the United States was very active in its efforts to secure profits for American businesses operating overseas. The quest for foreign oil concessions makes a good case study for trends in American foreign relations in the 1920s and anticipates some of the problems of American foreign relations in the second half of the twentieth century.

4. The cultural and intellectual trends of the 1920s lend themselves to fascinating lecture material. After describing some of the themes of the period’s famous novels, such as *The Sun Also Rises*, examine the literary achievements and social impact of the Harlem Renaissance, giving special attention to the writings of Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Jean Toomer. Two sources for additional material on this subject are David Levering Lewis’s *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (1979) and Page Smith’s *Redeeming the Time* (1987).

5. Write a lecture examining the darker side of the 1920s, including the rise of nativism and the Ku Klux Klan. This issue can be brought into greater focus for students by citing examples of local Klan activity or other kinds of political persecution in the university’s community in the 1920s.

6. An approach that may interest students is to point out that some historians see the 1920s as a watershed decade in the creation of “modernity” in America. In the previous chapter, students learned that, with the conclusion of World War I and President Wilson’s ambition to create a League of Nations, the United States became committed to international involvement and worldwide influence, which it still upholds today. Likewise, American culture changed in ways that continue to shape our lives. Mass marketing and advertising, the extension of private credit, widespread use of mechanized transport, travel, and involvement in the stock market are all examples of these changes. Ask students to define the term modern and examine why the innovations of the 1920s are still with us today.

7. Although the stock market crash of 1929 is often overrated as the chief cause of the Great Depression, it is nevertheless an important and colorful episode that deserves attention. Write a lecture explaining the nature of stock market speculation in the late 1920s, how it caused the crash, and how it affected investors and ordinary Americans.

8. Write a lecture examining the new historical interpretation of Herbert Hoover’s presidency. Hoover is now generally regarded as a transition figure between the passive presidencies of the 1920s and the more dynamic Roosevelt administration. His philosophies and policies should be discussed in detail. Explain Hoover’s aversion to direct federal relief, and describe how his position has been criticized.

9. Write a lecture that examines the issues and personalities of the 1932 presidential election. Explain what voters expected from Franklin D. Roosevelt and why they turned against Hoover so overwhelmingly. Note the details of the election results and the creation of the Democratic coalition. Finally, discuss the problems of the period after the election.

**Reviewing the Text**

These questions are from the textbook and follow each main section of the narrative. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

**The Business-Government Partnership of the 1920s (pp. 706–713)**

1. How do you explain the resurgent popularity of business leaders during the 1920s? What changed from the Progressive Era, when corporate executives were held in contempt?

   • The nation’s prosperity from 1922 to 1929 seemed to confirm in the public mind the wisdom of championing corporations and business leaders for improving the efficiency and material wealth of society.
   • Middle-class Americans now respected business leaders in part because many considered the Progressive Era reforms to have solved most of the important ills of society.

2. In what ways did government and business work together during the “new era”? What were the sources of this relationship?

   • One example of government-business cooperation occurred under Herbert Hoover’s direction, when the Commerce Department fostered the creation of two thousand trade associations representing companies in almost every major
industry. Government officials worked closely with the associations, providing them with statistical research, assisting them to devise industry-wide standards, and urging them to stabilize prices and wages.

• By creating informal governmental ties between government and industry—an “associated state,” government officials like Hoover hoped to promote the public interest. His goal was to achieve through voluntary cooperation what Progressive Era reformers had sought through governmental regulation.

• Sources of the relationship were common economic interests based on capitalism and sometimes illegal collusion between government and business leaders in the interest of producing profit through limited government and avoidance of new regulations of industry.

3. Describe American foreign policy—both political and economic—during the 1920s. Is it best characterized as “isolationist” or “internationalist”?

• American foreign policy during the 1920s was based both on isolationist and internationalist perspectives.

• By refusing to join the League of Nations or the Court of International Justice the United States declined to play an active role in international politics, clearly an isolationist position.

• However, as the efforts of American diplomats to shore up the international financial system suggest, the United States pursued a vigorous, internationalist economic policy.

• Officials in the Department of State and the Department of Commerce worked constantly to open up new foreign markets for American manufacturers and bankers and to protect existing American interests in other countries.

A New National Culture (pp. 713–718)

1. How do we explain the rise of a new national culture in the 1920s? In what ways did Americans across the nation begin to share common experiences?

• In homes across the country during the 1920s, Americans sat down to a breakfast of Kellogg’s corn flakes and toast from a General Electric toaster. Then they got into a Ford Model T to go to work or go shopping at Safeway, A&P, or Woolworth’s, one of the chain stores that had sprung up across the country. In the evening the family gathered to listen to radio programs like Great Moments in History, to catch up on events in the latest issue of Reader’s Digest, or to enjoy the melodramatic tales in True Story; on weekends they might see the newest Charlie Chaplin film at the local theater. Millions of Americans now shared similar daily experiences.

• The development of standardized product and mass media communication helped to create a national culture. A new emphasis on leisure, consumption, and amusement characterized the era. Automobiles, paved roads, the parcel post service, movies, radios, telephones, mass-circulation magazines, brand names, chain stores linked Americans—in the mill towns in the southern Piedmont, outposts on the Oklahoma plains, and ethnic enclaves on the East and West coasts—in an expanding web of national experience.

2. How did the automobile epitomize the new values of mass consumption and the changing patterns of leisure in America?

• The showpiece of modern capitalism, the automobile revolutionized American economic and social life.

• Mass production of cars stimulated the prosperity of the 1920s. Before the introduction of the moving assembly line in 1913, Ford workers took twelve and a half hours to put together an auto; on an assembly line they took only ninety-three minutes. By 1927 Ford was producing a car every twenty-four seconds.

• The expansion of the auto industry had a ripple effect on the American economy. It stimulated the steel, petroleum, chemical, rubber, and glass industries and, directly or indirectly, provided jobs for 3.7 million workers. Highway construction became a billion-dollar-a-year enterprise, financed by federal subsidies and state gasoline taxes.

• The auto also changed the way Americans spent their leisure time. Although gasoline was not cheap (about $2.30 a gallon in 2006 dollars), they took to the roads, becoming a nation of tourists.

3. What facets of cultural change does the example of Clara Bow help us to understand?

• Clara Bow was Hollywood’s favorite flapper, a bobbed-hair “jazz baby” who rose to stardom almost overnight. With her boyish figure and shock of red hair, she had a strikingly sensual presence; “she could flirt with the grizzly bear,” wrote one reviewer.

• Thousands of young women took Bow as their model. Decked out in short skirts and rolled-down silk stockings, flappers wore makeup,
Redefining American Identity (pp. 718–727)

1. What changes in American society prompted the dissent expressed by nativist activists, the Ku Klux Klan, and religious fundamentalists? How did these groups voice their outrage?

• As movies, radio, advertising, and mass-production industries began to transform the country into a modern, cosmopolitan nation, many Americans welcomed them as exciting evidence of progress. Others were uneasy.
• Flappers dancing to jazz, youthful sexual experimentation in Model Ts, hints of a decline in religious values: these harbingers of a new era worried rural folk and city dwellers who had been born and raised in small towns.
• They were also troubled by the powerful presence in American cities of millions of Catholic and Jewish immigrants from Europe and African American migrants from the South.
• Beneath the clichés of the Jazz Age and the Roaring Twenties were deeply felt tensions that surfaced in conflicts over immigration, religion, Prohibition, and race relations. At stake was no less than the definition of what it meant to be an American.
• These groups voiced their outrage through mass rallies and protests, the use of mass media to disseminate their viewpoint, the use of the legislative branch to pass laws, the use of the court system to invalidate existing laws, and the use of violence in the case of the nativists and KKK to stop immigrants, blacks, and Jews from increasing power.

2. How do you explain the simultaneous appearance of the new Klan, the Harlem Renaissance, and Marcus Garvey’s UNIA movement?

• The new Klan rose in part in response to the rise of black nationalist organizations and the movement of black people and black southern culture into northern cities for the first time during Reconstruction.
• The Harlem Renaissance and the Garvey movement arose in response to the Great Migration of blacks to northern cities during World War I, and the alienation felt by many blacks in response to white racism. Massive numbers of blacks in the urban northeast and Midwest enjoyed a rising standard of living during the 1920s that made possible the development of a racial pride movement also driven in part by white demand for black culture.

The Onset of the Great Depression, 1929–1932 (pp. 727–734)

1. What were the causes the Great Depression? In what ways did foreign events affect the financial downturn?

• The causes stemmed from the fact that booms and busts are a characteristic feature of the business cycle in capitalist economies. Since the early nineteenth century, the United States had experienced recessions or panics about every twenty years.
• The economic downturn began slowly and almost imperceptibly in 1927. For five years Americans had spent at a faster pace than their wages and salaries had risen. As consumers ran out of cash and credit, spending declined and housing construction slowed. Soon inventories piled up; in 1928, manufacturers began to cut back production and lay off workers, reducing incomes and reinforcing the slowdown. By the summer of 1929, the economy was clearly in recession.
• The crash exposed long-standing weaknesses in the economy. Agriculture was in the worst shape because farm products sold at low prices throughout the 1920s. Because farmers accounted for a fourth of the nation’s workers, their meager buying power dragged down the entire economy. Two other major industries—railroads and coal—had also fallen upon hard times. As automobile and truck traffic increased, railroad revenues from passenger travel and freight shipments declined, forcing several railroads into bankruptcy.
• A final structural weakness was the unequal distribution of wealth. In 1929, the top 5 percent of American family received 30 percent of the aggregate income while the bottom 50 percent of American families received only about 20 percent—most of which was spent on food and housing. Once the depression began, a majority of the population lacked sufficient buying power to revive the economy.
• During the 1920s the flow of international credit hinged on the willingness of American banks
and corporations to make loans and investments in European countries, allowing them to pay reparations and war debts and to buy U.S. goods. As the domestic economic crisis deepened, U.S. banks and companies reduced their foreign investments, disrupting the European financial system. As economic conditions in Britain, Germany, and France worsened, European demand for American exports fell drastically.

2. How did President Hoover respond to the economic emergency?

• Once elected, Hoover foresaw an era of Republican prosperity and governmental restraint and, even after the Great Crash, stubbornly insisted that the downturn was temporary.

• As the depression continued, the president adopted a two-pronged strategy. Reflecting his ideology of voluntarism and his reliance, as Secretary of Commerce, on business community, the president turned first to corporate leaders. Hoover asked business executives to maintain wages and production levels and to work with the government to rebuild Americans’ confidence in the capitalist economic system.

• But Hoover recognized that voluntarism might not be enough, given the depth of the crisis, and so turned as well to government action. Soon after the stock market crash, he won cuts in federal taxes in an attempt to boost private spending and corporate investment, and he called on state and local governments to increase capital expenditures on public works. By 1932, the president had secured an unprecedented increase in federal spending for public works to $423 million.

• Some of his initiatives were misguided: The Revenue Act of 1932, which increased taxes in order to balance the budget and lower interest rates, choked both consumption and investment. Similarly, his refusal to consider direct federal relief for unemployed Americans and to rely on private charity—the “American way,” he called it—was a mistake; unemployment during the depression was too massive for private charities and state and local relief agencies to handle.

Chapter Writing Assignments

These questions appear at the end of Chapter 23 in the textbook. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

1. What were the main cultural conflicts of the 1920s? Are they the same or different from the “culture wars” of the present?

2. This chapter is titled “Modern Times.” What was especially “modern” about the 1920s that made the decade stand out from previous years?

• Modernity of the 1920s includes the development of a mass consumption society and a new homogenized national culture through new business practices and the industrial system of mass production.

• The economic innovations and prosperity of the 1920s gave Americans the highest standard of living in the world. The values of the nineteenth-century middle classes—the Protestant ethic of hard work, self-denial, and frugality—gave way to a fascination with consumption, leisure, and self-realization, some of the essential features of modern life.

3. Describe the continuing process of state building in the 1920s. In what ways did the government become more or less active in society, the economy, and American culture?

• By creating informal governmental ties between government and industry—an “associated state,” government officials like Hoover hoped to promote the public interest. His goal was to achieve through voluntary cooperation what progressive era reformers had sought through governmental regulation. Government officials worked closely with business associations, providing them with statistical research, assisting them to devise industry-wide standards, and urging them to stabilize prices and wages.

• In American culture and society, the government increased its use of the courts and legislation to shape the content of the new national culture, setting in motion the precedent of government regulation of morality in U.S. society. Immigrant restriction and Prohibition serve as examples of government attempts to regulate American society and culture.

4. What problems in the American economy were exposed by the crisis of the Great Depression? To
what extent did those economic problems reflect social problems, especially social inequality?

• The crash exposed long-standing weaknesses in the economy. Agriculture was in the worst shape because farm products sold at low prices throughout the 1920s. Because farmers accounted for a fourth of the nation’s workers, their meager buying power dragged down the entire economy.

• Two other major industries—railroads and coal—had also fallen upon hard times. As automobile and truck traffic increased, railroad revenues from passenger travel and freight shipments declined, forcing several railroads into bankruptcy.

• A final structural weakness was the unequal distribution of wealth based on race, class, and region. In 1929, the top 5 percent of American family received 30 percent of the aggregate income while the bottom 50 percent of American families received only about 20 percent—most of which was spent on food and housing. Once the depression began, a majority of the population lacked sufficient buying power to revive the economy. Blacks in the South were particularly hard hit.

Class Discussion Starters

1. Why did the American people embrace the Republicans’ “politics of normalcy” in the 1920s?

   Possible answers

   a. The Democrats were blamed for the strikes, the Red Scare, the racial violence, and the economic disruptions that occurred in the years after World War I.

   b. Harding and Coolidge appeared to be respectable candidates whose promises of limited reforms and a healing of the nation’s wounds were safe and reassuring.

   c. American politics seems to follow a cyclical pattern, oscillating between periods of government activism and reform. The pendulum was due to swing in the conservative direction.

2. How did the automobile epitomize the new values of mass consumption and the changing patterns of leisure in America?

   Possible answers

   a. The automobile afforded people unprecedented freedom and mobility for shopping, travel, and entertainment.

   b. The automobile became a status symbol. Advertisers convinced Americans that they needed a car.

   c. Americans began to accept credit purchases as part of their normal consumption behavior.

   d. More Americans took extended vacations, and they traveled farther away from home than ever before.

   e. Young people used cars as a way to escape parental supervision. Cars changed dating patterns throughout America.

3. What examples are given in the textbook to demonstrate that the United States was not truly an isolationist country in the 1920s?

   Possible answers

   a. The United States continued to dominate the economic affairs of the Western Hemisphere.

   b. The United States sponsored the Washington Naval Arms Conference, which imposed limits on the size of the Great Powers’ navies and made arrangements for keeping the peace in East Asia.

   c. The United States sponsored the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounced war as an instrument of national policy.

   d. The United States sponsored the Dawes Plan, which assisted German economic recovery and promoted European financial stability.

4. What explains the rise and fall of the new Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s?

   Possible answers

   a. Americans who were reacting against the pace of modernization saw in the Klan a means to control the most “objectionable” aspects of social change.

   b. The Klan benefited from the rise of nativism and the desire to promote “100 percent Americanism” that had begun during World War I.

   c. The Klan promoted a sense of community and belonging, which seemed to be eroding in small towns across America.

   d. The Klan declined in power and popularity because of scandals involving its leadership and because immigration restriction eliminated one of its most potent issues.
5. What were the causes of the Great Depression?

Possible answers

a. The Great Crash of October 1929 wiped out the savings of thousands of Americans and destroyed consumers' optimism. Many investors had bought stock on margin while the prices were inflated and lost money when they were forced to sell at prices below what they had paid.

b. Structural weaknesses in the economy, especially in agriculture and “sick industries” such as coal, textiles, shipping, and railroads, made the economy vulnerable to a crisis in the financial markets.

c. The unequal distribution of wealth made it impossible to sustain the expansive economic growth of the late 1920s. In the 1920s the share of national income going to upper- and middle-income families had increased, so that in 1929 the lowest 40 percent of the population received only 12.5 percent of the national income. Once the depression began, not enough people could afford to spend the money necessary in order to revive the economy, a phenomenon known as underconsumption.

d. The reduced flow of American capital to world markets after the Great Crash and the trade war initiated by the Hawley-Smoot Tariff of 1930 led to a decline in world trade that made the depression worse.

6. What were the most dramatic episodes of protest during the Hoover years, and what do they tell us about the depression?

Possible answers

a. A strike of coal miners in Harlan County, Kentucky, featured police violence and resulted in the crushing of the union.

b. A demonstration at Ford’s River Rouge plant in 1932 resulted in three deaths and fifty serious injuries.

c. In 1932, a group of midwestern farmers formed the Farm Holiday Association and dumped food on the roads rather than to see it reach the market at prices below production costs.

d. A group of unemployed World War I veterans calling themselves the Bonus Army marched on Washington and remained encamped in the city after Congress failed to pass a relief bill for them. They were violently evicted by federal troops.

e. Frustration and despair reached many corners of American society during the depression. For the most part the voices of protest were silenced by the authorities.

f. The Communist party organized and participated in some of the protests but remained a small organization with only 12,000 members.

7. How did Herbert Hoover try to combat the depression?

Possible answers

a. Hoover did not embrace a laissez-faire approach; he called on business leaders to hold the line on wages.

b. He cut taxes and increased public works spending (policies in line with what would later be called Keynesian remedies for a depression).

c. He imposed a moratorium on foreign-debt payments in order to stimulate world trade.

d. He later raised taxes to lower interest rates and balance the budget, but that hurt the economy.

e. He encouraged the creation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which lent money to banks and large companies in the hope that their increased production would “trickle down” to the rest of the economy.

f. Most significantly, Hoover refused to sanction direct federal relief for the needy, claiming that this would create a permanent class of dependent citizens, something he believed would be worse than the continued deprivations of the depression.

Classroom Activities

1. Show the PBS film Scottsboro, which traces events surrounding the incarceration of nine young black men on false charges of raping two white women in the early 1930s. After you have previewed the film as the instructor, develop a series of questions to photocopy and give to the students as they watch the film. One technique to help students understand how film reveals the major themes and values of the era in question is to stop the film partway through and discuss what the students have discovered so far. This classroom activity will require two class sessions to complete.

2. Did Herbert Hoover respond poorly to the Great Depression? Or has he been “framed,” so to speak, by modern analysts? This is an ongoing debate
among historians, and one that students usually find interesting owing to its association with the sensational events of the 1929 stock market crash. Create the conditions for a debate or discussion in class based on these questions. Be sure to write students’ ideas on the chalkboard to generate more ideas as the class proceeds.

**Oral History Exercise**

- Because many people who experienced the events of the Great Depression are still living, the era provides an excellent case study for doing oral history. This assignment works well as part or all of a research paper or for class discussion. Ask students to locate an individual who personally experienced the ravages of the Great Depression (he or she would have been a child then). Have them develop a series of questions to ask the individual in an interview session. If a suitable interview subject cannot be found, ask students to consult a primary source or collection of oral history (for instance, Studs Terkel’s *Hard Times*) and bring into class a copy of a particularly revealing passage. More documents will be needed if the students are working on a research paper.

**Working with Documents**

**COMPARING AMERICAN VOICES**

**The Scopes Trial** (p. 724)

1. Was the Tennessee battle really a conflict between modern urban values and traditional rural beliefs?
   - It was also a battle about the power of majority rule in a representative government, as the document by William Jennings Bryan suggests.
   - It was also a conflict between the rights of teachers to express their beliefs under the Constitution and the rights of schools to restrict it, as several documents point out.
   - It was also a conflict between various private interest groups to control state public education.

2. Are there any limits to legislative power? What constitutional provisions might restrict political censorship or the suppression of scientific knowledge?
   - There are constitutional, judicial, and electoral limits to legislative power, such as judges overruling legislative decisions and legislators being recalled from office.
   - The Bill of Rights protects restrictions on freedom of speech, political censorship, and the suppression of scientific knowledge.

3. Does the prescribed teaching of the Christian Bible violate the First Amendment to the Constitution, which forbids the “establishment” of religion?
   - In the context of the Scopes trial, the right of teachers to teach biblical beliefs does not violate the First Amendment.
   - But it is also the right of the state and of children and their parents to not be subject to teachers creating undue religious institutions in public schools.

4. Is there an inherent conflict between a democratic polity and freedom of intellectual and scientific inquiry?
   - There is an inherent conflict in that the conclusions reached by social and physical scientists often conflict morally with a minority or majority of the population whose children attended state-owned public schools that employ the scientists. In a representative democracy structured along a federalist system, dissent will always result in debates over educational curriculum.

5. In recent years, the Japanese government has censored textbooks to exclude information about the “rape of Nanking” in the 1930s (see Chapter 25). How might that controversy be used in debates about the Scopes trial?
   - It is the right of the state to teach children based on the collective wisdom of an elected board of representatives of the people of the United States who decide education policy for the state. This position reinforces Bryan’s call for teacher obedience to state-sponsored educational programs, and Scopes’s guilt.
   - The free-speech side might argue that the Japanese were barbarians during the Nanking massacre and later censored textbooks in an attempt to whitewash the incident. The United States should not mimic what the Japanese did in the service of delivering a pre-packaged and nationalistic public education.

**VOICES FROM ABROAD**

**Mary Agnes Hamilton: Breadlines and Beggars** (p. 732)

1. Why might Hamilton believe that the condition of the idle in America is “more degraded and degrading than anything in Britain or Germany”?
   - As a foreign observer, she might be biased toward the positive qualities of her own nation.
• The American idle are physically dangerous, numerous, shocked at their recent fall from middle-class status, and culturally out of place in a nation based on individualism and accumulation of property.

2. What is Hamilton's opinion of the reaction of America's political leaders to the depression? Is it a valid assessment?

• She finds U.S. leaders overly optimistic in their assessment of immediate national recovery; she thinks Congress expresses a defeatist attitude, with Congressmen worrying more about their personal election needs than national recovery.
• It is a valid assessment, although Hamilton is a quite critical foreign observer and may be biased in her descriptions.

Reading American Pictures

Patrolling the Texas Border (p. 720)

1. Goldbeck's photograph is clearly a posed one. What do you suppose was the intent of presenting the Border Patrol in this fashion?

• The image was designed to serve as government propaganda and a message for Mexican immigrants not to cross into the United States.

2. What is the significance of the type of uniforms the officers are wearing?

• The uniforms resemble a combination of military uniforms and a Texas Ranger or cowboy lawmen image—law enforcement teams stationed in the West and South that removed Indians and Mexicans from the United States for generations.

3. What aspects of their methods might potentially exacerbate the illegal immigrant problem?

• The men appear violent and militarily organized, exuding a cocky “shoot first, and ask questions later” attitude and foreign policy to deal with Mexican immigration. The use of English on the signs intended for Spanish speakers reveals the cultural bias of the border patrol, which exacerbated the development of sound U.S. foreign policies with Mexico regarding immigration.

4. If you were an immigrant worker, how might you read this image?

• I would view the image as very unwelcoming to new immigrants and quite dangerous to come into the United States. This would be ironic, as the United States was and is known as a welcoming place for immigrants.

Electronic Media

Web Sites

• The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921–1929
  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/coolhtml/coolhome.html
  This Library of Congress site contains original documents, film footage, and scholarly insights.

• The Harlem Renaissance
  http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/circle/harlem-ren-sites.html
  A site containing a plethora of primary documents on the sociocultural movement.

• Marcus Garvey
  http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey
  This site contains images and material on other African American leaders; it was created by PBS in conjunction with an excellent film on Garvey, Look for Me in the Whirlwind.

• Flapper Station
  http://home.earthlink.net/~rbotti
  This site details the youth culture of the 1920s and its fascination with cars and fashion. For the speakeasies, see “Music of the Roaring Twenties” at http://www.authentichistory.com/1920s/1920smusic01.html.

Films

• Hoover Dam (1999, PBS documentary, 90 min)
  Directed by Stephen Stept, this PBS American Experience documentary traces the early years of the Great Depression and the building of the Hoover Dam.

• Jazz (1998, PBS multiple part series)
  Directed by Ken Burns, this PBS documentary traces the development and impact of jazz in the United States.

• The Great Gatsby (1974, Paramount Pictures, 120 min)
  Directed by Jack Clayton, this Hollywood version of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel captures the material culture, spirit, and values of the era.
Literature

  One of the best collections of oral interviews from the depression era.

  A secondary source that probes the meaning of advertisements during the 1920s. This book contains numerous glossy advertisements that make for great class handouts.

  The classic study of the rise of the American middle class during the 1920s.

Additional Bedford/St. Martin’s Resources for Chapter 23

**FOR INSTRUCTORS**

Transparencies

The following maps and images from Chapter 23 are available as full-color acetates:

- Charles Lindbergh (1902–1974), Famous Aviator
- Map 23.1 Ku Klux Klan Politics and Violence in the 1920s
- Map 23.2 The Spread of Radio, to 1939
- The United States Border Patrol, Laredo, Texas, 1926
- Map 23.3 Presidential Election of 1928
- Map 23.4 The Great Depression: Families on Relief, to 1933
- Map 23.5 The Presidential Election of 1932

Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM

The following maps, figures, and images from Chapter 23, as well as a chapter outline, are available on disc in both PowerPoint and jpeg formats:

- Map 23.1 Ku Klux Klan Politics and Violence in the 1920s
- Map 23.2 The Spread of Radio, to 1939
- Map 23.3 Presidential Election of 1928
- Map 23.4 The Great Depression: Families on Relief, to 1933
- Map 23.5 The Presidential Election of 1932
- Figure 23.1 A Statistical Index of Boom and Bust
- Figure 23.2 Unemployment, 1915–1945
- Charles Lindbergh (1902–1974), Famous Aviator
- The United States Border Patrol, Laredo, Texas, 1926
- The League of Women Voters
- Ku Klux Klan Women Parade in Washington, D.C.
- Defining Beer
- The Breadline

Using the Bedford Series with America’s History, Sixth Edition

Available online at bedfordstmartins.com/usingseries, this guide offers practical suggestions for incorporating volumes from the Bedford Series in History and Culture into the U.S. History Survey. Relevant titles for Chapter 23 include

- Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression: The Report on Economic Conditions of the South with Related Documents, Edited with an Introduction by David L. Carlton, Vanderbilt University, and Peter A. Coclanis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents, by Jeffrey P. Moran, University of Kansas

**FOR STUDENTS**

Documents to Accompany America’s History

The following documents and illustrations are available in Chapter 23 of the companion reader by Kevin J. Fernlund, *University of Missouri—St. Louis*:

1. Herbert Hoover, American Individualism (1922)
2. Andrew W. Mellon, Fundamental Principles of Taxation (1924)
4. Advertisement for Listerine (1923)
5. Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrel Lynd, Remaking Leisure in Middletown (1929)
6. The Ku Klux Klan (1924)
7. William Jennings Bryan, Clarence Darrow, Transcript of the Scopes Trial (1925)
8. H. L. Mencken, Introduction to Nietzsche’s *The Antichrist* (1918)
9. Charles A. Lindbergh, Preparing to Fly (1927)
10. Cabinet Meeting—If Al Were President (1928)
12. Herbert Hoover’s Plan (1931)
13. John T. McCutcheon, A Wise Economist Asks a Question (1932)
14. Mirra Komarovsky, Mr. Patterson (1940)
15. Meridel Le Sueur, Women on the Breadlines (1932)
16. Richard Wright, Communism in the 1930s
Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/henretta

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the text as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. The following visual and documents activities are available for Chapter 23:

Visual Activity

• Reading American Pictures: Patrolling the Texas Border

Reading Historical Documents Activities

• Comparing American Voices: The Scopes Trial
• Voices from Abroad: Mary Agnes Hamilton: Breadlines and Beggars

Critical Thinking Modules at bedfordstmartins.com/historymodules

These online modules invite students to interpret maps and audio, visual, and textual sources centered on events covered in the U.S. History Survey. The relevant module for Chapter 23 is

• A Look at the Harlem Renaissance