**1920s WebQuest Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The Task:**

The 1920’s were often called the "Roaring '20s" and Hollywood movies make it look like one big dance party. For historians and journalists, however, the 1920s are often seen as the beginning of modern America -- a decade that helped set the tone for the rest of the century.

Through this Web assignment you will be able to do the following:

**- Identify and explain the issues and events of the 1920s in American History.**

- Enter your answers in the worksheet below.

**The Process**

**Step 1:** **To get started,** let's get a quick introduction to the 1920s at [Learner.org](http://www.learner.org/biographyofamerica/prog20/feature/index.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) by viewing the introduction, and four webpages there. **Write a brief summary of each page.** Just click on the links Roar or Yawn to continue to the next page at the site, <http://www.learner.org/biographyofamerica/prog20/feature/index.html>

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| **Webpage title** | **Summary** |
| Economic Prosperity |  |
| The Effects of Prohibition |  |
| The Impact of Popular Culture |  |
| Effects of the Automobile |  |

**Step 2:** Check out some of the popular music of the Roaring 20's.  Listen to the song "Take the A Train" by Duke Ellington, he became one of the most popular Jazz musicians of the decade.  **Write a brief description of what you hear. What is this song about? The "A Train" is giving directions to Harlem and the nightclubs there.  Do you think this is a typical message for a Jazz/Blues song? Why would people need directions to the Jazz clubs in Harlem?**

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| "Take the A Train" by Duke Ellington |
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**Step** **3:** **From “When the Negro Was in Vogue” by Langston Hughes**

Poet Langston Hughes was one of the leading voices of the Harlem Renaissance.

“The 1920s were the years of Manhattan’s black Renaissance. . . .

White people began to come to Harlem in droves. For several years they packed the expensive Cotton Club on Lenox Avenue. But I was never there, because the Cotton Club was a Jim Crow club for gangsters and monied whites. They were not cordial to Negro patronage, unless you were a celebrity like Bojangles. So Harlem Negroes did not like the Cotton Club and never appreciated its Jim Crow policy in the very heart of their dark community. Nor did ordinary Negroes like the growing inﬂux of whites toward Harlem after sundown, ﬂooding the little cabarets and bars where formerly only colored people laughed and sang, and where now the strangers were given the best ringside tables to sit and stare at the Negro customers—like amusing animals in a zoo.

The Negroes said: “We can’t go downtown and sit and stare at you in your clubs. You won’t even let us in your clubs.” But they didn’t say it out loud—for Negroes are practically never rude to white people. So thousands of whites came to Harlem night after night, thinking the Negroes loved to have them there, and ﬁrmly believing that all Harlemites left their houses at sundown to sing and dance in cabarets, because most of the whites saw nothing but the cabarets, not the houses. . . .

It was a period when, at almost every Harlem upper-crust dance or party, one would be introduced to various distinguished white celebrities there as guests…It was a period when Harold Jackman, a handsome young Harlem schoolteacher of modest means, calmly announced one day that he was sailing for the Riviera for a fortnight, to attend Princess Murat’s yachting party. It was a period when Charleston preachers opened up shouting churches as sideshows for white tourists. And when books by Negro authors were being published with much greater frequency and much more publicity than ever before or since in history. It was a period when white writers wrote about Negroes more successfully (commercially speaking) than Negroes did about themselves. It was the period (God help us!) when Ethel Barrymore appeared in blackface in Scarlet Sister Mary! It was the period when the Negro was in vogue.”

*From Langston Hughes, The Big Sea: An Autobiography (New York: Hill & Wang, 1940).*

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| What different aspects of life in Harlem does Hughes capture in this excerpt from his autobiography? |
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| How would you describe Harlem of the 1920s based on your reading of this excerpt? |
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| Why do you think white America suddenly became fascinated by Harlem? |
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| What is ironic about the situations described in this excerpt? |
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**Step 4:** The movie "The Kid" was both a comedy and a drama that was one of the most popular movies of 1921.  Chaplin was a well known actor who will continue his roles in silent films throughout the twenties and until 1940. Watch the following clip from Charlie Chaplin's "The Kid."

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| **How do the actors communicate their ideas without dialogue?**  |
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| **Do you think it is more or less effective?  Why?** |
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**Step 5:** Advertising changed how shopper shopped and what they bought. **How were each of these products advertised in McClure’s magazine, were their ads effective?**

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug00/rekas/attic/main.htm>

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| [**Hosiery, 1922**](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug00/rekas/attic/hose.htm) |  |
| [**Makeup, 1928**](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug00/rekas/attic/kiss.htm) |  |
| [**Cream of Wheat, 1923**](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug00/rekas/attic/cream.htm) |  |
| [**Washing Machine, 1923**](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug00/rekas/attic/wash.htm) |  |

**Step 6:** Use the <http://www.1920s-fashion-and-music.com/1920-flappers.html> webpage to find out about the flapper lifestyle.  Answer the following questions.

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| What were the main characteristics of a flapper? |
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| Who was the best known flapper couple? How did their lifestyle represent the flapper ideas? |
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**Step 7:** Watch the two clips on the class webquest page: <http://msmcdushistory2.pbworks.com/w/page/21881739/1920%27s%20Culture%20WebQuest>

then answer the following question.

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| How did the stunts performed during the 1920s represent the excesses and extravagance of the 1920s? |
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