

Section 2: The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910–1929

Chapter 4: The main problems and challenges facing America

4.1 Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?

Exam practice (page 36)

What do Sources A and B suggest about attitudes towards immigration into the USA after 1917? [4 marks]

Sample answer: The two sources show how attitudes towards immigration into the USA were beginning to change by 1917, moving away from the 'open door' policy towards a system of restricted entry. Source A says that by 1917 there was increasing opposition to mass migration, causing a growing concern that the new immigrants were taking away jobs from US citizens and were responsible for increases in crime and lawlessness. Such attitudes caused the US government to introduce measures to restrict immigration and this is illustrated in Source B. In 1921 the Emergency Quota Act set limits for the entry of immigrants from particular countries based upon a 3% quota based on the total population of each ethnic group and in 1924 the National Origins Act reduced this quota to 2% of the population. By 1924 America's attitude to immigration had hardened and steps had been taken to abandon its open door policy in favour of restricted entry.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. The candidate has made a number of valid observations based upon both sources and has displayed an understanding of the measures taken to restrict immigration and the reasons for the abandonment of the open door policy. Historical context is provided through specific reference to key terms such as Open Door policy, Emergency Quota Act and National Origins Act. At least two relevant points are extracted from each source and discussed in some detail. Both sources are afforded equal weighting.

4.2 Was America a country of religious and racial tolerance during this period?

Exam practice (page 38)

How useful are Sources A and B to a historian studying the reasons why the Monkey Trial took place in 1925? [8 marks]

Sample answer: Source A is useful to the historian because it tells us that what was taught in schools in the southern states of the USA was the cause of considerable concern to many Americans who were in favour of an anti-evolution law. They were opposed to the teaching of evolution and thought that the lack of old-fashioned teaching based on religious faith and the Bible had caused a lowering of moral standards. The source is part of an interview given by Austin Peay, the Governor of the southern state of Tennessee, which was printed in the *Nashville Banner* newspaper in 1925. Tennessee was a part of the Bible Belt states which opposed the teaching of evolution in schools and supported the prosecution of teacher Johnny Scopes in 1925 during the Monkey Trial. The biased beliefs of the Governor reflect the views of many of his voters. Source B is extracted from a book on the Monkey Trial which was written in 1985 by the historian E. Larson. He makes the point that the real purpose of the trial was to debate the scientific theory of evolution with the Biblical teaching

that God created human life. The trial attracted vast media attention as both sides attempted to convince the jury that their interpretation of the origin of mankind was the correct one. Source B is the reflection of a modern historian who, with the benefit of hindsight, would have had time to reflect and reach a more balanced conclusion, while Source A spells out the beliefs of religious fundamentalists at the time of the Monkey Trial and is clearly biased in its comments. Both sources are useful to the historian as they illustrate why the trial received such wide-spread media attention.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It provides a good discussion of what each source says (the content) and links it to the Monkey Trial. It identifies the authors and the dates when they made these comments (the origin). It comments that Source A is biased because it is the view of a religious fundamentalist who was Governor of the state of Tennessee within the Bible Belt and therefore reflects the views of the anti-evolution faction, while Source B offers a more reflective and balanced view, having been written by an historian with the benefit of hindsight (the purpose).

Exam practice (page 41)

How useful are Sources A and B to a historian studying the KKK organisation in the 1920s? [8 marks]

Sample answer: Both sources are useful to the historian because they provide specific details about the organisation of the KKK in the 1920s. Source A is a contemporary account and is part of an interview with Hiram Wesley Evans in 1924. He was the Imperial Wizard of the KKK and his views are useful because they are those of the person who headed the KKK organisation. Evans wanted to use the interview to spell out the key beliefs of the KKK, stressing the need to ensure that the White Protestant race remained pure. He identified several groups which threatened the purity of the American stock, namely black Americans and Catholics. Source A provides useful information on the attitude and beliefs of the KKK during the 1920s and while it presents a very biased point of view it clearly displays what the KKK stood for. Source B is the reflection of a modern historian who would have had time to reflect and reach a more balanced conclusion. In his book *The USA: A Divided Union*, DeMarco identifies common activities of the KKK during the 1920s. Mention is made of the methods used by the Klan to terrorise black Americans and other 'troublesome' groups. They included whipping, branding and lynching. DeMarco also suggests that the Klan was so well organised that it included members in key positions of authority, such as police officers and judges. The weakness of Source B is that it talks about the activities of the KKK rather than its organisation and this will affect its usefulness to the historian. While both sources provide useful information to the historian, they also have their limitations which the historians need to be aware of when using this evidence.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer in which the candidate demonstrates good knowledge and understanding. The content of both sources is explained in some detail and put into context using the own knowledge. The origin of each source has been clearly identified and there is an informed attempt to discuss the context in which each source was produced. There is an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of both contemporary (primary) and reflection (secondary) sources as pieces of evidence to be used by the historian. The candidate reached a reasoned and substantiated conclusion regarding the utility of both pieces of evidence.

4.3 Was the 1920s a decade of organised crime and corruption?

Exam practice (page 43)

Use Source A and your own knowledge to explain why Al Capone was sent to prison in the early 1930s. [6 marks]

Sample answer: Source A talks about the empire of organised crime established by Al Capone in Chicago during the 1920s. When he took over control of Johnny Torrio's gangland operations in 1925 Capone eliminated rival gangs and increased his control over the bootlegging trade across the city. The St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929 in which Capone's men shot dead members of the rival Bugs Moran gang was the most violent of these gangland attacks. Capone also bribed police officers, judges, politicians and the Mayor of Chicago, Big Bill Thompson. However, despite operating such a large empire of organised crime the authorities were unable to find enough direct evidence to prosecute Capone. It was not until 1931 that he was eventually sent to prison following evidence of tax avoidance gathered by Elliot Ness and his band of 'untouchables'. Ness proved in court that Capone's vast empire of speakeasies, bookmakers, gambling houses, brothels, nightclubs and breweries were involved in tax avoidance schemes and it was for this crime that the gangster was sent to prison. This investigation finally brought down Chicago's top gangster and led to the break-up of his empire of organised crime.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. The candidate demonstrates a sound understanding of this topic and has worked the source material well. There is a good use of own knowledge to explain and expand upon the information given in the source relating to Capone's empire of organised crime. Additional material is provided detailing the investigations of Elliot Ness in Capone's tax avoidance schemes, which finally brought about the downfall of Chicago's top gangster and his empire. The answer displays a clear use of content material with accurate and detailed background knowledge, identifying several factors why Capone was eventually sent to prison in 1931.

Chapter 5: The rise and fall of the American economy

5.1 What were the causes of the economic boom?

Exam practice (page 46)

Describe how the policies of the Republican presidents aimed to help the US economy to grow during the 1920s. [4 marks]

Sample answer: The three presidents of the 1920s were all Republicans and they followed the same policies. Warren Harding followed a 'back to normalcy' policy and he reduced the high taxes of the war years in the belief it would encourage Americans to spend more. His successor Calvin Coolidge believed in the policy of 'laissez-faire' which meant limited interference by government in the running of the economy, letting it control itself, meaning businesses were free to make their own decisions. Herbert Hoover believed in 'rugged individualism' which aimed at encouraging people to achieve success through their own hard work. All three presidents believed in protecting home markets and introduced tariffs such as the 1922 Fordney-McCumber Act which introduced high import taxes. This encouraged Americans to buy cheaper US goods rather than more expensive foreign imports.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a top performing answer. The answer is well informed, making specific reference to a number of key policies followed by the Republican presidents – 'back to normalcy', 'laissez-faire', 'rugged individualism' and tariffs (protectionism). Explanation was included to show how these policies attempted to boost economic growth.

5.2 How did this prosperity affect American society?

Exam practice (page 49)

Historians have made different interpretations about the success of the American economy during the 1920s. One interpretation is that the lifestyle of the American people improved significantly during the economic boom of the 1920s. How far do you agree with this interpretation? [10 marks]

Sample answer: Only one piece of evidence supports the interpretation that the lifestyle of the American people improved significantly during the economic boom of the 1920s and that is Evidence 1. The information in this source comes from a Republican Party leaflet produced during Herbert Hoover's presidential campaign of 1928. Hoover was obviously attempting to win votes and comments that the policies of previous Republican presidents had helped cause the economy to boom, resulting in the building of many new homes, the creation of new jobs, increased pay packets and rising share prices. However, this evidence is very biased as it is the view of a Republican politician hoping to be elected president and is therefore exaggerated. This contrasts sharply with the interpretation provided by the historians S. Waugh and J. Wright in Evidence 2. This is a researched piece of work written with the benefit of hindsight and it comes to the conclusion that many Americans did not share in the economic boom, especially immigrants, black Americans and poor tenant farmers. More than 70 million Americans lived below the poverty line in the 1920s, which clearly contrasts with the view presented by Hoover. Evidence 3 also counters the interpretation presented by Hoover. It is a photograph showing a poor farmer and his family, living with few possessions and dressed in rags. These people did not benefit from the boom. As this is an actual photograph it can be considered to be a reliable piece of evidence, although it is not known exactly how many farmers lived in such poverty.

Looking at all three pieces of evidence I disagree with the interpretation that the lifestyle of the American people improved significantly during the 1920s. It did for some Americans, as indicated by Evidence 1, but this was a very biased Republican viewpoint of the progress made during the 1920s. Many Americans did not make significant advances and struggled to survive. The researched piece of work presented in Evidence 2 is a more accurate evaluation, and this view is supported by the photograph in Evidence 3.

Comment: This is a developed answer which uses Evidence 1 to support and illustrate the interpretation presented in the question. The content of the source is evaluated and contextualised. Its biased nature is identified and the reasons for that bias are explained. A counter-interpretation has been identified in Evidence 2 and Evidence 4. The content of both sources is used to show how not all Americans experienced prosperity during the 1920s. Attention has been paid to the attributions of both sources and how this has influenced the interpretation given. The answer concludes with a judgement upon the value of the given interpretation.

5.3 Why did this prosperity come to a sudden end in 1929?

Exam practice (page 51)

Use Source A and your own knowledge to explain why the American economy went into depression in late 1929. [6 marks]

Sample answer: The American economy went into depression in late 1929 for a combination of reasons. Source A refers to the problems caused by over-production which left factories and shops with goods they could not sell. The introduction of mass-production techniques during the 1920s flooded the market with relatively cheap household goods such as radios, washing machines and

refrigerators. These are items which families only need to purchase once yet factories continued to produce such goods in large numbers, ignoring the fall in demand. Similar over-production took place in agriculture, where the price of farm produce fell sharply, resulting in serious reductions in income for many farmers. This in turn caused land values to fall. Despite the slowing of demand people continued to invest heavily in the stock market and share prices continued to rise. By mid-1929 they had reached unrealistic highs and once several big investors began to sell it led to panic selling by smaller investors. By late October the stock market had crashed and the American economy had entered into a period of prolonged depression.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It elaborates on the information in the source, explaining the problems caused by over-production in industry and the flooding of the market with unsold mass-produced household goods. References to problems in other areas of the economy such as over-production in agriculture, the fall in the value of land prices and the rise of share prices to unrealistic levels followed by panic selling and the crash of the stock market, provide context to the answer. The response covers a variety of reasons to explain the onset of the depression.

Exam practice (page 51)

Describe the Wall Street Crash of October 1929. [4 marks]

Sample answer: The Wall Street Crash was the direct result of the panic selling of shares following over-speculation on the US stock market. Share prices had continued to rise to unrealistic highs during 1929 and in mid-October several big investors started to sell large numbers of shares. As prices began to fall this caused small investors to panic and there was a rush to sell shares. On Monday 21st October more than 6 million shares were traded, on Thursday 24th, nicknamed 'Black Thursday' 13 million shares were traded. This caused a further sharp fall in share prices. The worst day of trading on the stock market occurred on 'Black Tuesday', the 29th October, when more than 16 million shares were sold. By the end of the month the US stock market had crashed and shares were worth only a fraction of they had been a few months earlier. There was a loss of confidence in the financial sector causing many banks to go bust.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a top performing answer which is structured and well informed. Several key events during the crash such as Black Thursday and Black Tuesday are described and supported with specific detail such as the specific number of shares traded on named days. The candidate displays an in-depth knowledge and an excellent understanding.

Chapter 6: Changes in American culture and society

6.1 How did popular entertainment develop during this period?

Exam practice (page 54)

Why was Source A published in 1926? [6 marks]

Sample answer: Source A was produced in 1926 to record the funeral of one of Hollywood's most famous movie stars, Rudolph Valentino. During the 1920s Valentino starred in a number of very popular silent films, including 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' (1921) and, most famously, 'The Sheik' (1921). His youthful good looks and sex appeal made him one of Hollywood's most popular movie stars. His sudden death in September 1926 caused great shock among his many fans. On the day of his funeral over 100,000 fans lined Broadway in New York to pay their respects and

watch the funeral procession. Such a large crowd demonstrated Valentino's status as a Hollywood movie star. Cinema audiences in the USA had risen sharply in the early 1920s, with millions going to the cinema every week to watch the latest movie of their star performer. Photographs similar to that of Source A appeared in newspapers across America. Source A was therefore produced to record this important event, the funeral of one of Hollywood's most famous stars of the silent cinema.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. The candidate has successfully developed the content of the source and used their knowledge of this topic area to provide historical context, spelling out the high profile that Rudolph Valentino held in the movie business. He was one of the most popular of the male movie stars during the early years of the silent cinema, and his sudden death was mourned by millions of Americans. A range of factors have been identified to explain why this photograph was taken in September 1926, placing the event into the context of the popularity of the silent cinema during the 1920s.

6.2 How did the lifestyle and status of women change during this period?

Exam practice (page 56)

Describe the lifestyle of flappers living in the 1920s. [4 marks]

Sample answer: A flapper was a fashionable young woman of the 1920s who challenged traditional attitudes towards the role of women in US society. They adopted a more independent and liberal lifestyle. They wore make-up and perfume, dressed in short sleeveless bright coloured dresses and more revealing swimwear. They cut their hair short, making the 'bob' haircut fashionable. They ditched the traditional custom of using a chaperone and went out independently to the new dance clubs and speakeasies. They listened to jazz, danced the new fashionable dances such as the Charleston and Black Bottom, and smoked and drank in public. They drove cars and rode motorbikes, activities traditionally performed only by men. Many copied the flapper lifestyles adopted by the stars of the silent cinema such as Clara Bow and Joan Crawford. Such a lifestyle was strongly disapproved of by conservative and religious groups who considered it to be too sexual and immoral.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a well-informed answer which demonstrates good range and depth. Reference is made to costume, hairstyle and make-up, the ditching of the chaperone, and a social life which involved visiting dancehalls and speakeasies to enjoy the new jazz culture. The candidate demonstrates a thorough understanding of the flapper lifestyle.

6.3 Why did sport and other leisure activities witness so much growth during this period?

Exam practice (page 59)

Was the growth of the cinema the most important development in American culture and society during this period? In your answer you should discuss the key developments in American culture and society, including the importance of the cinema. [12 marks & 3 marks for SPaG]

Sample answer: The growth of the cinema played a significant part in the development of American culture and society during this period. The silent cinema saw tremendous growth. In 1910 there were 8000 cinemas and by 1930 this had grown to 303,000. They showed a variety of films covering many themes such as romantic, westerns and slap-stick comedy. Stars such as Charlie Chaplin and Clara Bow attracted large audiences. In 1927 the first talking picture appeared which was called 'The Jazz Singer'. The cinema changed the social life of millions of Americans and it became one of the most popular forms of entertainment.

However, the cinema was not the only cultural and social development to affect America during this period. Another important development was the impact of jazz music. This was the music of black Americans which developed in the Deep South and became popular during the 1920s. Jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington became household names as did singers like Bessie Smith.

Popular entertainment such as listening to the radio and gramophone, and attending the new clubs and dance halls also became fashionable. People went to perform the new dances such as the Charleston and Black Bottom. Organised sport also grew in popularity during the 1920s and became an important part in the social life of many Americans as they had more free time and more money to engage in leisure activities. Baseball grew in popularity due to the appeal of stars such as Babe Ruth and Oscar Charleston who attracted large crowds and large radio audiences.

Women also made great social progress during the 1920s with the development of the flapper lifestyle. New modern women dressed in new fashions with sleeveless dresses, a bob haircut and wore make-up. They ditched the chaperone and followed a more liberal lifestyle.

During the 1920s people had more leisure time and disposable income to engage in cultural and social events. They listened to the new jazz music on the radio, they went to watch their sporting heroes in the new stadia, and they went to nightclubs and dance halls. However, one of the greatest changes was due to the growth of the cinema. It was cheap entertainment enjoyed by millions of Americans, making it the most important development in American culture and society during this period.

Comment: This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a well-developed two-sided argument which is supported with specific factual detail. The growth and development of the cinema is well documented with supporting examples. The counter-argument is explored and a range of alternative factors are discussed. The essay concludes with a reasoned judgement, with a clear link back to the question. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar is very good throughout.