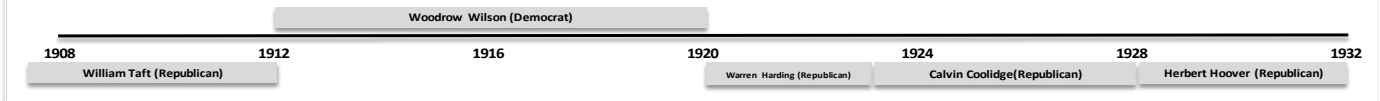


Knowledge Organiser: USA 1910 - 1929 (The Constitution and the Economic Boom)

Summary: This section of the topic deals with two key factors that have to be understood as they provide the foundations for the entire depth study. An understanding of the American Constitution is important as you need to know how the country is run and by whom. The election results during this period help explain later elements of the course such as immigration and race. The Economic Boom throughout the 1920s is the backdrop to the whole period where on the surface, the US appears to prosper but on closer analysis, it is not everyone.



US Constitution

Summary

The US system of government is a democracy in which the three pillars of the constitution are all voted for by the people. The system operates on a separation of power between the President, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Key Knowledge

| | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 1 | The Constitution | The rules and laws by which the American system of government operates. There are three main elements to the system: the office of President, the House of Representatives and the Senate. The system is based on no one aspect able to gain too much power. |
| 2 | Political Parties | There are two main political parties in the US: The Republicans and the Democrats. The Republicans tend to have policies considered right-wing; the Democrats are considered more left-wing. |
| 3 | President | These are the Executive in the Constitution and are elected by the people every four years. No president can serve more than two-terms. Presidents have always come from the two main political parties. |
| 4 | Congress | Congress has to agree all laws. It is made up of two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Congressmen is the term for a member of the House of Representatives and are elected every two years. Senators are elected every six years. There are two senators from each state. |
| 5 | Supreme Court | The Supreme Court sits above both the President and the Congress and is the highest court of the land. The Supreme Court has the power to declare a law unconstitutional. The main job of the Supreme Court is to protect the constitution. |

Causes of the Economic Boom

Summary

The Economic Boom of the 1920s is the key feature of this period of American History. The decade of the 1920s is called the "Roaring 20s" because of it. The Economic Boom needs to be understood to understand the whole period and why there is so much conflict and so much contrast in it.

Key Knowledge

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| 12 | Natural Resources | The USA had an abundance of natural resources which would provide the foundations for an economy to grow. This included steel, coal, iron and oil; as well as foods such as wheat and maize. |
| 13 | Impact of the First World War | The First World War saw the US come out as the world's leading economy because the Allies relied so heavily on them during the conflict for food and supplies. It also saw technology advance during this war. |
| 14 | Henry Ford and the Assembly Line | Henry Ford's assembly line would be a key invention that saw the explosion of mass production in the US. The key principle of it was to speed up production of the car by assigning workers to individual roles in the production rather than assembling the whole thing. |
| 15 | Mass Production and Consumer Goods | Mass production of consumer goods was the backbone of the US economic boom. It was a new growth market with goods such as cars and radios being made. Mass production made goods cheaper and more affordable for ordinary people. |
| 16 | New Technologies | New technologies were also another aspect to the economic boom. The new technologies were generally associated with a new source of power: electricity. Goods such as vacuum cleaners, cookers, refrigerators and washing machines became everyday ordinary goods. |
| 17 | Confidence and Credit | What sustained the economic boom was also the availability of cheap credit for ordinary people. It gave people the means to buy usually unobtainable luxuries such as cars through monthly installments. |
| 18 | Republican Presidents | The policies of the Republican Presidents throughout the 1920s only encouraged economic growth. Their policies of tax cuts and tariffs on foreign goods were added to an overall laissez-faire approach to business. |

US Presidents 1908 to 1932

Summary

From 1908 to 1932 there were seven elections, but only six different Presidents as Woodrow Wilson was elected twice. All presidents were either Republican or Democrat but, importantly, through the key years of the 1920s all the presidents were Republican.

Key Knowledge

| | | |
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| 6 | 1908 to 1912 | President: William Taft (Republican) |
| 7 | 1912 to 1920 | President: Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) |
| 8 | 1920 to 1924 | President: Warren Harding (Republican) |
| 9 | 1923 to 1928 | President: Calvin Coolidge (Republican) |
| 10 | 1928 to 1932 | President: Herbert Hoover (Republican) |
| 11 | 1932 to 1945 | President: Franklin D. Roosevelt (Democrat) |

Keywords

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Constitution | The rules by which a country is run |
| Republican Party | A more right-wing political party in America |
| Democratic Party | A more left-wing political party in America |
| Economic Boom | A period of significant and rapid growth in a country's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) |
| Mass Production | The production of large quantities of a good using automated machinery |
| Consumer Goods | Goods and products bought and used by consumers for domestic use |
| Credit | The ability of a customer to obtain goods or services before payment, based on the trust that payment will be made in the future. |
| Laissez-Faire | In French it means "let them do" and is the policy of leaving things to take their own course, without interfering. |
| Tariffs | A tax or duty to be paid on a particular class of imports or exports. |