

## Unit 8

1900 –  
1930s

# The Early 1900s: Fast Forward

The years from 1900 to the 1930s brought great changes to the American people. Automobiles became common on city streets and on rural roads. Airplanes in the sky, music on the radio, and Hollywood movies were all part of an exciting new future that was fast arriving.

This was also the period of Prohibition, when the 18th Amendment banned alcohol. Illegal bars called speakeasies became widespread all over the country in spite of the law. In many big cities criminal gangs organized to gain control of the smuggling and sale of illegal alcohol.

Through it all, American confidence was riding high. A lively new musical style called jazz became popular. Artists and writers, musicians and inventors – they all expressed the energy and creativity of the early 1900s.



### Internet resources:

[www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap](http://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap)

### Words and people to know:

Henry Ford	electrification	organized crime	Bessie Smith
assembly line	broadcast industry	Great Migration	blues
mechanization	Prohibition	Harlem Renaissance	Georgia O'Keeffe
mobility	speakeasies	Langston Hughes	Aaron Copland
suburbs / suburban	bootlegger	Jacob Lawrence	George Gershwin
Wright brothers	18th Amendment	jazz	F. Scott Fitzgerald
Alexander Graham Bell	21st Amendment	Duke Ellington	John Steinbeck
	repeal	Louis Armstrong	migrant workers

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**Internet Support Site: [www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap](http://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap)**

<b>Notes:</b>

# Outline – The Early 1900s: Fast Forward

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## Topic I: Technology brought progress to all areas of American life.

### 1. Automobiles became affordable and greatly improved transportation.

#### A. Henry Ford - Model T automobile

- \* Use of the moving assembly line lowered the cost.

#### B. Affordable automobiles had a big impact:

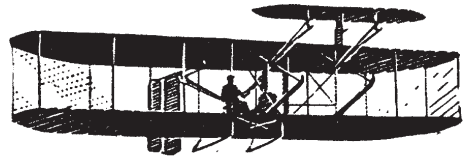
- \* Greater mobility (ability to get around).
- \* Many new jobs were created.
- \* Led to growth in transportation-related industries such as steel, oil and gasoline, road construction, automobiles.
- \* Allowed people to move to suburban areas (just outside cities).



### 2. The invention of the airplane improved transportation.

#### A. The Wright brothers, Wilbur and Orville, in 1903.

#### B. Airline passenger service started in the mid-1920s.

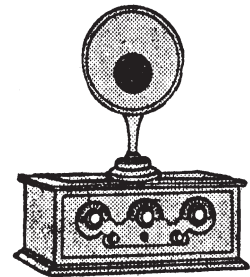


### 3. The assembly line and mechanization increased factory and labor productivity.

#### A. Assembly lines for automobiles – Henry Ford / Model T.

#### B. The rise of mechanization:

- \* Use of machines in factories.
- \* Use of tractors on farms.



### 4. Communication was changed by technology.

#### A. Telephones more widely available - Alexander Graham Bell.

#### B. Radio was developed and the broadcast industry grew.

#### C. Movies became a popular form of entertainment.

### 5. Electrification (the spread of electric power) changed American life.

#### A. Many labor saving products became available:

- \* Washing machines.
- \* Electric stoves.
- \* Water pumps (for wells).

#### B. Electric lighting became common in homes.

#### C. Radio and other forms of entertainment improved.

#### D. Improved communications.



## Outline – *continued*

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### **Topic II: Prohibition – the banning of alcohol in the U.S. from 1920 to 1933.**

#### **1. Prohibition took effect in 1920 with the 18th Amendment.**

- A. A victory by the temperance movement of the 1800s.
  - \* Women were often leaders in the movement, and were concerned about the problems created by drinking.
- B. The 18th Amendment banned the “manufacture, sale, or transportation” of intoxicating beverages (alcohol).
- C. Prohibition did not succeed in stopping drinking.
  - \* Speakeasies - illegal bars / saloons were widespread.
  - \* Bootleggers - people who made and smuggled illegal alcohol.
  - \* Organized crime - criminal gangs that in the 1920s were formed to smuggle and sell illegal alcohol.

**18th  
Amendment**  
started  
Prohibition



#### **2. Prohibition was repealed (ended) in 1933 by the 21st Amendment.**

- A. The experience of Prohibition showed that government could not legislate (make laws) to control how people behaved.

**21st  
Amendment**  
ended  
Prohibition

### **Topic III: The Great Migration – African Americans moving out of the South.**

#### **1. The Great Migration began in the 1910s and continued in the 1920s.**

- A. Why African Americans left the South:
  - \* Jobs were scarce and low paying.
  - \* Discrimination and violence against African Americans.
- B. Why African Americans moved to the North and West:
  - \* Jobs in the growing cities of the North and Midwest offered better employment opportunities.



#### **2. What African Americans experienced:**

- A. Most landed in older, run down sections of Northern / Midwestern cities.
- B. African American neighborhoods grew and became communities.
  - \* Businesses, churches, social clubs, schools, etc.
- C. Racial discrimination and sometimes even violence existed in the North and Midwest, but were not as common as in the South.

**Chicago  
Boston  
New York City  
Philadelphia  
Pittsburgh**

## Outline – continued

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### Topic IV: The Harlem Renaissance had a great influence on American culture.

#### 1. The Harlem Renaissance showed the freshness and variety of African American culture in the 1920s.

A. African American artists created new styles of painting.

\* **Jacob Lawrence** chronicled the experiences of the Great Migration of Southern blacks moving to Northern and Midwestern cities.

B. Writers and poets combined African and American cultural roots.

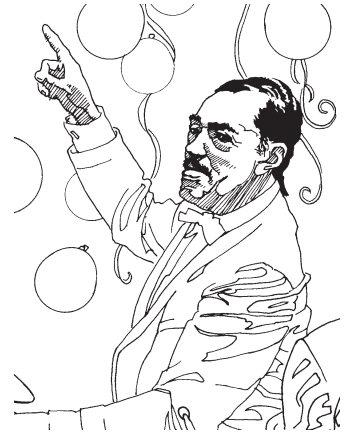
\* **Langston Hughes** - “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”

C. Musicians developed jazz and blues styles of music.

\* **Duke Ellington** - jazz composer, piano player, big band leader - “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing).”

\* **Louis Armstrong** - jazz composer, trumpet player, singer - “What a Wonderful World.”

\* **Bessie Smith** - blues singer - “After You’ve Gone.”



Duke Ellington

#### 2. Music, art, and literature of the Harlem Renaissance spread to the rest of American society.

A. Jazz and blues styles are still widely heard in popular music today.

### Topic V: The cultural climate of the 1920s and 1930s.

#### 1. American art, literature, and music made big steps forward.

A. Artists created bold new styles of painting.

\* **Georgia O’Keeffe** - paintings of urban (city) scenes, Southwest desert areas, and flowers.

B. Musicians created a new, uniquely American style of music.

\* **Aaron Copland** - music for *Appalachian Spring*.

\* **George Gershwin** - music for *Porgy and Bess*.

C. Writers used literature to reveal the full range of American life.

\* **F. Scott Fitzgerald** - wrote about the life of the rich in the 1920s in novels like *The Jazz Age* and *The Great Gatsby*.

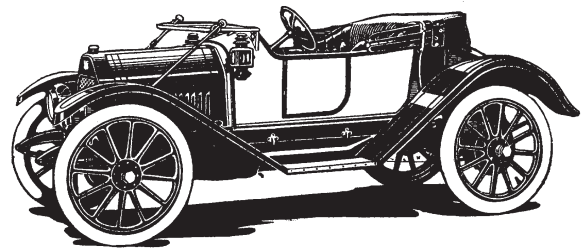
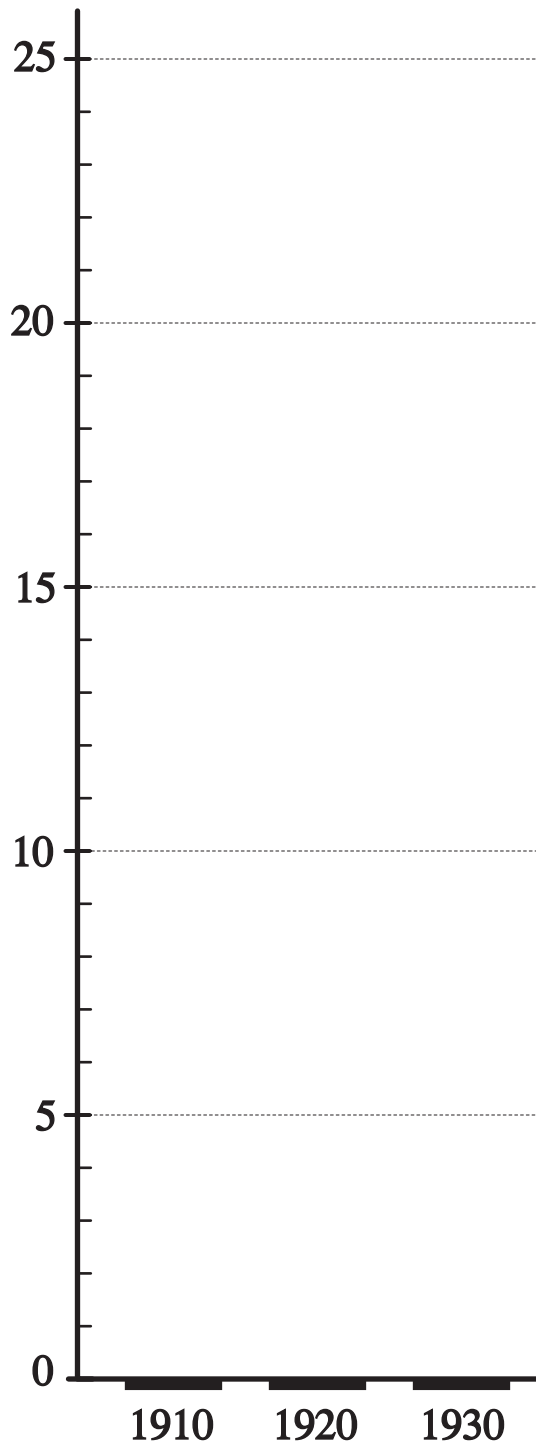
\* **John Steinbeck** - wrote *The Grapes of Wrath* to show the struggles and strength of poor migrant farm workers during the 1930s.



George Gershwin

## Automobile Use Expanded Rapidly

In the early 1900s the automobile became a big and rapidly growing part of American life. Complete the bar graph below to show the number of automobiles registered in the U.S. during this period.



Use the table shown below to find the information to finish the bar graph on the left. Draw a vertical bar for each year shown, with the length corresponding to the number of automobiles registered in the U.S.

Year	Automobiles Registered in the U.S.
1910	458,000
1920	8,132,000
1930	23,035,000

source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*

**Passenger Autos  
Registered (Millions)  
1910 - 1930**

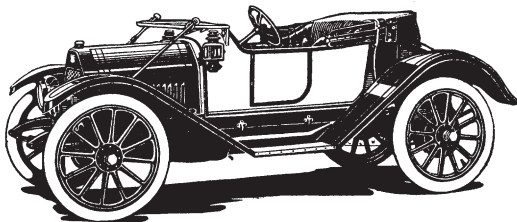
# Henry Ford and the Model T

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Henry Ford



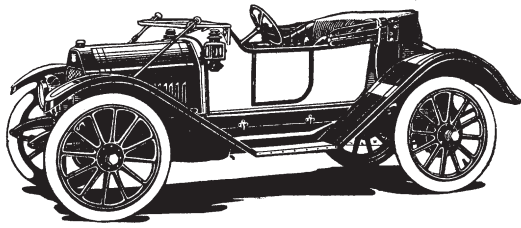
## The Model T Ford



**Produced from  
1908 to 1927**



# The Impact of Affordable Automobiles



What were the main results of improved transportation brought about by affordable automobiles?

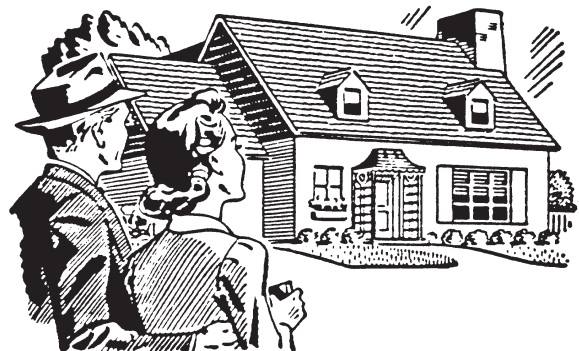
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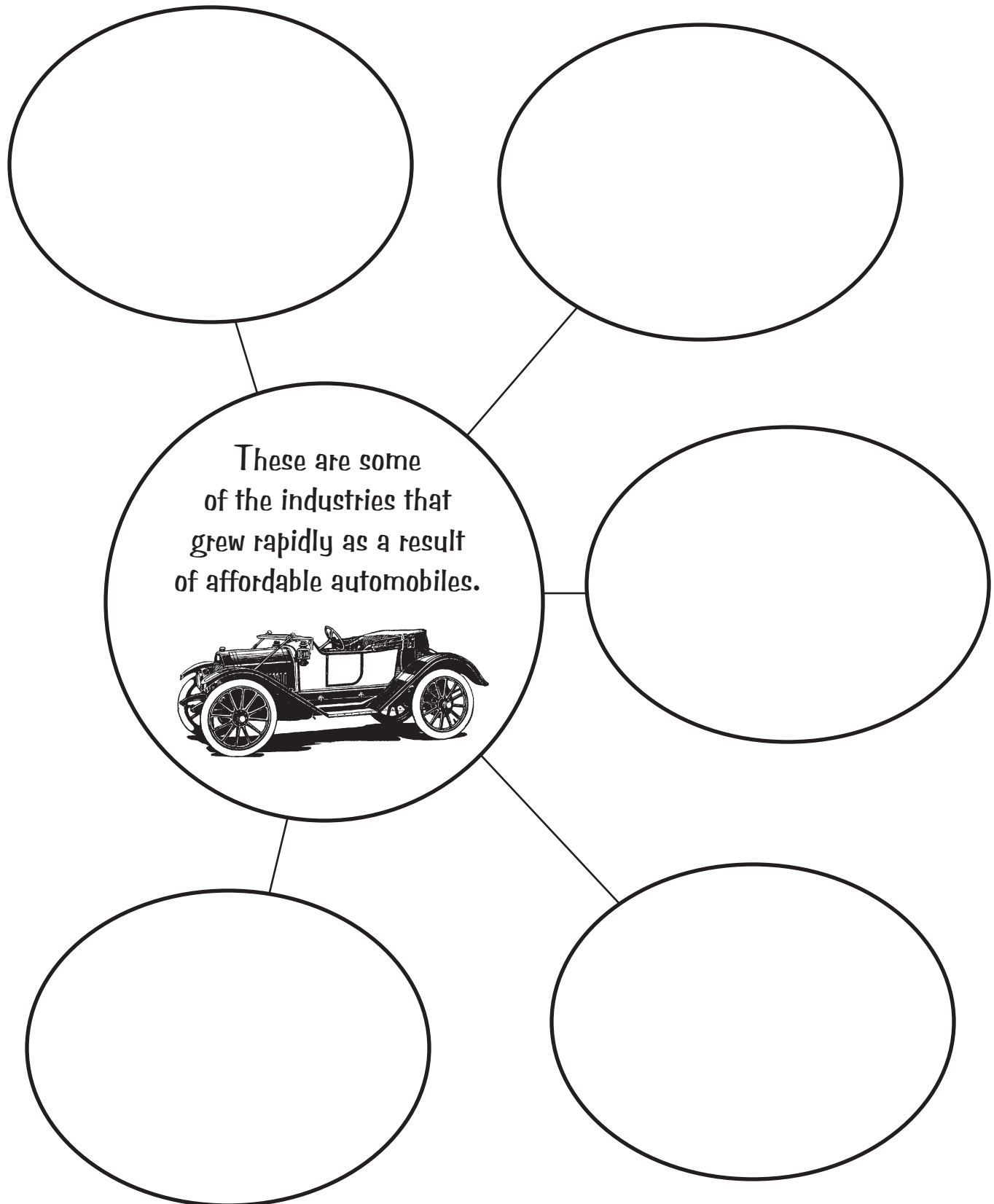
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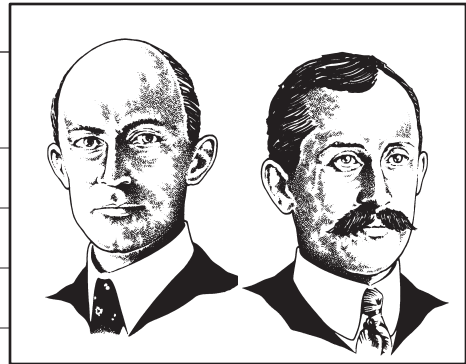
## Growth of Automobile Related Industries

*Draw and label examples of automobile related industries in the spaces below.*

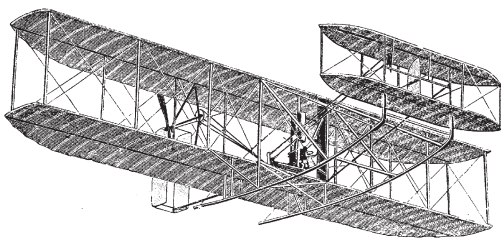


# The Wright Brothers and the First Airplane

## The Wright Brothers



## The First Airplane



**First Flight:  
120 feet**

# Great Improvements in Communication

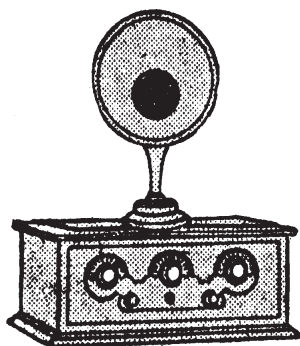
The early 1900s saw incredible improvements in ways to communicate!



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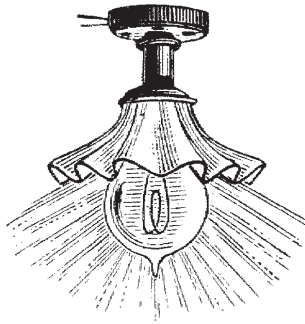
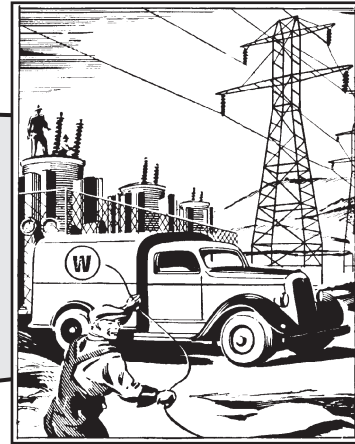
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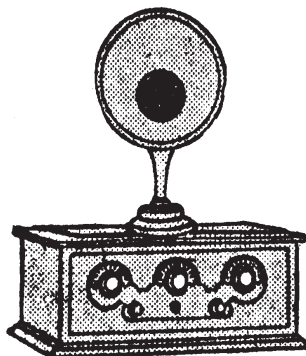
# Electrification Changed American Life

How did electrification (the spread of electrical power) change life across America?



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# Prohibition: When Alcohol Was Banned



Prohibition means the banning of alcohol. In the U.S., the making, selling, or transportation of alcohol was illegal from 1920 to 1933.

Here are some of the key facts you should know about Prohibition:

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18th  
Amendment

1920

21st  
Amendment

1933



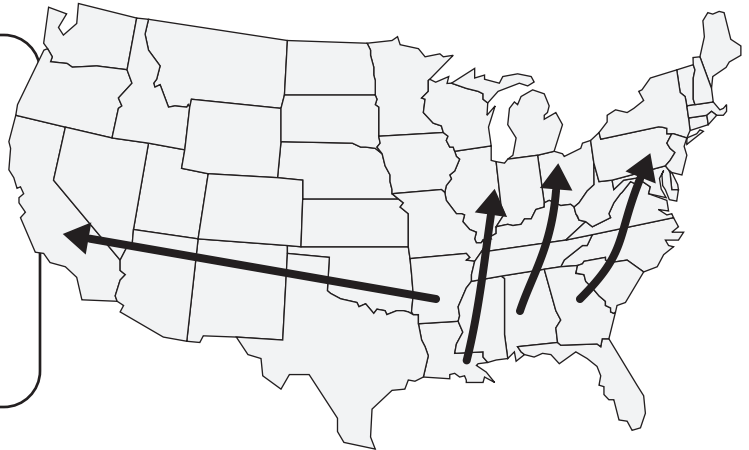
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# The Great Migration of African Americans

In the Great Migration, many African Americans moved from the South to the North and West. It lasted from the 1910s through the 1920s and beyond.



In the 1910s and 1920s over 1.5 million African Americans left farms, towns, and cities of the South. Most headed to Northern or Midwestern cities, but some went as far as California. Here are some of the reasons:

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Many African Americans did find better opportunities outside the South. It was not always easy, however, to make a new life in a strange and distant city. There was another problem as well:



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# The Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance was a burst of art, music, and literature created by African Americans during the 1920s and 1930s. It was centered in the New York City neighborhood called Harlem.



African American artists, writers, and musicians

*Did you know?*

Renaissance means "rebirth"

## The Harlem Renaissance

Drew on African American heritage

The Harlem Renaissance began in the 1920s, but its impact on American culture can still be seen and heard even today!

Spread beyond Harlem to the rest of society

*Put the information in the graphic organizer above in a different layout using the design shown below:*

The Harlem Renaissance		



## Harlem Renaissance: Famous People

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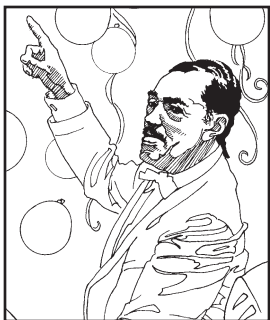


**Louis Armstrong**

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**Duke Ellington**

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**Bessie Smith**

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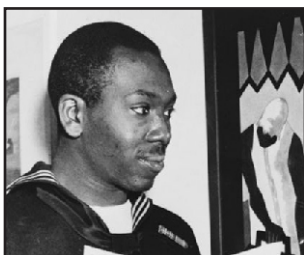


**Langston Hughes**

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**Jacob Lawrence**

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## Cultural Climate of the 1920s and '30s



**Georgia O'Keeffe**

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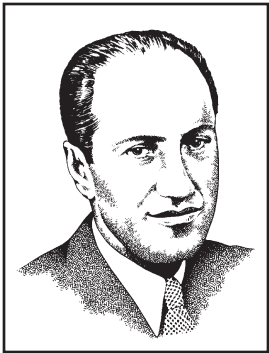
**Aaron Copland**



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**George Gershwin**

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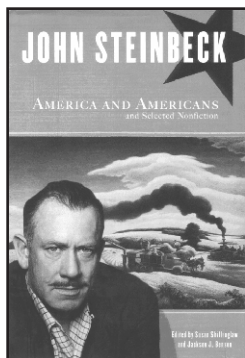
**F. Scott Fitzgerald**



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**John Steinbeck**

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**18th Amendment** - the amendment that prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transport of alcohol. It was in effect from 1920 to 1933.

**21st Amendment** - the amendment that repealed (ended) the 18th Amendment, thus permitting the making and selling of alcohol again. It took effect in 1933.

**Armstrong, Louis** - an African American musician who became a famous jazz performer.

**assembly line** - a method of assembling products in which each worker does one specific part of the overall job as the product moves from worker to worker.

**Bell, Alexander Graham** - inventor of the telephone, first demonstrated in 1876.

**blues** - a style of music that often shows that sad times are as much a part of life as happy times.

**bootlegger** - a person who smuggled illegal alcohol during Prohibition.

**broadcast industry** - the businesses that were created in the fields of radio and television.

**Copland, Aaron** - a famous composer who created music with a new, uniquely American sound.

**electrification** - the spread of electric power.

**Ellington, Duke** - a famous African American composer and performer of jazz music.

**Fitzgerald, F. Scott** - a famous writer of novels and short stories that described life in the 1920s.

**Ford, Henry** - the businessman who developed the first affordable automobile using large scale assembly line methods. He started the Ford Motor Company.

**Gershwin, George** - a famous composer of music, especially for Broadway theater productions. He helped bring a uniquely American sound to music.

**Great Migration** - the movement of many African Americans out of the South to the North, Midwest, and West. It began in the 1910s and continued through the 1920s and beyond.

**Harlem Renaissance** - the rapid growth of African America art, literature, and music that started in the

1920s and continued into the 1930s. It was centered in the neighborhood of Harlem in New York City, but spread its influence all across the country.

**Hughes, Langston** - an African American poet and writer who blended African and American cultural roots in his work.

**jazz** - a musical style that was first developed by African American musicians in the early 1900s. It is not easy to define, but has a lively sound and spirit that once heard is easily recognized.

**Lawrence, Jacob** - an artist famous for his paintings of events in African American history. His most famous work, done in Harlem during 1940 and 1941, was a series of paintings that portrayed the Great Migration.

**mechanization** - the spread of the use of machines in factories and farms.

**migrant workers** - people who travel from farm to farm to find work planting or harvesting crops.

**mobility** - the ability to move easily and quickly.

**O'Keeffe, Georgia** - an artist famous for her paintings of the Southwest, urban (city) scenes, and flowers.

**organized crime** - large criminal groups that are run by a well organized set of leaders.

**Prohibition** - the period from 1920 to 1933 when the making, selling, or transporting of alcoholic beverages was illegal in the U.S.

**repeal** - to end, take away, or stop a law.

**Smith, Bessie** - an African American blues singer who became fabulously successful in the 1920s and 1930s as a performer and recording artist.

**speakeasies** - illegal bars or clubs where alcoholic drinks were served during Prohibition.

**Steinbeck, John** - a writer who told the stories of migrant farm workers who went to California in search of work during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

**suburbs / suburban** - areas just outside cities.

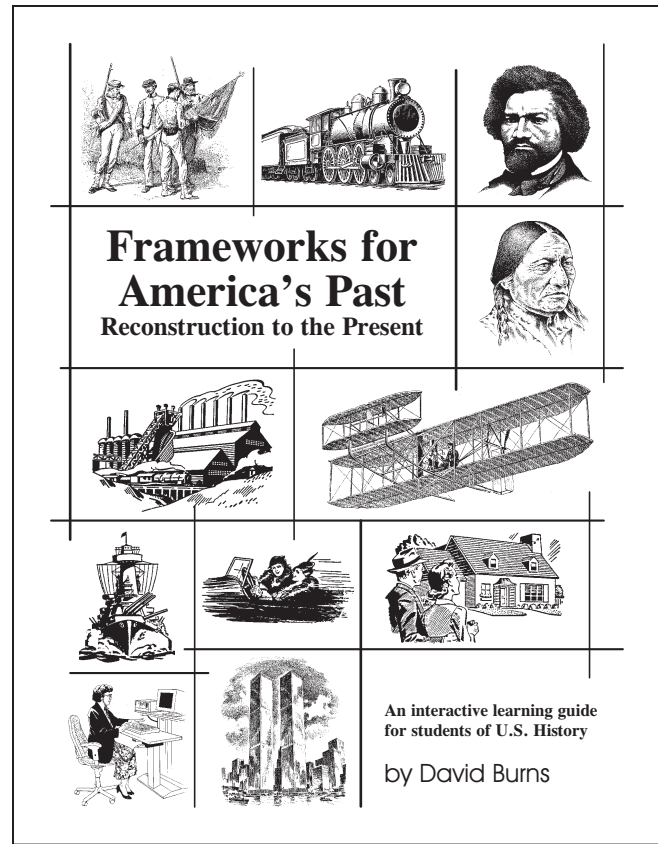
**Wright brothers** - Orville and Wilbur Wright, the inventors of the first successful airplane.



The Teacher Key and additional  
resources to use with these  
pages are at:

[www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap](http://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap)

Fasttrack Teaching Materials  
6215 Lavell Court  
Springfield, VA 22152  
[www.fasttrackteaching.com](http://www.fasttrackteaching.com)



## Frameworks for America's Past Reconstruction to the Present

An interactive learning guide  
for students of U.S. History

by David Burns

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