

THE USA 1919–1941

GCSE Modern World History for Edexcel

Steve Waugh
John Wright

endorsed by
edexcel 



Introduction

About the course

During this course you must study four units:

- **Unit 1** Peace and War: International Relations 1900–1991
- **Unit 2** Modern World Depth Study
- **Unit 3** Modern World Source Enquiry
- **Unit 4** Representations of History.

These units are assessed through three examination papers and one controlled assessment:

- In Unit 1 you have one hour and 15 minutes to answer questions on three different sections from International Relations 1900–1991.
- In Unit 2 you have one hour and 15 minutes to answer questions on a Modern World Depth Study.
- In Unit 3 you have one hour and 15 minutes to answer source questions on one Modern World Source Enquiry.
- In the controlled assessment you have to complete a task under controlled conditions in the classroom (Unit 4).

Modern World Depth Study (Unit 2)

There are three options in the Modern World Depth Study unit. You have to study one. The three options are:

- **Option 2a** Germany 1918–39
- **Option 2b** Russia 1917–39
- **Option 2c** The USA 1919–41.

About the book

This book covers the key developments in the USA from 1919 to 1941. The book is divided into four key topics, each with three chapters.

- **Key Topic 1** examines the US economy in the years 1919–29. In particular, it focuses on the reasons for the boom of the 1920s and its effects

on the USA; and the problems of declining industry and agriculture.

- **Key Topic 2** explores US society in the years 1919–29. It focuses on the ‘roaring twenties’; Prohibition and gangsters; and racism and intolerance.
- **Key Topic 3** concentrates on the Depression of 1929–33, especially the causes and consequences of the Wall Street Crash; the reaction of the US government during this period; and the impact of the Depression on people’s lives.
- **Key Topic 4** examines Roosevelt’s policies, particularly the key features of the New Deal; reasons for opposition; and the extent of economic and social recovery in the years 1933–41.

Each chapter in this book:

- contains activities – some develop the historical skills you will need, others are exam-style questions that give you the opportunity to practise exam skills. The exam-style questions are highlighted in blue.
- gives step-by-step guidance, model answers and advice on how to answer particular question types in Unit 2.
- defines key terms and highlights glossary terms in bold the first time they appear in each key topic.

About Unit 2

Unit 2 is a test of:

- knowledge and understanding of the key developments in the USA in the years 1919–41
- the ability to answer brief and extended essay-type questions and a source inference question.

You have to answer the following types of questions. Each requires you to demonstrate different historical skills:

- **Source inference** – getting messages from a source
- **Causation** – explaining why something happened
- **Consequence** – explaining the effects or results of an event
- **Change** – explaining how and why changes occurred
- **Describe** – giving a detailed description, usually

of the key events in a given period – this is also known as the key features question

- **Judgement** – assessing the importance of causes, changes or consequences. This is commonly known as the **scaffolding** question.

Below is a set of specimen questions (without the source). You will be given step-by-step guidance in Chapters 2–12 on how best to approach and answer these types of questions.

EXAM

UNIT 2

1(a) What does Source A tell us about the impact of the First World War on the economy of the USA? (4 marks)

1(b) Describe US government policies towards industry in the 1920s. (6 marks)

1(c) Explain the effects that developments in the car industry had on the US economy in the 1920s. (8 marks)

1(d) Explain why there was a depression in US agriculture in the 1920s. (8 marks)

2 Explain how the role of women in US society changed in the 1920s. (8 marks)

3 Was over-production the main reason for the Wall Street Crash of 1929? Explain your answer. (16 marks)

You may use the following information to help you with your answer:

- Over-production
- Unequal distribution of incomes
- Protection
- Problems in the stock market

(Total 50 marks)

This is a **source inference** question. You have to get a message or messages from the source.

This is a **describe** question – you have to describe the key features of historical actions or events.

This is a **consequence** question – you have to explain the effects or results of an event.

This is a **causation** question – you have to explain why something happened.

This is a **change** question – you have to explain how and why changes occurred.

This is a **scaffolding** question, which gives you four main points. You should develop at least three clear points and judge and explain the importance of each.

Key Topic 2: US society 1919–29

Source A: A photo, taken in 1926, of a black man who has been lynched



Source B: 'Strange Fruit' was written by Lewis Allan and sung most famously by Billie Holiday, an African American blues singer. The haunting song describes a lynching

*Southern trees bear a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.
Pastoral scene of the gallant south,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth;
And the sudden smell of burning flesh.
Here is the fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the tree to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.*

Tasks

1. Study Source B. What is the song's message? Which line do you think is the most effective?
2. Study Sources A and B. What impression do they give you of US society in the 1920s?

This key topic examines the main features of the roaring twenties, including **consumerism**, new forms of entertainment, the impact of the cinema and changes in the position of women, especially the **flappers**. It also explains the reasons for and the social effects of Prohibition, in particular the rise of organised crime and the activities of Al Capone and other gangsters. The final chapter highlights intolerance and racism in the USA in the 1920s. It examines attitudes to immigrants and black Americans and the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Furthermore it shows the importance of two key trials, the 'Monkey Trial' and Sacco and Vanzetti.

Each chapter explains a key issue and examines important lines of enquiry as outlined below:

Chapter 4 The roaring twenties (pages 33–44)

- What was meant by 'consumerism'?
- In what ways did the position of women change?
- What new forms of entertainment were there?
- What was meant by the 'jazz age'?

Chapter 5 Prohibition and gangsters (pages 45–52)

- Why was Prohibition introduced?
- What effects did it have on US society?
- Why was there an increase in organised crime?

- What was the importance of gangsters such as Capone?

Chapter 6 Racism and intolerance (pages 53–65)

- What was the attitude towards immigrants and immigration?
- Why was the Sacco and Vanzetti case important?
- What was the Ku Klux Klan?
- What was the experience of black Americans in the 1920s?
- What was the Monkey trial?

4

The roaring twenties

Source A: A queue outside a cinema in 1925



Source B: From a newspaper article written in the mid-1920s

Jazz employs primitive rhythms which excite the baser human instincts. Jazz music also causes drunkenness. Reason and reflection are lost and the actions of the persons are directed by the stronger animal passions.

Task

What can you learn from Sources A and B about life in the USA in the 1920s?

There were rapid social changes in the USA in the 1920s, and the period is often referred to as the 'roaring twenties'. These changes included a growth in demand for **consumer goods** and a transformation in the status of some women, especially those known as the flappers. Radio and the cinema revolutionised entertainment. Hollywood, in California, became the centre of the film industry. More and more people watched and participated in sport. Modern forms of music, such as jazz, and dances such as the Charleston, became popular.

This chapter answers the following questions:

- What was meant by 'consumerism'?
- In what ways did the position of women change?
- What new forms of entertainment were there?
- What was meant by the 'jazz age'?

Examination skills

This chapter gives additional guidance on answering question 1b from Unit 2. This question, which is worth six marks, is a key-features describe question.

What was meant by 'consumerism'?

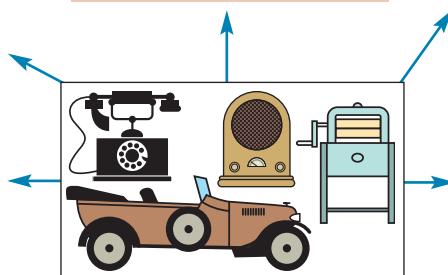
The growth in female employment (see page 38) also increased the need for labour-saving devices, such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners.

By 1927 two-thirds of US homes had electricity. This situation stimulated the demand for electrical goods, such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners.

Hire purchase schemes (see page 13) made it easier to buy goods on **credit**.

Owing to the spread in popular entertainment, more and more Americans bought radios.

For the majority of workers in industry, wages increased. Between 1923 and 1929, the average wage rose by 8 per cent. In other words, workers had more spare money to spend on consumer goods.



The economic boom of the 1920s was fuelled partly by the growth of consumerism, the growing demand among many Americans for everyday items, often household goods. As the diagram above shows, the increased demand for consumer goods was due to several factors.

The impact of the motor car

The clearest example of 1920s consumerism was the boom in the car industry. Chapter 1 gave an explanation of the effect the assembly line had on the growth of the car industry (see pages 16–18). Above all else, Henry Ford made the car affordable

Source A: From an article in the *New York Daily Tribune*, 1929

Any American willing to get up early enough can look out of his own windows and see a trail of thousands of workmen's automobiles scooting down the boulevards to the factory or new building destination. Even ten years ago this great mass of labour had to live just around the corner in a hovel next to the factory or hang on street cars at six o'clock in the morning in order to reach the building site.

Advertising

The importance of advertising was explained in Chapter 1 (see pages 12, 17 and 20). Designers of advertisements studied the psychology of consumers

and devised methods which they believed would encourage people to buy the products. Women were used to advertise many goods. Women were also important targets for the advertisers.

Source B: The manager of an advertising firm explains how to appeal to women

Nine-tenths of the goods bought annually are bought by women. Woman is a creature of the imagination. We pay her a compliment when we say this, for imagination comes from the feelings and feelings come from the heart. And so the advertising appeal, to reach women, must not ignore the first great quality of the heart, which is love. Most advertisers do not ignore the quality of love. There, in almost every advertisement, is a reference, in word or picture, to mother love, to the home, to children, to sentiment.

Tasks

1. Explain why consumerism grew in the USA in the 1920s. (For guidance on how to answer this type of question, see page 74.)
2. What can you learn from Source A about the impact of the motor car?
3. Study Source B. In what ways did advertisers try to appeal to women?

In what ways did the position of women change?

The position of women before 1917

POLITICAL POSITION

Women played no part in politics. They did not have the vote.

SOCIAL POSITION

It was thought to be un-ladylike to smoke or drink in public. A woman would be accompanied by a **chaperone** if she went out during the day or evening. Divorce was rare, and so was sex before marriage.



EMPLOYMENT

Opportunities were limited. Most middle- and upper-class women did not go out to work as this would interfere with their domestic role as mother and housewife. Most working women were employed in low paid jobs, such as cleaning, dress-making and secretarial work.

APPEARANCE

Women were expected to wear tight-waisted, ankle-length dresses, have long hair which was tied back and to wear no make-up.

Source A: Elementary schoolgirls learning to cook, Washington, DC, 1900



Changes after 1917

After 1917, several factors changed the position of women – especially a group known as the flappers.

- The USA's entry into the First World War provided new employment opportunities for women, especially in heavy industry. They proved they could do these jobs just as well as men. This sort of work also encouraged freer behaviour. For the first time, women smoked and drank in public and went out unchaperoned.
- Women were given the vote in 1920. This increase in political power encouraged some to campaign for further change.
- During the consumer boom of the 1920s, the development of new labour-saving devices, such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines, gave women more opportunities for leisure and work.

Tasks

1. What image does Source A give of the life of American women in 1900?
2. Describe the position of women in the USA in the early twentieth century.
(Remember how to answer this type of question? For further guidance, see page 31.)
3. Explain why the position of women changed after 1917.
(For guidance on how to answer this type of question, see page 74.)

The flappers

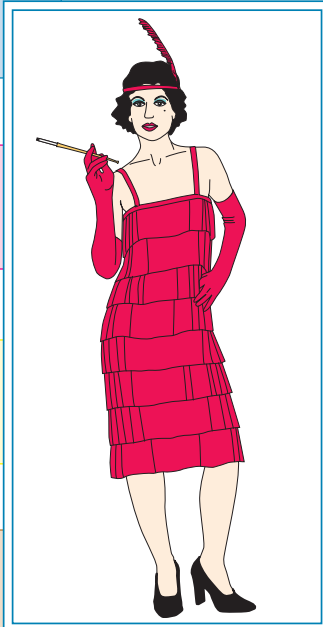
In the 1920s a number of women, generally from middle- and upper-class families living in the northern states, decided to challenge society's traditional attitudes towards women. They became known as the flappers. Their aim was to become more independent in their social life and to take a freer approach to their behaviour and appearance.

They cut their hair short and wore make-up.

They wore short skirts and very bright clothes.

They smoked and drank in public.

They went out to speakeasies and to the cinema without a chaperone.



They openly danced with men in public. Their particular favourite was the new craze, the Charleston. They also listened to controversial new music known as jazz.

They drove cars and even motorbikes.

They wore very revealing swimming costumes on public beaches.

Source A: A view of flappers from the *New York Times*, 1922

A flapper is shameless, selfish and honest but at the same time she thinks of these things as good. Why not? She takes a man's point of view as her mother never could. When she loses she is not afraid to admit defeat, whether it be a lover or \$20 at an auction. She will never make you a husband or knit you a necktie, but she'll drive you from the station on hot summer nights in her own sports car. She'll put on trousers and go skiing with you or, if it happens to be summertime, go swimming.

Source B: Flappers dance the Charleston at a New York club in 1926



Source C: F Scott Fitzgerald was a famous American author who wrote about the roaring twenties. In 1920 he married Zelda Zayre, who was a typical flapper

Flirting, kissing, viewing life lightly, saying damn without a blush, playing along the danger line in an immature way – a sort of mental baby vamp.

Source D: An article with the title 'Flapper Jane' from a US magazine, 1925

Jane's a flapper. Let us take a look at the young person as she strolls across the lawn of her parent's suburban home, having just put the car away after driving sixty miles in two hours. She is, for one thing, a pretty girl. Beauty is the fashion in 1925. She is frankly, heavily made up with poisonously scarlet lips and richly ringed eyes. As for her clothes, Jane isn't wearing much this summer. Her dress is brief. It is cut low. The skirt comes just below the knees. The bra has been abandoned since 1924.

Source E: From a letter written to the *Daily Illini*, 1922

The word 'flapper' to us means not a female that smokes, swears and kisses her gentlemen friends goodnight, although there is no harm in any of that. We think of the flapper as the independent young woman who feels like punching someone when called the 'weaker sex', who resents being put on a pedestal and who is responsible for the advancement of women's condition in the world.

In some respects, however, the flappers did not advance the cause of women's rights in the 1920s. Many traditional groups, especially in rural areas, saw them as too extreme, and they met with strong disapproval from religious societies. Some flappers deliberately flouted the law and were arrested – for example, for wearing revealing clothing such as banned swimsuits (see Source F). Other observers dismissed the flappers as simply pleasure-seeking women with few other attributes.

Source F: A group of flappers in Chicago being arrested for wearing banned one-piece bathing suits which were seen as too figure-hugging



Source G: An English journalist writing about flappers in the USA in 1921

Think of the modern young American girl of this great country. Do they ever think? Do they ever ask whence they have come? It would seem not. Their aim appears to be to attract men and to secure money. What can a man with a mind find to hold him in one of these lovely, brainless, cigarette-smoking creatures of undisciplined sex whom he meets continually?

Tasks

4. Study all the sources on these two pages. Then copy and complete the following table. An example has been done for you.

Source	Positive features of flappers	Negative features
D		Interested only in their appearance

5. Overall, do you think the flappers improved the status of women? Explain your answer.

Other changes in the position of women

There were other important developments in the status of women in the USA in the 1920s.

Employment opportunities

There was certainly progress in the numbers of women in employment. By 1930 two million more women were employed than had been the case ten years earlier. However, these women tended to do poorly paid unskilled jobs. Despite the fact that a third of university degrees were awarded to women in 1930, only 4 per cent of university professors were women. Medical schools allocated only 5 per cent of places to women. Consequently, the number of female doctors actually declined in the 1920s.

A man doing the same job as a woman still received a lot more pay. Women received no support from the **Supreme Court**, which banned all attempts to set **minimum wages** for women. In 1927, when female textile workers in Tennessee went on strike for better pay, the government took the side of the employers. The strikers were arrested by the local police.

There were some new career opportunities for women, but these were in so-called 'women's jobs', such as librarians and nurses.

Source H: A table showing the percentage of women in certain jobs in the years 1900–30

	1900	1930
Professional and technical workers	8	14
Managers and officials	1	3
Clerical and sales workers	8	28
Skilled craftspeople	1	1
Workers and labourers	26	19
Domestic servants	29	18
Other service workers	7	10
Farmers	6	2

Marriage

The media, and especially magazines, reminded women that they should marry and have children. Once women married, they generally gave up work. Nevertheless, married women in the 1920s tended to have fewer children and lived longer than their mothers and grandmothers had. In 1900, the average lifespan for a woman was

51 years. By 1925 this figure had increased to 63. In 1900, American women had an average of 3.6 children. This figure had fallen to 2.6 by 1930.

Women were less likely to remain in unhappy marriages in the 1920s. In 1914 there were 100,000 divorces. There were twice as many in 1929.

Politics

Women were given the vote in 1920. A few women did make progress in gaining political power. For example, in 1924 Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming became the first woman to be elected **governor** of a state. Two years later, Bertha Knight Landes became the first female mayor of an American city, Seattle.

However, these women were the exception, and women made little progress in politics itself. Political parties wanted their vote but did not see them as realistic candidates for political office. By 1920 there were only a handful of female politicians. Most women, in any case, had little interest in politics. The **women's movement** failed in its attempt to get the Equal Rights Amendment Act passed. The act would have given women equality in law with men.

Entertainment

The popularity of the cinema, radio and dance halls provided further opportunities for women. For example, Mary Pickford and Clara Bow became stars of silent movies; they were so successful that they joined two other stars in setting up their own film company. Mae West, Gloria Swanson and Jean Harlow became stars of the 'talkies' and role models for many younger American girls.

Society

The flappers did pave the way for a more tolerant approach to the social position of women. More women worked, and with more money of their own, working women increasingly made the decisions about whether to buy new items for the home. Even women who did not earn their own money were increasingly seen as the ones who took these purchasing decisions. Advertising was aimed specifically at women for this reason. It has even been suggested that it was pressure from women that convinced Ford to offer other colours, apart from black, for their cars.

In addition, the new labour-saving devices such as vacuum cleaners, released women from some of the time previously spent on domestic chores. This enabled some to go into employment and provided others with more opportunity for leisure and recreational activities.

Source I: American magazine advertisement, 1926, for the Maytag electric washer

However, there was still a strong conservative element in US society – especially in rural areas, where religion and traditional attitudes prevented any real change.

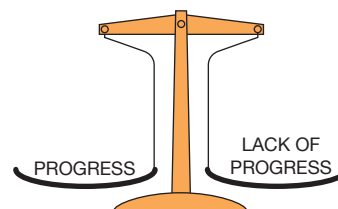
Many married women could not afford the new labour-saving devices. A survey in 1932 of 10,000 farmhouses found that only 32 per cent had any running water at all, with 57 per cent owning a washing machine. Only 47 per cent had carpet sweepers. These women not only spent a considerable time on housework and looking after the children, they also had to milk the cows and work in the fields. They experienced little change and few benefits from the roaring twenties.

Source J: Written by Doris E Fleischman and published in America as Americans See It (1932)

It is wholly confusing to read the advertisements in the magazines that feature the enticing qualities of vacuum cleaners, refrigerators and hundreds of other devices which should lighten the chores of women in the home. On the whole these large middle classes do their own housework with few of the mechanical aids. Women who live on farms do a great deal of work besides caring for their children, washing the clothes and caring for the home and cooking. Thousands still work in the fields and help milk the cows.

Tasks

6. What can you learn from Source J about women in rural areas of the USA in the 1920s and early 1930s?
7. Study Source I. Give two examples of progress for women from this advert.
8. Working in pairs, make a copy of the following set of scales.



Using evidence from pages 33–37,

- one of the pair write examples of progress on the left-hand scale
 - the other write examples of lack of progress on the right-hand scale.
9. Overall, do you think women made progress in their position in US society in the 1920s? Give reasons for your answer.
 10. Explain the effects that the roaring twenties had on the position of women in the USA. (For guidance on how to answer this type of question, see page 52.)

What new forms of entertainment were there?

In the USA in the 1920s, there was a growth in the popularity of many forms of entertainment, including sport, radio and the cinema. Labour-saving devices for the home, like washing machines, gave people more free time. **Mass production** meant people worked less. Americans began to look for ways to fill their spare time, especially as many were now better paid. They wanted to forget about the war and set out to enjoy themselves. A whole pleasure industry grew up, giving Americans new entertainments to spend their money on. The boom of the 1920s brought new forms of music and dance as well as increased popularity for spectator sports.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

More and more people bought newspapers and magazines. In 1919 the first tabloid newspaper, the *Daily News*, was published. This breakthrough encouraged other publications, which concentrated on crime, cartoon strips and fashion. People wanted to read about heroes and heroines of sport and cinema. Advertisers were keen to use magazines and newspapers to sell their goods. In 1922, ten magazines each claimed a circulation of over 2.5 million.



Source A: The heavyweight boxing champion Gene Tunney sends Jack Dempsey to the canvas in the eighth round of their 1927 title bout in Chicago



SPORT

In the early 1920s sport became a very important part of the lives of many Americans. The radio made following major sports events even more popular. Indeed, the 1920s was officially named the 'Golden Age of Sport'. Baseball, football, horse racing and tennis captured the imagination of many people. Baseball was the most popular game; Babe Ruth, the most popular sportsman of the time, had a major influence on the younger generation because he was not shy about drinking and smoking in public.



Spectators flocked to see sporting events. In 1924, 67,000 watched the football match between Illinois and Michigan in the Memorial Stadium. In 1927, some 145,000 saw the boxing match between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney.

THE CINEMA

The most popular form of entertainment in the 1920s was the movies. A visit to the cinema became an integral part of American life.



By 1926 there were over 17,000 movie houses, including many in small villages. Until 1927 there was no soundtrack on films. A pianist played tunes while the film ran. He would play fast music for chase scenes and romantic music for love scenes. The film stars of the silent era included Charlie Chaplin and Greta Garbo. In 1926 it was reported that Greta Garbo earned \$5000 a week.

Rudolf Valentino was the first male star to be sold on sex appeal. The studio publicity reported how women fainted when they saw him. When he died in 1926, over 100,000 fans lined the streets during his funeral.

The release of the first 'talkie' in 1927 made the cinema even more popular. By 1930 more than 100 million cinema tickets were sold every week. Movie-makers found that sex sold tickets. Newspapers wrote about risqué love scenes and the sex lives of the stars.

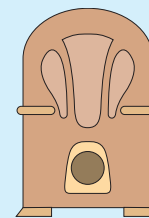
The cinemas themselves improved their facilities in order to attract more people. The early nickelodeon with its wooden seats was replaced by 'picture palaces' with luxurious seats. The hollow-sounding piano was replaced by organs or even a full orchestra. By the end of the 1920s, there were several famous film studios, notably Warner Brothers, William Fox and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM).

Source C: Mary Evelyn Hults remembers the 1920s

It was really an experience. You would be treated like a king or queen. You were ushered into an enormous lobby of marble or gilt with huge stairways leading up to the balconies. All the carpets were at least an inch or two thick. Everything was done in there to make you feel comfortable, to make you feel very important.

THE RADIO

The radio had a huge influence on many Americans. The first radio station, Station KDKA, began in 1920, and by 1930, 40 per cent of US homes had a radio set. Radio enabled people to listen to sporting events, music – notably jazz – and advertisements. News, sport and entertainment were easily relayed into millions of homes. Indeed radio became the main source of family entertainment. It created sporting heroes such as Jack Dempsey and Babe Ruth, and made events accessible to many who could not afford to attend.



Source B: A woman listening to a radio, 1923



Tasks

1. Make a mind map of the main forms of entertainment. On your mind map show any links. For example, the radio could be used to promote sport.
2. Study Sources A and B. How important was the media in promoting new forms of entertainment?
3. What can you learn from Source C about why the cinema became popular?
4. Explain how two forms of entertainment became popular in the 1920s. (For guidance on how to answer this type of question, see page 93.)

Hollywood

Hollywood became the centre of movie making in the USA in the 1920s.

The first film shot in the Hollywood area was called *In Old California* (1910). The following year the first studio was opened by the Centaur Company. This company was based in New Jersey but wanted to make Western films in California. By 1915 the majority of American films were being made in the Los Angeles area. Four major film companies – Paramount, Warner Bros, RKO and Columbia – had studios in Hollywood. Five years later, a million people were employed in the Hollywood film industry.

Movie stars themselves moved to the Los Angeles area and began building themselves luxury homes. Gloria Swanson, for example, had a 22-room mansion in Beverly Hills. Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton both lived in the area.

Hollywood and the film industry in general did provoke criticism from those who believed that the movies were threatening the morals of American society. Many Americans blamed Hollywood for the blatant use of sex symbols, such as Clara Bow and Rudolf Valentino. They were also shocked by the morality of some Hollywood films. Hollywood responded by setting up the Hays Code.

Source A: Extracts from the Hays Code

- *No screen nudity*
- *Screen kisses must not last*
- *Adultery must not be presented as attractive*
- *Producers must avoid low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects*
- *Members of the clergy cannot be comic characters or villains*
- *Murder, arson and smuggling must be shown as evil.*

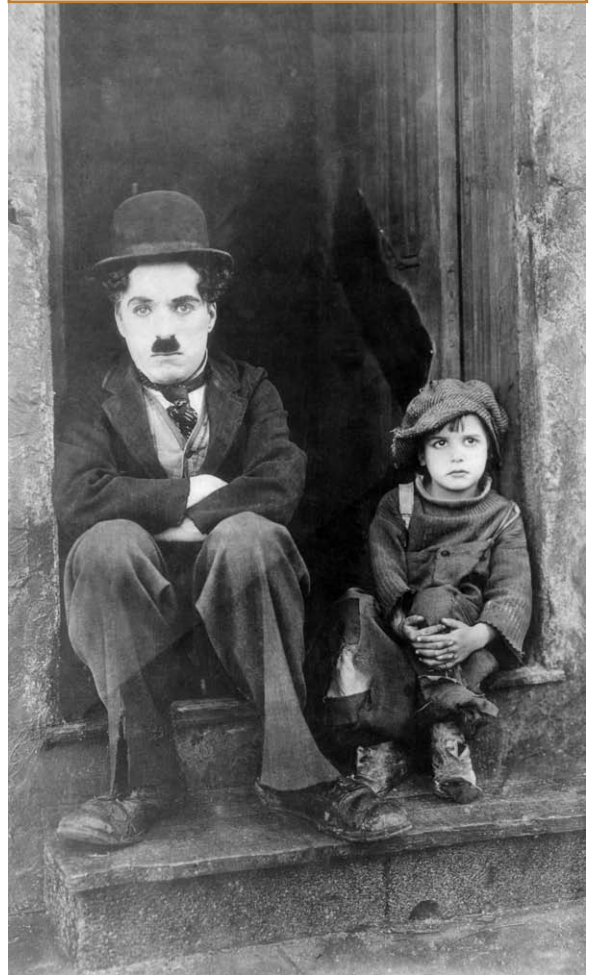
Tasks

5. What can you learn from Source A about attitudes to film making in the 1920s?
6. Source B was used to advertise the film *The Kid*. Devise an appropriate caption to encourage people to go to see the film.

Biography Charlie Chaplin, 1889–1977

Charlie Chaplin was born in England in 1889 and moved to the USA in 1913. He began to work in silent movies and rose to become one of the great comic movie stars of the 1920s. Among his most famous films were *The Vagabond*, *The Kid*, *The Gold Rush* and *The Pawnshop*.

Source B: Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Coogan in *The Kid*, 1921



Chaplin did lose popularity in the 1920s when an actress, Joan Barry, claimed he was the father of her child. Chaplin took Barry to court over this. Although he won the case, some Americans turned against him, believing he was setting a bad moral example, and refused to go to see his films.

What was meant by the 'jazz age'?

The 1920s is known as the 'jazz age' because the popular music of the time was jazz. The writer F Scott Fitzgerald coined the phrase in 1922 in his book *The Beautiful and Damned*.

Jazz was not new. It originated with black slaves who were encouraged to sing in order to increase production. They used washboards, cans, pickaxes and percussion to produce their own distinctive brand of music. By changing the beat and creating particular rhythms, it was changed into jazz. Originally the music had various names, including 'blues', 'rag' and 'boogie-woogie'. However, these words were taken from black sexual slang terms, and white people disapproved of their use. Therefore, the music was renamed jazz.

Despite its African American origins, in the 1920s jazz became popular with young middle-class whites, especially the flappers. Some condemned jazz as another sign of a fall in moral standards. In 1921, for example, the *Ladies Home Journal* published an article with the title 'Does Jazz put the Sin in Syncopation?' (Syncopation refers to the off-beat rhythms that characterise jazz music.)

Some cities, including New York and Cleveland, prohibited the public performance of jazz in dance halls. However, this only made it more exciting to the young. Jazz became the great attraction of the night clubs and speakeasies and was brought into homes through radio broadcasts.

Duke Ellington, 1899–1974



He was born in Washington, DC, in 1899 and became a composer and pianist. In the 1920s he moved to New York, where he assembled a ten-piece band. He became popular because of recordings such as *Choo Choo* and *Chocolate Kiddies*.

Louis Armstrong, 1901–1971



He was born in New Orleans in 1900 and became famous as a trumpeter there. In 1922 he moved to Chicago, known as the jazz capital of the USA. By 1925 he had his own band and was known nationwide. Some of his famous recordings included *Ain't Misbehavin* and *Tiger Rag*.

Source A: The *Ladies Home Journal*, 1922

Jazz was originally the accompaniment of the voodoo dancer, stimulating the half-crazed barbarian to the vilest deeds. The weird chant had been employed by other barbaric people to stimulate brutality and sensuality. That this has a demoralising effect on the human brain has been demonstrated by many scientists. Jazz is harmful and dangerous and its influences are wholly bad.

Task

What can you learn from Source A about attitudes to jazz in the 1920s?

Examination practice

This section provides guidance on how to answer question 1b from Unit 2, which is worth six marks. There is further guidance on how to answer this type of question on page 31.

Question 1 – describe

Describe the key features of the flapper movement of the 1920s. (6 marks)

How to answer

- Underline key points in the question.
- Plan your answer. Think of the relevant points – the main question word is ‘describe’, and the topic is the flapper movement. You will need to describe three key features.
- Fully develop each factor/feature you mention. Features could include:
 - How flappers looked
 - Their attitude to socialising
 - F Scott Fitzgerald
 - Attitudes to flappers

The more precise your knowledge, the higher your marks.

- Make links between one factor/feature and the next. Use link words or phrases, such as ‘furthermore’, ‘moreover’, ‘however’, ‘in addition’, ‘as a result of’, and ‘this led to’.
- Aim for two good length paragraphs, as the question is worth six marks.

The diagram below shows the steps you should take to write a good answer. Use the steps and the examples to complete the answer to the question. Write your answer one paragraph at a time and link the paragraphs where possible.

