

## Knowledge Map: USA 1910 – 1929 4. Popular entertainment

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| <b>Summary:</b> | There were rapid social changes in the USA and this corresponded with huge changes and developments in popular entertainment. It was revolutionised by radio and cinema. Music went through a transformation with the development of Jazz which in turn led to new styles of dance. Dancing and dance clubs thrived in the speakeasy culture. The advances in the role of women meant there was an increase in female stars. |
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| Cinema   |  |
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| Summary  |  |
| Cinema was already well established in America in 1910 and the popularity increased hugely between 1910 – and 1929. Cinema was the fourth largest industry in the country. |  |

| Key knowledge |  |   |
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| 1.            | Number of cinemas                      | By 1910 there were more than 8,000 cinemas. This figure rose to 17,000 in 1926 and 303,000 by 1930.   |
| 2.            | Reasons for the increase in popularity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People had more leisure time and disposable income.</li> <li>• Cheap ticket prices.</li> <li>• Films were a form of escapism.</li> <li>• Improved transport meant cinemas were more accessible.</li> <li>• People wanted to go and see their favourite 'stars' in movies.</li> </ul> |
| 3.            | Silent movies                          | Until 1927 movies were silent, although they were often accompanied by live musicians, and sometimes sound effects. Films would range from comedies to romances to Westerns and biblical stories.   |
| 4.            | The Jazz Singer                        | Released in 1927, this was the first 'talkie'. It was made using the Warner Bros' Vitaphone system with a disc with a sound recording that played alongside the movie. It starred Al Jolson. The success of this quickly caused other film companies to do the same.  |
| 5.            | Hollywood                              | By 1915 the majority of films were made in the Los Angeles area. Paramount, Warner Bros, RKO and Columbia all had studios in Hollywood. It was the ideal location as it had deserts and mountains and a warm, dry climate most of the year.   |
| 6.            | The Hays Code                          | Some people were shocked by the morality of some films so Hollywood set up the Hays Code. It banned screen nudity, limited the length of screen kisses and stated murder and arson must be shown as evil.   |

| Movie stars  |  |
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| Summary  |  |
| As a result of the popularity of cinema film stars became celebrities and demanded more money. The Oscars were introduced in 1928 to highlight achievement in the film industry. |  |

| Key knowledge |                   |  |
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| 7.            | Rudolph Valentino | Most famous film was the Sheik. He died suddenly in 1926 – 50,000 people attended his funeral and several women committed suicide.               |
| 8.            | Clara Bow         | Was given the nickname 'The It Girl', and was seen as a sex symbol. Women would want to copy her hair, make up and fashion.                      |
| 9.            | Charlie Chaplin   | British immigrant famous for his physical comedies. He starred in silent movies and was one of the most famous people in the world in the 1920s. |
| 10.           | Buster Keaton     | Wrote, directed and acted in his own films as well as performing his own stunts.   |

| Changes in popular music   |  |
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| Summary  |  |
| The 1920s is often known as the Jazz Age because the popular music at the time. It was originally performed by black artists. Throughout the decade Jazz music was played in clubs and on the radio and gramophone |  |

| Key knowledge |                              |   |
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| 11.           | Jazz music                   | Originated from black slaves. They used washboards, cans and percussion. By changing the beat and creating particular rhythms, it became Jazz. Musicians often made it up as they went along.   |
| 12.           | Popularity of Jazz           | Jazz became popular with young middle class white Americans, in particular flappers. As black Americans migrated North Jazz music spread around the country.  |
| 13.           | The Cotton Club              | Special clubs devoted to Jazz were started in cities such as Chicago and New York. Many were used as covers for speakeasies. The most famous was the Cotton Club in Harlem, New York.   |
| 14.           | Attitudes towards Jazz music | Some conservatives were anti Jazz music and some venues prohibited the public performance of it. It was described as 'harmful and dangerous and its influences are wholly bad.'   |
| 15.           | Jazz Artists                 | The most famous was Louis Armstrong. He was born in New Orleans and moved to Chicago in 1922. Duke Ellington's orchestra were the 'house band' at the Cotton Club. Bessie Smith was a famous female jazz performer.   |
| 16.           | Radio                        | Radio replaced the gramophone as the way to hear music. KDKA in Pittsburgh was the first radio station in 1920. NBC was the first national radio station in 1926. There were 60,000 radios in US homes in 1910 and 10 million by 1929, reaching an audience of 50 million people. |

| Dancing   |  |
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| Summary   |  |
| There were a number of Jazz inspired new dances. They were less formal and more carefree. |  |

| Key knowledge. |                         |   |
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| 17.            | New dances              | The Charleston was one of the most well known. Other new ones were the Black Bottom, Lindy Hop, and Monkey Glide. |
| 18.            | Attitudes to new dances | These new dances scandalised the older generation and many people viewed them as immoral.                         |
| 19.            | Dance Marathons         | Dancers danced non stop for as long as possible and the last couple left standing claimed the prize money.        |

| Key words           |  |
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| <b>Nickelodeons</b> | Cheap cinemas (tickets cost a nickel).       |
| <b>Talkies</b>      | Films with sound recordings.                 |
| <b>Speakeasies</b>  | Illegal bars people could go to for alcohol. |