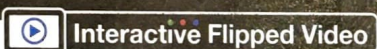


>> Duke Ellington was a composer, pianist, and bandleader. He referred to his music as "American Music" rather than "jazz." His career spanned the 1920s to the 1970s.



>> Objectives

Analyze how Western society and culture changed after World War I.

Identify the contributions of modern scientists such as Marie Curie and Albert Einstein.

Summarize the domestic and foreign policy issues that the Western democracies faced after World War I.

Describe how the global depression began and spread.

Explain the responses of Britain, France, and the United States to the Great Depression.

>> Key Terms

flapper	Great Depression
Miriam Ferguson	Franklin D. Roosevelt
Prohibition	New Deal
Marie Curie	
Albert Einstein	
psychoanalysis	
Harlem Renaissance	
abstract art	
dada	
surrealism	
Maginot Line	
Kellogg-Briand Pact	
disarmament	
general strike	
overproduction	
finance	
Federal Reserve	

8.5

The catastrophe of World War I shattered the sense of optimism that had grown in the West since the Enlightenment. Despair gripped survivors on both sides as they added up the staggering costs of the war. Europeans mourned a generation of young men who had been lost on the battlefields.

The West After World War I

Social Change After World War I

Many people talked about a "return to normalcy," to life as it had been before 1914. But rebellious young people rejected the moral values and rules of the Victorian Age and chased after excitement. Gertrude Stein, an American writer living in Paris, called them the "lost generation." Others saw them as immoral pleasure-seekers.

The Roaring Twenties During the 1920s, new technologies helped create a mass culture shared by millions in the world's developed countries. Affordable cars, improved telephones, and new forms of media such as motion pictures and radio brought people around the world closer together than ever before.

In the 1920s, many radios tuned into the new sounds of jazz. In fact, the decade in the West is often called the Jazz Age. African American musicians combined Western harmonies with African rhythms to create jazz. Jazz musicians, like trumpeter Louis Armstrong and pianist Duke Ellington, took simple melodies and improvised endless subtle variations in rhythm and beat.

Throughout the 1920s, the popularity of jazz moved from the United States to Europe. Europeans embraced American popular culture, with

its greater freedom and willingness to experiment. The nightclub and jazz were symbols of that freedom. Jazz came to embody the universal themes of creativity and self-expression.

Much of today's popular music has been influenced by jazz. It has transcended the "Roaring Twenties" American culture to become an international musical language.

After the war, rebellious young people, disillusioned by the war, rejected the moral values and rules of the Victorian Age and chased after excitement. During the Jazz Age, this rebellion was exemplified by a new type of liberated young woman called the **flapper**. The first flappers were American, but their European sisters soon adopted the fashion. Flappers rejected old ways in favor of new, exciting freedoms.

The Flapper awoke from her lethargy (tiredness) ... bobbed her hair, put on her choicest pair of earrings and a great deal of audacity (boldness) and rouge and went into battle. She flirted because it was fun to flirt and ... refused to be bored chiefly because she wasn't boring ... Mothers disapproved of their sons taking the Flapper to dances, to teas, to swim, and most of all to heart.

—Zelda Fitzgerald, flapper and wife of author F. Scott Fitzgerald

Women's Progress Flappers were highly visible, but they were a small minority. Most women saw mixed progress in the postwar period. During the war, women had held a wide range of jobs. Although most women left those jobs when the war ended, their war work helped them win the vote in many Western countries, such as Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States. A few women were elected to public office, such as Texas governor **Miriam Ferguson** or Lady Nancy Astor, the first woman to serve in the British Parliament.

By the 1920s, labor-saving devices had become common in middle class homes. Washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and canned foods lightened the burden of household chores. Some women then sought work outside the home or did volunteer work to help the less fortunate.

In the new atmosphere of emancipation, women sought higher education and pursued careers in many areas—from sports to the arts. Women golfers, tennis players, swimmers, and pilots set new records.

Women worked as newspaper reporters, published bestselling novels, and won recognition as artists. Most professions, though, were still dominated by men. Women doing the same work as men earned much less.

Diverse Reactions to the Jazz Age Not everyone approved of the freewheeling lifestyle of the Jazz Age. In 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States ushered in **Prohibition**, which banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. Temperance reformers had long sought the amendment to stop alcohol abuse. It was later repealed in part because it had spurred the growth of organized crime, which supplied illegal alcohol to speakeasies, or illegal bars.

In the United States in the early 1900s, a Christian fundamentalist movement swept rural areas. Fundamentalists support traditional Christian beliefs. Popular fundamentalist preachers traveled around the country holding inspirational revival meetings. Some used the new technology of radio to spread their message.

? SOLVE PROBLEMS What problem was Prohibition intended to solve? How well did it succeed?



>> Amelia Earhart was an American aviation pioneer and author. She was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She was also an avid supporter of women's rights.

Scientific Discoveries

Even before World War I, new ideas and scientific discoveries were challenging long-held ideas about the nature of the world and even of people. Like the war, science helped feed a sense of uncertainty that flowed through Western culture.

Curie Experiments with Radioactivity The ancient Greeks were the first to propose that all matter is composed of tiny, indivisible atoms. Over the centuries, most scientists came to accept this idea. But discoveries made in the early 1900s showed that the atom was more complex than anyone suspected.

The Polish-born French scientist **Marie Curie** and others experimented with an atomic process called radioactivity. They found that the atoms of certain elements, such as radium and uranium, spontaneously release charged particles. As scientists studied radioactivity further, they discovered that it can change atoms of one element into atoms of another. Such findings proved that atoms are not solid and indivisible.

Einstein Proposes the Theory of Relativity In 1905 and 1916, the German-born physicist **Albert Einstein** introduced his theories of relativity. Einstein argued

that measurements of space and time are not absolute but are determined by many factors, including the relative position of the observer. Einstein's ideas raised questions about Newtonian science, which compared the universe to a machine operating according to absolute laws.

In the postwar years, many scientists came to accept the theories of relativity. To the general public, however, Einstein's ideas were difficult to understand. They seemed to further reinforce the unsettling sense of a universe whirling beyond the understanding of human reason.

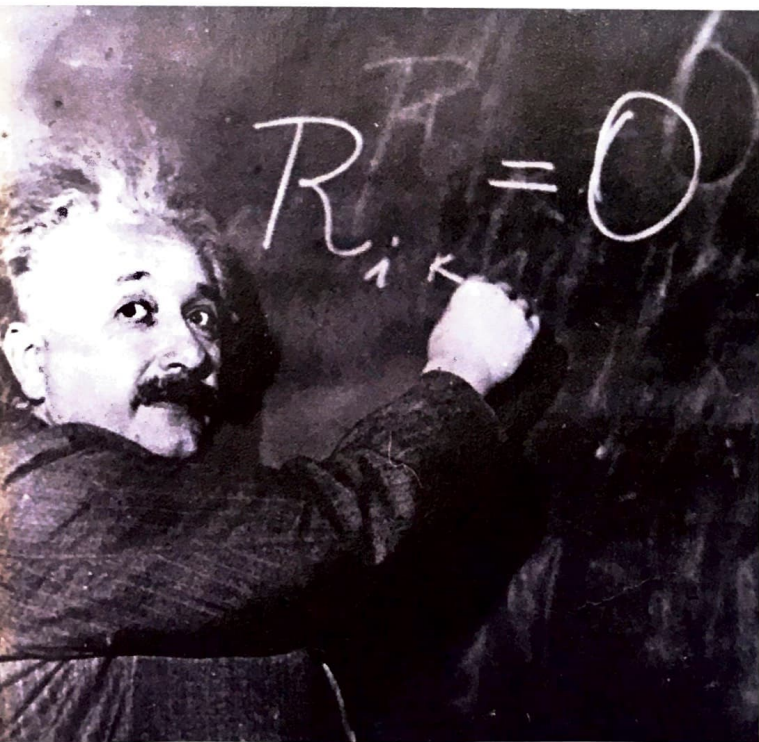
In 1934, building on Curie's and Einstein's theories, Italian physicist Enrico Fermi and other scientists around the world discovered atomic fission, or the splitting of the nuclei of atoms in two. This splitting produces a huge burst of energy. In the 1940s, Fermi (now an American), along with fellow American physicists J. Robert Oppenheimer and Edward Teller, would use this discovery to create the devastating atomic bomb.

Fleming Discovers Penicillin In 1928, the Scottish scientist Alexander Fleming made a different type of scientific discovery. One day, he picked up a discarded laboratory dish that he had used to grow bacteria. The dish had grown some mold, which had killed the bacteria. Fleming called this nontoxic mold "penicillin." Fleming's penicillin was the first antibiotic, or medicine used to kill micro-organisms such as bacteria. Later scientists developed a wide range of antibiotics.

Freud Analyzes the Mind The Austrian physician Sigmund Freud (froyd) also challenged faith in reason. He suggested that the subconscious mind drives much of human behavior. Freud said that learned social values such as morality and reason help people to repress, or check, powerful urges. But an individual feels constant tension between repressed drives and social training. This tension, argued Freud, may cause psychological or physical illness.

Freud pioneered **psychoanalysis**, a method of studying how the mind works and treating mental disorders. Although many of his theories have been discredited, Freud's ideas have had an extraordinary impact far beyond medicine. They strongly influenced the art and literature of the postwar West.

? IDENTIFY PATTERNS How did scientific discoveries in the 1920s change people's views of the world?



>> Albert Einstein received the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics and is well known for his mass-energy formula. Einstein fled Germany and became an American citizen in 1940.

Literature Reflects New Perspectives

In the 1920s, war novels, poetry, plays, and memoirs flowed off the presses. Novels such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* by German author Erich Remarque exposed the grim horrors faced by soldiers in World War I. Other writers heaped scorn on the leaders who took them into war. Their realistic works stripped away any romantic notions about the glories of warfare and reflected a powerful disgust with war that influenced an entire generation.

The Lost Generation To many postwar writers, the war symbolized the moral breakdown of Western civilization. In 1922, the English poet T. S. Eliot published *The Waste Land*. This long poem portrays the modern world as spiritually empty and barren.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, the American novelist Ernest Hemingway shows the rootless wanderings of young people who lack deep convictions. "I did not care what it was all about," says the narrator. "All I wanted to know was how to live in it." In *The Great Gatsby*, American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald exposed the emptiness of the 1920s world of flappers and parties.

American poet Gertrude Stein considered herself, her writer friends, and young people part of a "lost generation." They had become adults during or right after World War I and were disillusioned by the upheaval of the war and its aftermath.

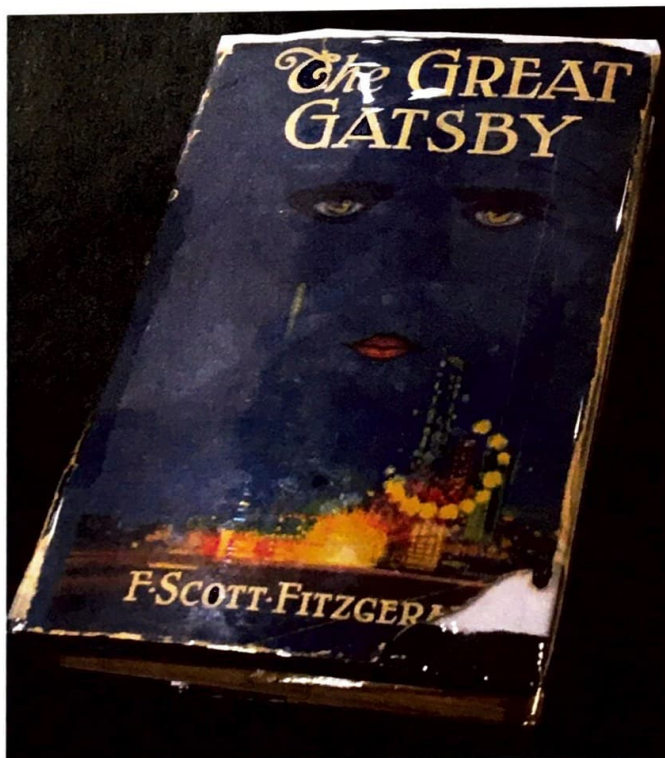
Literature Explores the Inner Mind As Freud's ideas became popular, many writers began to explore the inner workings of the mind. Some experimented with stream of consciousness. In this technique, a writer appears to present a character's random thoughts and feelings without imposing any logic or order. In the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, British novelist Virginia Woolf used stream of consciousness to explore the thoughts of people going through the ordinary actions of their everyday lives. In *Finnegans Wake*, the Irish novelist James Joyce explored the inner mind of a hero who remains sound asleep throughout the novel.

The Harlem Renaissance A more optimistic literary movement arose in the United States during the 1920s. The **Harlem Renaissance** was an African American cultural awakening. It began in Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City that was home to many African Americans. African American writers and artists expressed their pride in their unique culture.

Among its best known figures was the poet and playwright Langston Hughes. In his poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," Hughes reflects on the rivers



>> Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud founded the field of psychoanalysis. In his later years, Freud used psychoanalysis to interpret religion and culture.



>> F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* is a portrait of the Jazz Age and Roaring Twenties. It emphasizes the glittering but empty life of parties and excess.

associated with the African and African-American experience from the Euphrates, Congo, and Nile to the Mississippi. Novelist and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston studied African American folklore and traditions.

? COMPARE POINTS OF VIEW How did postwar authors show disillusionment with prewar institutions?

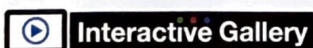
Modern Art and Architecture

In the early 1900s, many Western artists rejected traditional styles. Instead of trying to reproduce the real world, they explored other dimensions of color, line, and shape. Painters like Henri Matisse (ma TEES) utilized bold, wild strokes of color and odd distortions to produce works of strong emotion. He and fellow artists outraged the public and were dubbed *fauves*(fohv), or wild beasts, by critics.

Painters Embrace Revolutionary Trends Before World War I, the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso and the French artist Georges Braque (brak) created a revolutionary new style called cubism. Cubists painted



>> Pablo Picasso, one of the most important artists of the 20th century, co-developed the movement known as Cubism. He painted *Woman Sitting in an Armchair* in 1920.



three-dimensional objects as complex patterns of angles and planes. By redefining objects into separate shapes, they offered a new view of reality.

Later, the Russian Vasily Kandinsky and the Swiss Paul Klee moved even further away from representing reality. They created a new style of **abstract art**, composed only of lines, colors, and shapes, sometimes with no recognizable subject matter at all.

During and after the war, the dada movement burst onto the Paris art world. **Dada** was a European art movement that rejected traditional artistic values by producing works that seemed like absurd nonsense. Dada was a revolt against civilization. Paintings and sculptures by Jean Arp and Max Ernst were intended to shock and disturb viewers. Some Dadaists created works made of objects they found abandoned or thrown away.

Cubism and dada both helped to inspire **surrealism**, a movement that attempted to portray the workings of the unconscious mind. Surrealism rejected rational thought, which had produced the horrors of World War I, in favor of irrational or unconscious ideas. The Spanish surrealist Salvador Dali used images of melting clocks and burning giraffes to suggest the chaotic dream state described by Freud.

Architecture Reflects a New World Architects, too, rejected classical traditions and developed new styles to match a new urban, industrialized world. The famous Bauhaus school in Germany influenced architecture by blending science and technology with design. Bauhaus buildings used glass, steel, and concrete but very little ornamentation.

The American architect Frank Lloyd Wright reflected the Bauhaus belief that the function of a building should determine its form. He used materials and forms that fit a building's environment. He believed that "a building should grace its environment rather than disgrace it." One of Wright's most famous designs is Fallingwater, a house in Pennsylvania built on a waterfall. The structure works in harmony with the surrounding environment, as Wright intended.

? IDENTIFY CAUSE AND EFFECT What effect did World War I have on artistic movements in the 1920s?

Postwar Politics in the West

As nations recovered from the war, people began to feel hope rising out of their disillusionment. But soon, the "lost generation" would face a new crisis that would revive many old problems and spark new conflicts.

In 1919, the three Western democracies—Britain, France, and the United States—appeared powerful. They had ruled the Paris Peace Conference and boosted hopes for democracy among the new nations of Eastern Europe. Beneath the surface, however, postwar Europe faced grave problems. To make matters worse, many members of the younger generation who might have become the next great leaders had been killed in the war.

At first, the most pressing issues were finding jobs for returning veterans and rebuilding war-ravaged lands like France and Belgium. Economic problems fed social unrest and made radical ideas more popular. The Russian Revolution unleashed fears of the spread of communism. Some people saw socialism as the answer to economic hardships. Others embraced nationalist political movements.

Political Parties Clash in Britain In Britain during the 1920s, the Labour party surpassed the Liberal party in strength. The Labour party gained support among workers by promoting a gradual move toward socialism. The Liberal party passed some social legislation, but it traditionally represented middle-class business interests. As the Liberal party faltered, the middle class began to back the Conservative party, joining the upper class, professionals, and farmers. With this support, the Conservative party held power during much of 1920s. After a massive strike of over three million workers in 1926, Conservatives passed legislation limiting the power of workers to strike.

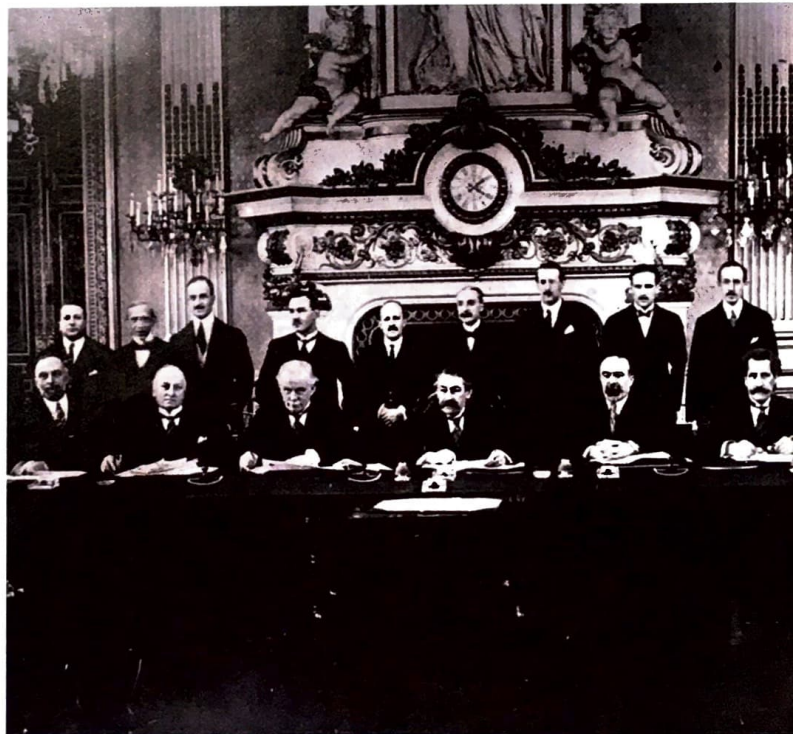
Irish Independence at Last Britain still faced the “Irish question.” In 1914, Parliament passed a home-rule bill that was shelved when the war began. Militant Irish nationalists, however, were unwilling to wait any longer. On Easter 1916, a small group launched a revolt against British rule. Although the Easter Rising was quickly suppressed, it stirred wider support for the Irish cause.

When Parliament again failed to grant home rule in 1919, members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) began a guerrilla war against British forces and their supporters. In 1922, moderates in Ireland and Britain reached an agreement. Most of Ireland became the independent Irish Free State. The largely Protestant northern counties remained under British rule. The settlement ended the worst violence, but the IRA and others never accepted the division of Ireland. In years to come, Catholics in the north faced discrimination, creating new tensions and conflict.

Peacetime Troubles in France Like Britain, France emerged from World War I both a victor and a loser.



>> Fallingwater, a Pennsylvania home designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, incorporates nature into its design. It appears to hover over a tranquil waterfall.



>> The major outcomes of the Paris Peace Conference were five peace treaties ending World War I, including the Treaty of Versailles with Germany, and the creation of the League of Nations.

Fighting on the Western front had destroyed much of northern France. The French had suffered huge casualties. Survivors felt battered and insecure.

After the war, political divisions and financial scandals continued to plague the Third Republic. Several parties—from conservatives to communists—competed for power. During the postwar years, France was again ruled by a series of coalition governments that created temporary alliances among rival political parties.

Postwar Fears in the United States In contrast, the United States emerged from World War I in good shape. A late entrant into the war, it had suffered relatively few casualties and little loss of property. However, the United States did experience some domestic unrest. Fear of radicals and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia set off a “Red Scare” in 1919 and 1920. Police rounded up suspected foreign-born radicals, and a number were expelled from the United States.

The “Red Scare” fed growing demands to limit immigration. Millions of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe had poured into the United States between 1890 and 1914. Some native-born Americans sought to exclude these newcomers, whose cultures differed from those of earlier settlers from northern

Europe. In response, Congress passed laws limiting immigration from Europe. Earlier laws had already excluded or limited Chinese and Japanese immigration.

? IDENTIFY CENTRAL ISSUES What political issues did France face after World War I?

International Relations

In addition to problems at home, the three democracies faced a difficult international situation. The peace settlements that ended World War I caused friction, especially in Germany and among some ethnic groups in Eastern Europe.

Allies Disagree Over Direction France's chief concern after the war was securing its borders against Germany. The French remembered the German invasions of 1870 and 1914. To prevent a third invasion, France built massive fortifications called the **Maginot Line** (ma zhee NOH) along its border with Germany. The Maginot Line offered a sense of security—a false one. The line would be of little use when Germany invaded again in 1940.

In its quest for security, France also strengthened its military and sought alliances with other countries, including the Soviet Union. It insisted on strict enforcement of the Versailles treaty and complete payment of reparations. France's goal was to keep the German economy weak.

Britain was more interested in protecting its overseas empire and rebuilding trade than in punishing Germany. British leaders strongly supported the limits on German naval power. Still, during the postwar period, many British leaders began to think that the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh on Germany, and they called for easing its terms. They feared that if Germany became too weak, the Soviet Union and France would become too powerful.

Searching for Peace During the 1920s and 1930s, many people worked for peace. Hopes soared in 1925 when representatives from seven European nations signed a series of treaties at Locarno, Switzerland. These treaties settled Germany's disputed borders with France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

The Locarno treaties became the symbol of a new era of peace. “France and Germany Ban War Forever,” trumpeted a *New York Times* headline.

The hopeful “spirit of Locarno” was echoed in the **Kellogg-Briand Pact**, signed in 1928. Almost every independent nation signed this agreement, promising to “renounce war as an instrument of national policy.”



>> Analyze Political Cartoons This political cartoon's original caption was “Communism. A Destructive Worm.” What message is the cartoonist conveying in this cartoon?

Although the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawed war, it provided no way of enforcing the ban.

In the same optimistic spirit, the great powers also pursued **disarmament**, the reduction of armed forces and weapons. The United States, Britain, France, Japan, and other nations signed treaties to reduce the size of their navies. However, they failed to agree on limiting the size of their armies.

The League of Nations Despite grumblings about the Versailles treaty, people around the world put their hope in the League of Nations. From its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the League encouraged cooperation and tried to get members to make a commitment to stop aggression. At first, the League did have some successes. Although the United States never joined, the League grew in the 1920s. In 1926, after signing the Locarno agreements, Germany joined the League. Later, the Soviet Union was also admitted.

Despite its lofty aims, the League of Nations was powerless to stop aggression. In 1931, the League vigorously condemned Japan's invasion of Manchuria, but it had no military means to stop it. Ambitious dictators in Europe noted the League's weakness. They began to rearm and pursue aggressive foreign policies.

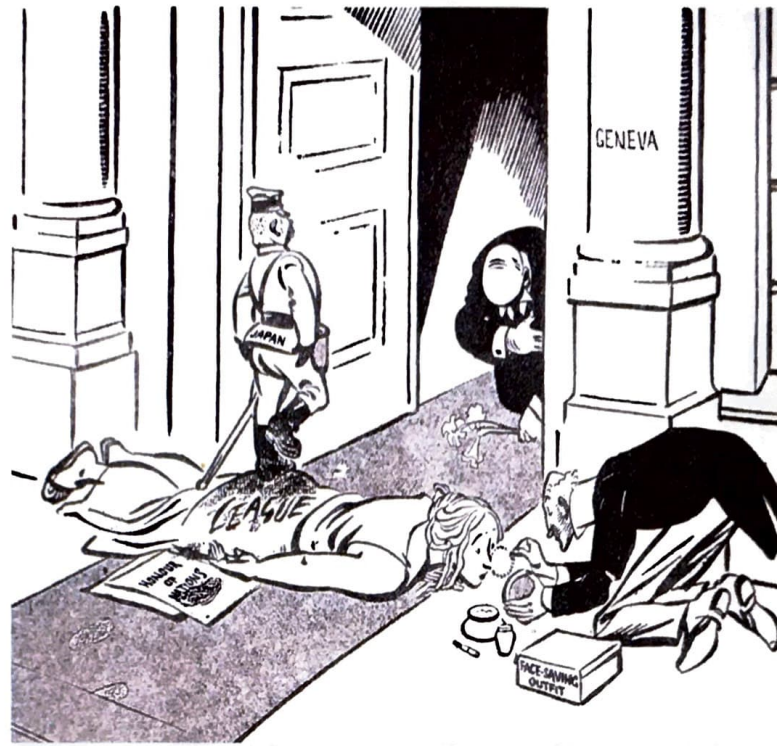
? COMPARE POINTS OF VIEW Why did Britain and France disagree over how to enforce the Treaty of Versailles?

Economics in the Postwar Era

The war affected economies all over the world, hurting some and helping others. Britain and France both owed huge war debts to the United States. Both relied on reparation payments from Germany to pay back their loans. Meanwhile, the crushing reparations and other conditions hurt Germany's economy.

Britain and France Recover Britain faced serious economic problems in the 1920s. It was deeply in debt, and its factories were out of date. Unemployment was severe. Wages remained low, leading to worker unrest and frequent strikes. In 1926, a **general strike**, or strike by workers in many different industries at the same time, lasted nine days and involved some three million workers.

In comparison, the French economy recovered fairly rapidly. Financial reparations and territories gained from Germany helped. Still, economic swings did occur, adding to an unstable political scene.



>> Analyze Political Cartoons This political cartoon, called "The Doormat," makes a statement about the world's reaction to Japan's rising militarism. Who is the doormat in the cartoon, and why might this be the case?

Interactive Cartoon

Despite these problems, Europe made a shaky recovery during the 1920s. Economies returned to peacetime manufacturing and trade. Veterans gradually found jobs, although unemployment never ceased to be a problem. Middle-class families enjoyed a rising standard of living.

The American Economy Booms In contrast, the United States emerged from the war as the world's leading economic power. In the affluent 1920s, middle-class Americans enjoyed the benefits of capitalism. American loans and investments backed the recovery in Europe. As long as the American economy prospered, the global economy remained stable.

? IDENTIFY CAUSE AND EFFECT How did World War I and its peace treaties affect the international economy?

The Great Depression

During the 1920s, European nations made a shaky recovery from World War I, helped in part by American loans and investments. As long as the American economy was healthy, the global economy remained

relatively prosperous. Then, at the end of the decade, an economic crisis began in the United States and spread to the rest of the world. This global economic slump, called the **Great Depression**, was the longest, most severe economic downturn to strike the industrialized Western world.

Overproduction and a Drop in Demand Both the American and the world economy had weak points. In the industrial world, a major problem was **overproduction**, meaning that factories and farms produced more goods than were being sold. In other words, supply outpaced demand.

By the 1920s, improved technology and farming methods had led to higher output. When demand for goods slowed, prices fell. Consumers benefited from the lower prices, but farmers, miners, and other suppliers of raw materials did not. Overproduction created a backlog of unsold goods, leading businesses to cut back on output and lay off workers. Unemployed workers had no money to spend on buying goods, which slowed demand further and brought more layoffs. This cycle then had a ripple effect throughout the economy.

Crash Leads to Collapse Meanwhile, a crisis in **finance**—the management of money matters, including the circulation of money, loans, investments, and banking—was brewing. Few saw the danger.

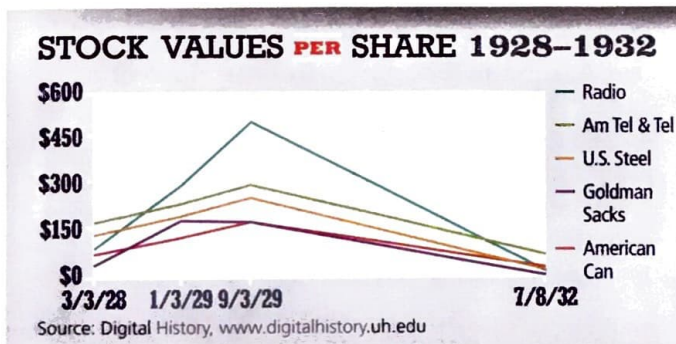
Prices on the New York Stock Exchange were at an all-time high. Eager investors acquired stocks through risky methods. To slow the run on the stock market, the **Federal Reserve**, the central banking system of the United States, raised interest rates in 1928 and again in 1929.

In the autumn of 1929, jitters about the economy caused brokers to call in the loans made to investors. When investors were unable to repay, financial panic set in. Stock prices crashed in October, wiping out the fortunes of many investors. The stock market crash worsened the economic decline. The Great Depression had begun.

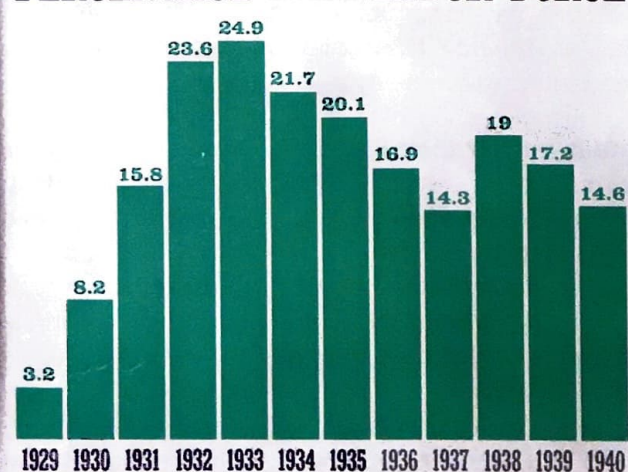
Over the next few years, consumer spending and investment fell, causing still more businesses and factories to close. Millions of people lost their jobs. The cycle spiraled steadily downward. By 1933, between 13 to 15 million Americans were jobless and almost half the banks had closed. The jobless could not afford to buy goods, so more factories had to close, which in turn increased unemployment. People slept on park benches and lined up to eat in soup kitchens.

The Depression Spreads Around the World The economic problems quickly spread around the world. American banks stopped investing or making loans abroad and demanded repayment of foreign loans. Without new investments, European prosperity slowed.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN THE UNITED STATES



UNEMPLOYMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF THE LABOR FORCE



>> Analyze Information In what year did unemployment and bank failures peak in the United States?

Hardest hit were countries, like Britain and Germany, that owed the most to the United States.

In Germany, unemployment rose steeply, leaving one in four workers jobless. Britain was less badly hurt, but its industries and trade were depressed.

Desperate governments tried to protect their economies from foreign competition. The United States imposed the highest tariffs in its history. The policy backfired when other nations retaliated by raising their tariffs. In the end, all countries lost access to the global markets as world trade continued to shrink. The collapse of world trade spread the misery of the Great Depression beyond the industrial world to Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

2 GENERATE EXPLANATIONS What were three root causes of the Great Depression?

Western Democracies React to the Depression

The Great Depression led to changes in government economic policies. For more than a century, Western governments had backed laissez-faire capitalism, the policy that calls for little or no government interference in the economy. During the 1930s, governments in Britain, France, the United States, and elsewhere stepped in to ease the impact of the Great Depression. None of their methods provided a quick fix, but they did alleviate some of the suffering.

Britain and France Search for Solutions In response to the Depression, Britain set up a coalition government made up of leaders from all three of its major political parties. The government provided some unemployment benefits. It kept tariffs low throughout the British Empire to boost trade but raised tariffs against the United States and other countries. By the mid-1930s, Britain was slowly recovering from the worst of the Great Depression. Still, unemployment remained high, and the recovery was uneven.

The Great Depression took longer to hurt France than some other countries. However, by the mid-1930s, France was feeling the pinch of decreased production and unemployment. In response, several leftist parties united behind the socialist leader Leon Blum. His Popular Front government tried to solve labor problems and passed some social legislation. But it could not satisfy more radical leftists. Strikes soon brought down Blum's government. Democracy survived, but the country lacked strong leadership able to respond to the clamor for change.



>> Striking workers walk down a boulevard in Paris in June 1936.

Roosevelt's New Deal Meanwhile, in the United States, President Herbert Hoover firmly believed that the government should not intervene in private business matters. Even so, he did try a variety of limited measures to solve the crisis. Nothing seemed to work.

In 1932, Americans elected a new President, **Franklin D. Roosevelt**, or FDR. Roosevelt argued that the government had to take an active role in combating the Great Depression. He introduced the **New Deal**, a massive package of economic and social programs.

Under the New Deal, the federal government took a more active role in managing the economy than ever before. New laws regulated the stock market and protected bank deposits. Government programs created jobs and gave aid to farmers. A new Social Security system provided pensions for the elderly and other benefits.

As the New Deal programs were being put into effect, a natural disaster in 1934 hit several central states. After years of drought and overfarming, huge winds blew across the plains. The winds picked up and carried away the topsoil exposed by erosion, creating the Dust Bowl. The storms destroyed crops, land, and equipment. Thousands of farmers lost their land. Many migrated to the cities of the West Coast in search of work and a new life.

The New Deal failed to end the Great Depression, although it did ease the suffering for many. Still, some critics fiercely condemned FDR's expansion of the role of government. The debate about the size and role of the U.S. federal government continues to this day.

Loss of Faith in Democracy As the Depression dragged on, many people lost faith in the ability of democratic governments to solve the problems of the modern world. Misery and hopelessness created fertile ground for extremists who promised radical solutions. Communists gloated over what they called the failure of capitalism. Right-wing extremists played on themes of intense nationalism, the failure of democracy, the virtues of authoritarian rule, and the need to rearm. By the late 1930s, aggressive rulers once again threatened the peace.

? EXPLAIN How did the U.S. government react to the Great Depression?

ASSESSMENT

1. **Identify Central Ideas** What cultural changes did Western society experience after World War I?
2. **Make Generalizations** How did the ideas of Einstein and Curie contribute to a sense of uncertainty?
3. **Synthesize** How did Britain and France emerge from World War I as both victors and losers?
4. **Summarize** What were three causes of the Great Depression?
5. **Identify Cause and Effect** How did the Great Depression change government in the United States?