



WEINER GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM

# 1920s

## Roaring toward a CRASH

BOOK 1

TEACHING OLD DOGS NEW TRICKS



## Chapter 1

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# Good Riddance to 1919!

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World War I, known as the GREAT WAR was finally over. Millions had been killed. A world wide influenza epidemic --called a pandemic -- caused 50 million deaths. The nation had been divided over drinking of alcohol and voting by women.

Many were ready to ring in a new decade --things had to be better!



# Life Without War

## IT WAS NOT ROARING...

- 1. Locate and watch a short Youtube video on the pandemic of 1918. After viewing, answer the following question: “Could a pandemic happen today? Why or why not?”**
- 2. IMAGES SPEAK: Wars rob nations, not only of the deaths of loved ones, but takes huge amounts of money --money that could have been used to build roads and help people. Locate a Google Image that illustrates the expense of war on a nation’s money AND on human loss. Be creative. Look for a symbolic image. Add to portfolio with explanation.**

America entered the war several years after it began. During that time U.S. factories had produced military equipment, uniforms, and guns and loaned money to warring governments. Farmers in the war nations were unable to plant and harvest crops. Our farmers were truly feeding the world. Our economy was BOOMING!

But... when the Great War came to an end in 1918, things changed. European countries were in bad shape because the war had been fought on their soil. They couldn’t pay what they owed the United States.

Now, American factories didn’t need to produce all those war items and they started to lower production. That meant fewer jobs and layoffs. Farmers suffered --soon there were surpluses of crops. Prices bottomed out, leaving no money to pay for land and equipment farmers had borrowed to meet the war demand for food.

The first two years of the 1920s were whimpering, not roaring...

# Buying on Margin

## INSTALLMENTS & MARGIN

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1. Some people say you should never buy something if you do not have the money that it costs. In today's world most people use credit cards, which is like buying something on the installment plan or borrowing money that has to be paid back. People also use debit cards. Watch this VIDEO and explain the difference between the two cards in a way that would be easy for a young child to understand. Include images in your explanation.
2. Do you think teenagers should have credit cards? Why or why not?

By 1922, things were turning around. More people lived in cities than in rural areas. People had money left after they paid for things they had to have. The ***installment plan*** was designed to allow buyers to take home their merchandise immediately and pay for it over time. Houses were purchased on the installment plan --with mortgages through a bank. This helped the economy “roar.” People began buying like crazy.

More Americans began investing in the stock market --buying ***shares*** of large corporations. People believed they would be rich! Some of those investors bought stocks on ***margin***, which meant, for example, a buyer who wanted to buy a stock worth \$1,000 paid \$100 and borrowed the other \$900. This was a risky move. If the stock increased in value, the buyer paid off his or her \$900 loan and made money on top of it. However, if the stock decreased in value, the buyer couldn't repay the \$900 loan. This practice of buying stocks on margin helped cause the crash that came in the late 1920s.



# Immigration

## TIME TO CLOSE AMERICA'S GATE???

1. Look at a map that distinguishes between Eastern and Western Europe. Look at countries considered part of Asia. Make a country list of “Desirable Immigrants” and “Less Desirable Immigrants.”
2. Today there are still those who do not want to allow immigrants into the United States. This video about Syria explains the difference between an immigrant and a refugee. Some fear terrorists will sneak in as refugees. Watch the video. What do you think the United States should do?

### VIDEO 1



In 1924, the commissioner of **Ellis Island** said it was time for less **immigration**. Many Americans agreed. Congress passed laws slamming shut the door on **SOME** immigrants. Two laws were passed limiting new immigrants from entering. It wasn't so much lowering the number coming into our nation that was unfair --it was that the law discriminated according to **ethnicity**. People from southern and eastern Europe and from Asia were considered less desirable than immigrants from western and northern Europe. These “less desirables” were the ones who were kept out<sup>1</sup>

Even those immigrants already in the country were treated poorly; some were forced to leave their homes. Why did so many Americans fear and hate them? After all, most Americans or their grandparents had been immigrants at one time. They feared religions, customs, and interests that were different than their own.

Labor unions were afraid entering immigrants would take jobs away from American workers since immigrants were willing to work for less money.

Even government leaders expressed fear of immigrants! Some lawmakers wanted to get rid of those who were already in the country.<sup>4</sup>

# The Red Scare

## MASS HYSTERIA AND PARANOIA

**1. What is “mass hysteria?” What is paranoia?**

**Watch this Disney telling of “Chicken Little” and 1. explain how it relates to mass hysteria and 2. Explain the twist at the end. Why did Disney studios decide to end it that way? VIDEO**

**2. What do you think are the good things about capitalism? What do you see as the bad things about capitalism? What do you see as good things about communism? What do you see as bad things about communism? How do you think the United States would be different if it was a Communists country? Before answering, watch the video.**

A revolution happened in Russia in 1917. The czar was driven from power and the Communists (or Reds) took over. Communists believe that the government should own all property and pay people the same amount of money for work. Capitalism (which is what America is) believes in private ownership of property and that people should be paid based on hard work and talent. Capitalists say, “Why should I do my best if the person who doesn’t makes the same amount of money I do?”

Some Communists thought violence and bombings were necessary to get people to listen to their ideas. There were some Communists in the United States. Some of them were immigrants. That’s all it took for many Americans to think ALL immigrants were Communists. Many innocent immigrants were unjustly arrested and deported. This time in our country became known as the Red Scare.

It was a time of mass hysteria and paranoia.

# African Americans in the 1920s

## REBIRTH AND HOPE

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1. View the video **LINK**. After viewing explain why you think most African Americans had been living in the south and why they thought life would be better for them in the north.
2. **THREE VIDEOS...**The Harlem Renaissance was a time of unbelievable **CREATIVITY!!!** Creativity that worked its way throughout the culture of America. View the **VIDEO**. Then listen to an example of Harlem **JAZZ HERE** played by Duke Ellington's band (video from 1920s). Then listen to the same piece played **TODAY!** What do you think the three videos have to say about creativity?

Over 350,000 African American men had served during World War 1 in segregated units. They hoped after the war there would be more opportunities for them. This did not happen. Even the Ku Klux Klan, which also targeted immigrants, became active again.

This caused what came to be called “The Great Migration.” Many African Americans left the South for northern states, looking for opportunity and safety.

During the 1920s Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City, began to flourish because it was home to many talented black artists, writers, and performers. Many were part of the Great Migration. In Harlem, African Americans felt free to express themselves through the arts and music. They showed pride in their culture. This time became known as “The Harlem Renaissance.” It was as though African Americans were awakening to a new life.

It was a “roaring” time for prosperity and the arts in Harlem.



# A Roaring Good Time

## ILLEGAL ALCOHOL AND SHORT SKIRTS

1. The Dance Marathons of the 1920s were a way some saw of winning prize money. Watch the **VIDEO** of scenes from an actual dance marathon. Knowing that only one couple --the last couple --standing was the one one to win the money, what do you think caused so many to participate? What do you think made people come watch? Can you think of anything that is done today that is similar to the dance marathons?
2. Entrance into a speakeasy required that you know the password or handshake. Watch this **VIDEO** about speakeasies. What can you tell about the type of people who visited and worked in the speakeasies? Knowing there were many speakeasies in cities, why do you think they continued to operate for years if alcohol was illegal?

“How Ya Gonna Keep ‘Em Down on the Farm After They’ve Seen Paree?” was a popular song that made a point about returning veterans who had seen the sights of Europe --especially Paris --coming back to the way things had been.

Young people, especially, looked at the world differently than their parents. They expressed their ideas in the way they dressed, behaved, in the books they read, and the music they listened to. Young men shaved their beards and slicked down their hair. College boys wore raccoon coats and topped them off with boaters (straw hats). Young women got rid of ankle length skirts and wore short skirts, rolling down their silk stockings to show their bare knees. They wore makeup with bright lipstick and cut their traditionally long hair into short, sassy “bobs.” These gals became known as “flappers.”

They danced the Charleston, Lindy Hop, and Shimmy. Dance marathons were the rage. When one partner got so tired he/she had to sleep, the other propped up the sleeper while continuing to move across the dance floor. The last couple standing won the prize money.

Speakeasies provided secret places for people who wanted to drink the illegal alcohol. Often, the owners of the speakeasies were warned by local police when a raid was coming. Bootleggers delivered illegal alcohol from Canada and other places. Organized crime controlled all this illegal activity. Al Capone was the most famous organized crime gangster. While he was feared, people were also fascinated with Capone.

Charles Lindberg became a celebrity for completing the first non-stop solo flight across the Atlantic. Airplane stunt performers were popular. It was a good time!



# The CRASH!

## BLACK TUESDAY

1. The money we make, the money a school has, the money a business earns, the money a state has, the money a nation has are all connected to how our national economy is doing. Black Tuesday would bring about the end to the good times of the Roaring Twenties. Watch the **VIDEO**. Think of how this section is related to Section 4 in this book. Explain the connection.
2. At Christmas time many people enjoy watching the movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life” which takes place in 1929. One scene in the movie shows the main character facing a “bank run” on his family owned bank. Watch the **VIDEO** and explain why people were so anxious to get their money out of the bank. How were bank runs related to Black Tuesday?

By 1929 people weren’t spending as much money as before, buying fewer cars and houses. Business began cutting production. By fall, things got really shakey. Prices began to drop on the stock market. Investors panicked and began to quickly sell their shares. The value of stocks kept dropping. Everyone wanted out!

The crash was crushing to those who had put their life savings into stocks. It was even a blow to wealthy people who lost millions but still had millions. For most Americans, however, the day after the crash didn’t seem to effect them --after all, they didn’t own stock.

However, the crash of the stock market would come to effect everyone. In 1929, no one could know that. People didn’t realize just how bad things could get. They would soon find out.