

Name _____ **The Great Gatsby**



Life in the Roaring Twenties

The 1920s in America were a time of major cultural, social, and economic change. After the devastation of World War I, many Americans were eager to enjoy life and break away from the strict traditions of the past. This period became known as the "Roaring Twenties."

One key feature of the 1920s was the booming economy. Factories produced goods on a larger scale, consumer credit became more common, and people bought new inventions like radios, automobiles, and household appliances. This prosperity also created new inequalities-while some grew incredibly wealthy, others struggled to get by.

Prohibition was another defining feature of the decade. In 1920, the U.S. government banned the production and sale of alcohol. Instead of ending drinking, prohibition encouraged illegal activity. "Speakeasies" (secret bars) appeared in cities, and organized crime grew stronger through bootlegging (the illegal alcohol trade).

Culturally, the Jazz Age exploded. Jazz music, with its rhythms and improvisation, represented energy, freedom, and a break from tradition. Dance halls, clubs, and parties became popular, and a new generation embraced fun and rebellion. At the same time, writers and artists of the modernist movement experimented with new forms of expression, questioning traditional values and exploring themes of alienation and change.

Women also experienced new freedoms. Many became known as "flappers"-young women who wore shorter dresses, cut their hair into bobs, smoked, danced, and rejected traditional expectations. The 1920s also saw women voting for the first time after the 19th Amendment passed in 1920.

This exciting but unstable era is the backdrop of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Understanding the Roaring Twenties helps readers see how wealth, excess, disillusionment, and social change shape the characters and themes of the novel.

1. Why were the 1920s often called the "Roaring Twenties"?

- A) Because World War I was still being fought
- B) Because of widespread economic prosperity and cultural energy
- C) Because prohibition ended during this time
- D) Because most Americans lived in poverty

2. What was one major effect of prohibition in the 1920s?

- A) It successfully eliminated alcohol consumption.
- B) It reduced crime in large cities.
- C) It led to the rise of illegal bars and organized crime.
- D) It increased public support for stricter laws.